

Fisheries Officers Vocational Branch

On 21 March the PSA/FOVB met with management to discuss various matters affecting our membership. These meetings are held twice yearly. Below is a brief summary stemming from that meeting.

Supervisory Hierarchy in Departmental Systems (such as SAP and PDP)

The PSA was advised that management recognised the above systems do not work effectively to deal with the supervisory structures between FO, DFO and SFO. Management anticipates resolving this in the next month.

Training – Update regarding Firearms Awareness and Vehicle Stop training

Management are keen to get Firearms Awareness training back on track, noting it had dropped off. Management further advised that whilst the pilot course for Vehicle Stop training missed the mark it is finalising an appropriate course. Consideration is being given to enabling such training to be done in-house in the future.

Extension of TECA Entitlements

The PSA raised the strong view of membership for a more open view to offering the above compensation (or part thereof) for employees who move. Management advised that TECA related to directed transfers will be paid, but where it relates to an optional transfer, it will not. Exceptions may be made where certain roles are hard to fill, but this is on a case-by-case basis and not common.

Job Task Analysis (Fisheries Officer fitness standard for duties)

The PSA noted that a review of this document was being conducted. We asked for, and it was agreed that we would be given, the opportunity to provide a response to the document prior to finalisation.

Fisheries Award

Management advised it was looking at the Award as it impacted on Fisheries Technicians and Hatchery Staff. The PSA advised Fisheries Officers also have aspects of the Award they wish to discuss. The NSW Government Wages Policy Taskforce is required to be consulted regarding proposed parameters for discussions, as it is the current Government's policy to ensure that any changes do not incur cost. It was agreed the PSA would provide existing concerns about the Fisheries Award as it relates to Fisheries Officers, noting that some areas of concern may not require an award change to reach positive resolution.

Radio Communications for FOs

On the day prior to this meeting we were provided with a report entitled Department of Primary Industries – Remote and Isolated Work. Work Health and Safety Risk Review. It was an overarching report and the PSA expressed disappointment it did not present firm resolutions to our concerns regarding lack of Radio Communications for FOs. We will be providing a formal response to management once we have fully assessed the report.



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Whilst management advises the report clarifies its need and intent to give further consideration to safety measures for those performing isolated work ,we seek more urgent action in this area. We note the report recognises that, as a minimum standard, no high-risk work should be done whilst alone. The PSA and FOVB fully concurs with that and reminds our members of their rights to cease any unsafe work as stated under section 84 of the Work Health & Safety Act 2011 (see previous bulletin dated 27 July 2017 which expands on this [HERE](#)).

We urge our members to put in Incident Reports for situations where safety related incidents occur or where there are near misses or other issues of concern. Providing such reports ensures there is a record of such matters as well as ensuring there is the opportunity to fully understand the issues in the work place and their impact.

Fisheries Officer power to carry appointments when the context of duties has changed, such as Biosecurity, Marine Parks, Commonwealth duties.

Management has confirmed it has sought independent legal advice on this matter and we await an answer shortly.

Redeployment and Recruitment

The PSA is seeking a clear and consistent approach to redeployment opportunities. We were advised management would look at transfer opportunities at grade (previously referred to as lateral) first before going to wider recruitment.

Members should note that where promotional opportunities apply, there is a requirement for external recruitment once they have looked at same grade transfers. Management advised this was in line with Government employment policy, which was to allow the opportunity for current employees to transfer at grade before opening it more widely (which includes external recruitment).

Workloads and Work Outside of Hours

Members should not work excess hours and certainly should not do work in their own time that they are not recompensed for. There is no obligation to do either of these and we advise members that whilst we fully recognise the passion and commitment Fisheries Officers have for their work, you should commit only to those hours for which you are paid. The Government will never recognise a need for increased resourcing if you work beyond what is reasonable.

