

19 December 2017

## Crown Solicitor's Office – Open Plan Proposal – Direction to take Industrial Action

As members are aware, your union has directed members to take the following industrial action, in opposition to the open-plan proposal, commencing 8am, 18 December 2017:

- » Solicitors and other fee earners (who are PSA members): Not record billable and administrative time in Open Practice. They are to keep written records of billable and administrative time for work-related matters and withhold these records from being entered in Open Practice.
- » Administrative staff (who are PSA members): not to enter recorded time in Open Practice for solicitors or other fee earners who are participating in the industrial action.

Temporary staff are exempt for this direction.

### Why are we taking industrial action?

PSA members have expressed strong opposition to the open-plan workplace fit-out. Concerns range from reduced productivity, confidentiality, noise, privacy, problems with file use and storage, WHS concerns, professional legal privilege, lower morale and lack of consultation with staff about opposition to open plan.

In October, the PSA lodged a dispute in the Industrial Relation Commission (IRC) against the CSO's open-plan proposal. The IRC directed the CSO to consult with the PSA on 'industrial matters' but stated that the Commission has no jurisdiction to order consultation on the Government's accommodation policy, which prescribes open-plan offices.

Since then, your PSA staff and delegates have met numerous times with CSO management to engage in genuine consultation and to reach an acceptable compromise for example, proposing that smaller offices could be accommodated for some or all solicitors on six floors. Management has flatly refused to consult on the open-plan itself.

The PSA has advised members that the only viable option left in fighting the open-plan is collective industrial action. At a well-attended PSA meeting on Friday 15 December, members voted in favour of taking industrial action.

Members are strongly advised to take part in the industrial action. The more members that participate the higher our negotiation power becomes. All members taking industrial action should be applauded for standing up for your workplace rights, conditions and the integrity of the CSO.

The Crown Solicitors Office is the largest and oldest (200 years old) provider of legal services to the NSW Government. Staff members are entitled to work in an office that is conducive to a productive, healthy and happy workplace where professional obligations can be fulfilled.

### PSA Members are protected when taking industrial action:

- » Only union members are protected when taking industrial action from action taken by the CSO. Speak to your colleagues about joining the union today to make sure they are protected.





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### Support from your fellow PSA members at Legal Aid:

Unlike CSO management, Legal Aid management agreed with its staff and relented providing solicitors with offices following the joint Legal Aid/Crown Solicitors Office PSA Open-Plan dispute in the IRC.

The following motion was passed unanimously at a recent meeting of PSA Legal Aid Delegates:

*The PSA Legal Aid Departmental Committee expresses solidarity with our colleagues at the Crown Solicitors Office in respect to their resistance to open plan and requests the PSA make every effort to support them in their current dispute.*

### Response if questioned by management about industrial action:

#### Solicitors

I am directed by my union to not record time in Open Practice. If you wish to discuss this further, please contact the PSA on 1300 772 679.

#### Administrative

I am directed by my union to not input time in Open Practice for solicitors participating in the industrial action. If you wish to discuss this, please contact the PSA on 1300 772 679.

### If you are victimised because of the industrial action, please contact:

PSA Organiser Surabi Alauddin on **0438 362 914** ([salauddin@psa.asn.au](mailto:salauddin@psa.asn.au))

or PSA industrial Officers, Andrew Boulton ([aboulton@psa.asn.au](mailto:aboulton@psa.asn.au)), Andrew Wright ([awright@psa.asn.au](mailto:awright@psa.asn.au)).

### Your PSA Delegates are:

**Leigh Plater** – Senior Solicitor (x 85377)  
[leigh.plater@csso.nsw.gov.au](mailto:leigh.plater@csso.nsw.gov.au)

**Teri Southwell** – Legal & Financial Administration Officer (x 85410),  
[teri.southwell@csso.nsw.gov.au](mailto:teri.southwell@csso.nsw.gov.au)

**The PSA is your voice in the workplace. Not a member? Sign up today online at**  
<https://membership.psa.asn.au/Register>

