

13 October 2017

SafeWork member bulletin

At the SafeWork JCC on 11 September 2017, management raised the need to commence discussions with the PSA/VG around the issue of recruitment to specialist Assistant State Inspector/State Inspector positions in the new Construction Infrastructure team.

SafeWork had alleged the requirement of an advanced diploma is causing difficulties for its recruitment outcomes to these identified roles.

The PSA is always willing to talk about mutual benefits associated with award improvements. However, your union is mindful of the reasons behind the Inspectorial membership vote and the rescission of the temporary MoU in 2015.

As most inspectors would be aware, the PSA entered into an agreement with WorkCover to make an interim change to Schedule 3 of the MoU, which is associated with your award in 2013. The purpose of the changes was to facilitate the transfer of DPOs into the Inspectorate in order to provide for jobs for those staff affected by the Work/ Health Safety Division restructure. The interim MoU expired on 30 September 2015 and the ballot overwhelmingly supported a continuation of the previous MoU and competency pathways.

After the JCC discussions, the PSA wrote to SafeWork on 18 September 2017 regarding:

1. the creation of the five ASI/SI positions
2. the previous restructuring that saw a massive reduction in specialist skills from the WHS Division

3. the difficulty associated with the acceptance from the PSA membership to change the MoU after previous SafeWork recruitments
4. the continuation of external advertisement for these positions.

You can view the whole correspondence by clicking [HERE](#).

The PSA and your VG President Toni McKay agreed to meet with the Safework executive on 5 October to discuss the MoU and options available for the recruitment of those five identified positions. It is important to note discussions do not make an agreement and the PSA would not be willing to enter into any agreements with SafeWork that affect the substance of the MoU without first balloting of the membership.

To an extent, SafeWork can demonstrate that it has attempted to deal with the issue of the skewed workforce demography and succession planning. However, the PSA maintains SafeWork can and must do more. Inspectors would be aware management has recently denied requests for transfer at level into vacancies prior to external recruitment, on the basis that SafeWork does not have sufficient staff to backfill losses. Some inspectors were also denied the opportunities given in the recent HDO positions.

As part of those discussions, the PSA asked SafeWork for consideration of the employment of DPOs as one of the options to meet the alleged skill deficiencies. As you can imagine, this was considered as an option. However, SafeWork was reluctant to agree.



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Another option given by SafeWork was to remove the Advanced Diploma requirements for recruitment. As the MoU is an industrial instrument, the PSA made it clear that membership sign-off would be required and that we were reluctant to agree.

WHERE TO NOW?

There is no denying that the opening of career pathways had some benefits for the progression of members in SafeWork. On the flip side, those provisions were open to manipulation by SafeWork and were ultimately voted down by the SafeWork membership.

The question now, with the benefit of hindsight, does the VG membership want the PSA and the VG to continue with discussions regarding the recruitment of those five identified roles if this means potential changes to Schedule 3 of the current MoU?

Representatives of the VG will be in touch with members to discuss options following the next meeting with management, scheduled for 16 October 2017.

