

For the attention of all School Administrative and Support Staff, including General Assistants

PSA Pay Equity for SAS Staff

The PSA appeared in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) last week to continue its case for pay equity for SAS Staff.

Normally the IRC is prevented from granting increases in wages above 2.5 per cent without a trade-off in conditions or other employee costs. One exception is where the increases claimed are to rectify gender-based undervaluation.

The PSA has made an application to vary the SAS Staff Award based on the equal remuneration principle and is required to prove SAS staff are undervalued on a gender basis. The PSA has engaged barristers and lawyers who are being assisted by PSA staff, delegates and members to support our position.

A number of your colleagues across SAS Staff classifications have prepared witness statements and will give evidence in the Commission in support of PSA members. The PSA is very appreciative of the time and effort these witnesses have provided. In addition, we will be calling on expert witnesses to give evidence.

The IRC has set a timetable for the proceedings and the PSA's evidence will be lodged in October this year.

For further information, contact

schools@psa.asn.au.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

The PSA became aware the Department changed the date for internal compliance for staff to obtain a Working With Children Check (WWCC) certificate.

The PSA formally registered a complaint about the Department's failure to advise the PSA of the change. The Department apologised for the oversight and undertook to investigate the reason the PSA was not informed of the change.

The PSA raised the implementation and administrative workload for SAS Staff arising out of the Children's Guardian monitoring and auditing requirements under section 39 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act.

The PSA has written to the Department requesting it acknowledges and takes appropriate steps to resolve the following concerns:

- » Assess the workload impact of the compliance date and provide additional resources
- » Conduct a risk assessment of the changed work practices
- » Consult with the PSA on the implementation of the compliance requirements to be introduced from November 2017.

The Department has responded and considers the workload impact to be temporary and measures such as Probity Team Support and Training, the FAQs on WWCC, and enhancements to the eCPC data base will deal with any issues. The PSA disagrees that these measures will manage the situation adequately.

The PSA has requested a meeting with the Department to address the inadequate response to these concerns.



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The Department has confirmed union staff visiting school sites are not subject to WWCC compliance procedures and the PSA has requested the Department advise schools of the situation.

REDUNDANCY PAYMENT LIABILITY

The issue of whether the Department or the school is responsible for redundancy payments for Above Centrally Identified Positions (ACIPs) has been raised with the PSA. The view of the Director, Industrial Relations is the school incurs liability for redundancy payments. This has the potential to impact on School Learning Support Officers who have converted to permanent employment. Principals may also take this factor into consideration when approving future EOIs for long-term temporary employees seeking permanency. The PSA's view is these payments are Treasury's responsibility.

We will inform members of the outcome of the discussions.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF vs NON-TEACHING STAFF

The Department is keen to use the term "Non-Teaching Staff" for all school-based employees who are not teachers. PSA members campaigned long and hard to change the title from Ancillary Staff to School Administrative and Support Staff as part of negotiations in a previous industrial agreement.

The PSA has made it clear SAS Staff are the second-largest group of employees in schools and deserve to be recognised by the title they chose.

The PSA suggested reference to employees working in schools should be Teachers, School Administrative and Support Staff and other Non-Teaching Staff.

INAPPROPRIATE ADVERTISING OF POSITIONS

Members occasionally report to the PSA inappropriate advertisements for administrative and support positions in schools. These can include creative classification titles and more creative duty or role statements.

In most cases, when these advertisements appear they breach the Award and when brought to the Department's attention steps are taken to withdraw them and agreed process is followed. The incidents have increased since the introduction of Local Schools Local Decisions.

IMMEDIATE RELIEF FOR SCHOOL LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICERS (formerly Teachers' Aides)

The Department and the PSA reached agreement in the 1980s for School Learning Support Officers to be granted immediate relief for short term absences (not wait five days before relief).

This agreement was reached on the basis immediate relief was available to teachers and, as the SLSO also worked face-to-face with students, they be given the same conditions.

Unfortunately, some principals are not providing immediate relief for SLSO which disadvantages students and staff. The PSA is interested in what happens at your school.



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GENERAL ASSISTANTS TRANSFER LIST

The Department of Education has emailed advice to principals that the General Assistants (GAs) transfer list will no longer be required and they can choose to go to open market for merit based recruitment.

The PSA was not consulted about this change and it was brought to our attention by a member. This is a substantial change in the conditions of employment of General Assistants.

PSA staff are currently working with the General Assistants Advisory Group to address this matter.

Conversion of around 1800 roles from temporary to ongoing, including General Assistants

The Department of Education is converting employees under the Government Sector Employment Act from temporary to ongoing. The first stage of that process covers:

- » General assistants
- » Groundsman
- » Stores officer
- » Driver/general assistant (not solely GA)
- » Community liaison officer
- » Student support officer
- » Maintenance officer
- » Recreation coordinator
- » Technical support officer (computer hardware and software support)

The process of conversion and compliances also requires the existing statement of duties and position descriptions to be changed to capability based role descriptions. DoE factsheet 'Role Descriptions' can be found [HERE](#).

Eighty per cent of the roles to be converted will be done through a suitability assessment. That is assessing the existing employee's duties and performance against the new role description. DoE say an easy assessment form is sent by HR to be completed by the principal. It is a simple checklist completed by the principal.

The remaining 20 per cent will be converted by capability assessment because these employees have never been assessed and have been in their jobs for fewer than 12 months. This may involve responding to an advertisement, making an application, completing set tasks and an interview.

These matters are not finalised as yet and the PSA continues to advocate strongly for GA union members with the Department. If you are a temporary GA and not a PSA member, now is the time to join the union.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS REFORM (LMBR)

LMBR Feedback

In response to members' feedback earlier in the year, the Department has implemented a number of changes as to how it manages your information to address your concerns in a timely manner.

Your feedback has led to the Department being more aware of systemic problems with LMBR and quickly take the necessary action to fix them.



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It is very important SAS staff continue to give feedback.

Current LMBR issues

EdConnect

The Executive Director, Shared Services (also responsible for EdConnect) attended a recent meeting and the PSA raised the questions relating to the following issues:

- » online enquiries having no option to categorise complaint
- » wait time for telephone advice
- » inconsistent information given and time taken to process invoices.

The responses from the Department were:

- » the IT form requires an accurate description of the problem and they categorise urgency;
- » they have a process that sorts calls into level 1,2, or 3 and determines response and who gives it
- » when Group 5 went live, 10 extra support staff were engaged based on an estimate of one to 1.6 calls per day, per-school
- » when it was only the 229 Schools, Shared Services processed 20,000 invoices per month but is now processing 120,000 per month
- » when there is an error, such as a different order number to the invoice, an email is automatically sent to the creator
- » EdConnect issues raised in LMBR feedback will be responded to by EdConnect.

The PSA has requested the process for sorting calls into the levels be explained in the SALM/Finance Schools support newsletter.

Members are advised to complete the EdConnect online form with as much detail as possible INCLUDING the incident number.

The Department in its 19 June bulletin has requested SAS Staff who are experiencing issues with EdConnect to contact the Department so problems can be addressed. The Department and the PSA are keen to assist SAS staff experiencing difficulties.

EBS4

The **recording of attendance and, or partial attendance is not a SAS Staff responsibility in primary schools.** This has long been accepted by the Department and the PSA due to the low staffing levels in primary schools. The PSA has therefore requested the Department remove any reference to SAS staff working in primary schools being required to record student attendance or absences.

The Department responded that principals may delegate marking rolls to school staff. The PSA's interpretation is in primary schools this means recording school attendance or absences is the role of teaching staff. The Department advised it would remove references to SAS Staff being solely responsible for recording partial absences from its training materials.

The Department will communicate to principals about the ban in primary schools and send out a bulletin advising teaching staff are to mark



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absences and the Department is looking to implement a new system that teachers mark locked rolls from next year.

The PSA was further advised the system has been developed around departmental policy which states absences can only be recorded up to seven days.

This is why the system is locked, so teachers don't breach policy. Hence SAS Staff shouldn't be working outside policy either.

Training post-LMBR deployment

Previously the Department has stated it will not provide additional face-to-face training after the 15-day LMBR deployment training and that the current Adobe Connect (in small groups or 1:1), QRG on-line training and LMBR support materials, and bulletins were adequate support.

Now it appears the Department is going to provide more training and resource development than was originally intended. LMBR support will increase in size as other teams delivering LMBR deployment training will change focus post-deployment.

LMBR support will take on a training resource development role, with the expectation of additional LMBR training. The Department's view is the SRGs will deliver a small proportion of training as an add-on to other LMBR training.

The PSA has ongoing concerns to the lack of funding being provided for further training and the level of involvement required by SRGs and SAM networks.

The Association continues to push for additional information on the allocation of funds to support SAS staff training to assist in all areas of their employment.

Computer problems/outages

Computer problems and network outages are in some cases a statewide problem.

The PSA has asked when this happens, EdConnect display a message to SAMs and SAOs alerting them to the problem.

Initially the PSA was informed this cannot be done as it may be a local problem. The PSA has now been advised the Department is completing a communication strategy on improved ways to inform schools of state-wide computer/network problems; and is looking at sending broadcast messages to schools. It is expected to be introduced by end of 2017.

Increased SAS Staff workload

Many members are frustrated and exhausted by the excessive workload due to LMBR. As a result of the PSA raising these concerns, the Department now has regular articles in *School Biz* about claiming overtime or converting overtime to time-in-lieu. SAS Staff should not be working unpaid overtime. The Department does not expect employees to work unpaid. If you are feeling pressure to work unpaid you should contact the PSA immediately; this is a clear breach of the award.

Members are reminded to raise workload concerns with their principal.



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The PSA encourages members to access the award online and ensure you are not being asked to work outside your conditions of employment.

If members are feeling stress or pressure, they can also contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) on 1300 360 364.

Excessive workload is a Work Health and Safety and an industrial issue. Workload is an ongoing agenda item at LMBR meetings. PSA has asked for details on the number of SAS Staff (not names) contacting EAP since Term 1 due to LMBR. The PSA has also requested statistics on the amount of over time claimed and figures on the additional staff employed since LMBR was introduced to schools.

The PSA is waiting for the information.

The next LMBR/PSA meeting is scheduled for 11 September. An update of that meeting will be included in the next bulletin.

