

4 September 2017

SAS Staff Recognition Week 2017

Dear member,

I'm very pleased to join you in celebrating School Administrative and Support (SAS) Staff Recognition Week 2017.

As I thank you for your vital work, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the PSA's past achievements in schools and inform you of a major case that we are running in the Industrial Court for SAS Staff.

PSA achievements in schools

SAS Staff were first employed in NSW Government schools in 1960 and were referred to as Ancillary Staff. One hundred women were employed in clerical positions from Term 1 1960. Since then, the PSA has worked to improve the wages and conditions of employment for SAS Staff. There are currently 17,500 SAS Staff employed in eight classifications across the state.

Some of our more notable achievements over the years for SAS Staff have been:

- » The first agreement between the Public Service Board and PSA in 1961 improved salaries based on a 3-year incremental scale
- » Introduction of staffing formulas to support established positions
- » The Stand Down Award ensuring stand down pay for SAS Staff during school holidays
- » Permanency agreement with the Public Service Board
- » Successfully negotiating 26 equal pays

- » Substantial increases in pay for SAS Staff – 1988/1993 dispute
- » Joint Working Party to review the work of School Assistants and Senior School Assistants resulting in current SAS Staff classifications and change from Ancillary Staff to School Administrative and Support Staff
- » Permanency for long-term temporary SAS Staff. Over 1500 employees gaining permanent employment.

Along the way, there have been numerous other achievements gained for members which, coupled with the major wins above, have helped make SAS Staff's work, pay and conditions what they are today.

Today's challenges

There are still big challenges ahead in schools - Local Schools and Local Decisions, Learning Management and Business Reform and other issues. SAS Staff are facing ever increasing demands on workloads and increased responsibilities.

With committed delegates and PSA staff we work continuously to raise these issues and secure positive outcomes for members.

In 2011, the NSW Government introduced its wages policy which has restricted all pay rises for NSW public servants, including SAS Staff, to 2.5% regardless of the actual increase in value of the work being done.



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Along with the ongoing issues of long-term temporary employment and conversion to permanency for SAS Staff, many members have also asked, what can be done about their pay?

Pay Equity - A major case

The work undertaken by SAS Staff since 1960 has been overwhelmingly done by women. Even today, women still comprise of over 93% of SAS Staff. This, along with a number of other factors, allows the PSA to make a claim for a variation in the award to achieve proper wage rates. The PSA will need to prove that the work SAS Staff perform is undervalued on a gender basis.

This year, the PSA made an application to the Industrial Relations Commission for a variation of the Crown Employees (School Administrative and Support Staff) Award – the Pay Equity case.

This is only the third Pay Equity application to be made in the Commission and is, without a doubt, one of the largest ever legal undertakings by the PSA. The PSA's claim includes all members covered by the award.

Currently, PSA staff supported by our solicitors McNally Jones Staff, barristers and expert witnesses, are working on preparing the evidence needed to support the case. Many of your colleagues are assisting by preparing witness statements, detailing the work they perform in their classification in support of the PSA case.

How can you help?

A union is only as strong as its members and it's a simple fact that the more SAS Staff who join the PSA, the stronger the PSA is in representing SAS Staff interests.

PSA members in schools can have a real sense of pride in the achievements won by the PSA over the years.

As a member, you can support the PSA by talking to colleagues about Pay Equity, invite a PSA Organiser to visit your school and if you know a colleague who isn't a member, ask them to join.

Stewart Little
General Secretary

