

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions NSW Report back on 27 September 2017 Joint Consultative Committee meeting

Your PSA Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions NSW (ODDP) delegates and industrial staff met with ODPP Management on 27 September 2017 to discuss collective member issues at the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting. The following issues were discussed:

Early Appropriate Guilty Plea (EAGP) reforms

ODPP gave an update on the organisation's approach to the Early Guilty Plea Reforms. ODPP indicated it had:

- » set up an intranet page that contained extensive information for staff
- » engaged contractors to work on the change process (they reside on level 30)
- » engaged staff via a roadshow
- » indicated via the roadshow there would be no redundancies.

ODPP noted that while the legislation is not due to be passed by Parliament until 23 November, it is in the process of preparing for the changes and is aiming to develop a structure for the organisation.

PSA members also noted ODPP had sent out a survey seeking feedback about what ODPP could look like in the future pending the organisational restructure. A major concern for members was the questions in the survey about privatising parts of ODPP. Members found this problematic as there was no context to the questions or rationale for why privatisation was even been contemplated.

ODPP indicated the survey was aimed at getting views from staff about what the organisation could look like in terms of practice sizes and less about revisitations. While any discussion of privatisation is concerning, ODPP noted that at this stage there is no plan to privatise any part of the organisation.

EAGP – consultation process

The PSA contends that the *Consultative Arrangement Policy Guidelines 1997* apply and ODPP should be consulting with the PSA as well as staff. Up until this meeting the ODPP had not provided any timelines or documentation regarding the changes. ODPP subsequently provided its EAGP Milestones that it posted on its intranet after the issue was raised during the JCC.

Your union will continue to pursue members' interests regarding the impending changes and seek your input as the process develops.

Workload

PSA members at a number of Metropolitan and Regional Offices have continued to raise concerns about the number of cases they are handling, the extensive hours they are working and the forfeiture of flex hours.

- » ODPP reiterated the need for staff to raise their workload with local managers.
- » There needs to be a system to record hours staff work on weekends on their laptops. As a result of the PSA raising this ODPP has agreed to look into this.

Your union also raised the issue of high workload and long hours as a Work Health and Safety concern. ODPP noted it has put on more staff to help alleviate the problem but there were still vacancies to fill.

There is also a Workload Management Strategy being developed as part of the EAGP change process which may in part resolve the issue. However, the PSA will seek feedback via Survey Monkey from members to present to ODPP.



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Temporary staff

PSA members have raised issues regarding their temporary employment status. Of primary concern is being employed on consecutive temporary contracts rather than being offered ongoing employment. Also of concern was the lack of confirmation of continuing employment/extension of contract. Often staff are being told AFTER the expiration of their contract that it will be extended. This leads to uncertainty and unnecessary stress for the affected staff members.

Your union raised this issue and also explored if the EAGP funding could be used to convert temporary staff to ongoing roles and whether it will give ODPP the ability to offer longer temporary contracts while the funding is available.

ODPP noted that it had to budget each year and in 2016 had converted a number of temporary roles to ongoing. While there was no commitment to convert staff to ongoing roles at this stage ODPP noted that it will look into this as part of staff retention. ODPP is aware staff have left for other organisations due to the temporary nature of their employment.

Work Health and Safety

ODPP advised that it had developed a Wellbeing program. Your union noted the importance of Mental Health in the workplace, which is of concern at ODPP due to the nature of the work exposing members to vicarious trauma and the high workloads.

In recognition of the importance of Mental Health, the PSA has developed training for members. The **Safer Together: Care and Resilience** course provides information, strategies and resources to build personal resilience and enhance mental health awareness.

It also provides participants with strategies to identify and support a colleague/s with mental health issues and encourage them to seek professional help.

If you would like more information on the course or interested in attending you can go to the PSA website <http://psa.asn.au/training/general-training-courses/> or contact bmckenzie@psa.asn.au.

Cases review update

ODPP gave an update on the CASES software review. It is seeking a vendor and will hold further workshops with smaller groups as part of the selection process. Consultation with ODPP staff and the chosen vendor will occur.

ODPP PSA member involvement in your union

Your union encourages PSA members from all vocations at ODPP whether it be Administration, Legal or Policy to get involved. To be more involved in your union, or you want more information on what being a delegate is or what a contact person entails, please contact PSA.

Next JCC date

The next JCC is Wednesday, 29 November 2017 and is the last JCC for 2017.

Your PSA industrial staff:

Andrew Boulton - Industrial Officer

Bart McKenzie - Senior Organiser

What can you do?

- » Give a copy of this bulletin to your colleagues.
- » Print this bulletin and put it up on your notice board.
- » Ask a colleague to join the PSA.
- » Get involved as your Area Contact.
- » Get involved by being on the ODPP DC
- » Attend a meeting at your worksite.

