

PSA seeks your feedback on inappropriate use of contract labour in your units

Sadly, in today's society we see that it is ordinary and predictable that employers want less union involvement in the workplace. It unfetters their ability to exploit workers based on economic insecurity.

One way to achieve this is through restructuring public servants out then engaging "on demand" contingent labour (AKA "labour hire" or "contract labour").

At the March Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), Department Secretary Martin Hoffman predictably espoused the benefits of contract labour for the worker.

Hoffman basically said "increasingly people have a preference for more flexible work", and this apparently enables the worker the "ability to not be stuck in the one job," etc

We all know this rhetoric fails completely to address the real life, day-to-day realities – namely workers wanting economic security for them and their families through reliable and stable employment and income that enables them to be able to pay their mortgage without the stress of insecure contract work.

As reported last month to members, the PSA had brought the matter of the Department's use of contingent labour to the Industrial Relations Commission following a report from the Audit Office which highlighted the use of labour hire to provide essential public services had doubled in five years from nearly \$500 million in 2010-11, to more than \$1.1 billion in 2015/16.

We had sought among other things - details around DFSI's current use of contingent labour including numbers, positions, costs and any other details pertinent to addressing issues affecting PSA members.

At the JCC, the Department was forthcoming with information we requested. It wrote "As at January 2018, the total number of contractors engaged in some capacity by the Department is 1308. This represents 19% of the total DFSI workforce. Contractors are engaged across all divisions of DFSI."

PSA officials and your delegates pressed DFSI Secretary Martin Hoffman and (now former) Director People Relations Darren Bickham for further particulars (namely costs and specific roles which where contingent labour was consistently being utilised). That information was not forthcoming.

We did however raise that there are various areas within DFSI where we believed the use of contingent labour was not appropriate. Typically, there are roles where the function is being performed by both PS employees and contracted labour.

We are pleased to advise members that agreement was reached between the Department and the PSA that once PSA had sought member input on areas that members are aware of that use contracted labour inappropriately (i.e. whether that be inappropriate because it is for extended periods or other types of arrangements) the Department would consider its use of contingent labour in each of these units.



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So please take a few moments to contact your delegate with any useful information you may have in your unit.

The aim of this as a next step is to present information to DFSI to persuade it to bring those contracted workers into the employ of the Public Sectors on a permanent basis so that they may enjoy the same conditions and entitlements.

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