

PSA campaign to end inappropriate contract labour continues

Your union is fighting to end the departmental practice of engaging inappropriate “on demand” contractor labour (also called “labour hire”, “contingent labour” or “agency workers”). Aside from the obvious unfairness on the many individual public servants who have been restructured out of their jobs to make way for contractors, the practice itself contributes to broader societal problems: principally an insecure workforce without proper union representation.

Since the PSA communique on contract labour from March, members from across the Department have begun to come forward advising their delegates on areas within their units where it is apparent that contractors are not being used appropriately.

Typically, these are roles where the function is being performed by both PS employees and contractors and/or contractors that continue for considerable lengths of time.

We know from the Audit Office report that generally speaking contract labour is not good use of taxpayers’ money.

This message may be starting to get through to DFSI.

Recent example demonstrates management will listen

In one recent example at Revenue NSW Maitland, management initially told staff that 20 contractors would be brought in and trained for Collections Centre work, and this arrangement would carry on until the end of the financial year.

The plan was in place. Much time and resources had gone into preparation in readiness for it.

The PSA intervened highlighting that all recruitment options had not been exhausted prior to engaging contractors, per the Auditor General’s report, and such an arrangement would diminish possibilities for existing staff.

Good news is management was persuaded to pull its plans.

Commission win

As part of the PSA-wide ‘Don’t Fill in the Cracks’ campaign, earlier this month the PSA had a win in the Industrial Relation Commission. The matter concerned contract labour in a separate Department. Essentially the Commission held that that Department needed to review its current supervisory arrangements to ensure that contractors and consultants are not supervising Public Service employees, and to ensure that contractors and consultants do not exercise administrative and financial delegations as per the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009*, and the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, and the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

Now is the time that members should contact their workplace delegate with any useful information you may have in your unit about the inappropriate use of contract labour.

Contingent labour workers deserve the same rights and entitlements as Public Servants – including permanency.

That’s what this fight is about.



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