

Environmental Allowance negotiations continue

Your representatives have been meeting with Corrective Services (CSNSW) since last October to discuss the ongoing issues with the Environmental Allowance.

This Allowance, introduced following representations by PSA members in 1990, was negotiated to address the hazardous work environment many of us faced in our daily jobs. However, over time, previous CSNSW regimes have turned this Allowance into a bureaucratic nightmare that is governed by financial considerations rather than any logical assessment of people's individual work environments.

Despite ongoing differences over the Allowance both parties are in agreement that how it is currently managed needs to change to address inconsistencies.

On that basis the PSA and CSNSW approached the NSW Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) for assistance in resolving issues around the Allowance. The most recent of these meetings was held this month.

Many members will be aware CSNSW has been conducting a state-wide review of non-custodial and community corrections positions. This has led to the first blanket assessment of all positions and has allowed the PSA to identify and address some of the issues both parties admit have developed in the system.

There is now agreement in a number of streams over how the Allowance will apply to individuals. Some members will be receiving letters from CSNSW providing notice that their access to Environmental Allowance will be changing, and giving three months' notice of that change. Members who disagree with the assessment will be able to seek a review of that decision during that three months. Please contact the PSA if you would like assistance with this issue.

Please quote call number 72253.

A number of issues remain outstanding, including in the Correctional Centre Administration stream, and will be resolved over the coming weeks.

Some of these issues are to do with the ongoing benchmarking process occurring at Centres, while other positions remain in dispute over their eligibility for the Allowance. Members will continue to be consulted by their Delegates as that process continues.

The PSA is aware that some staff recruited whilst the Environmental Allowance has been before the IRC have not received the Environmental Allowance payment. CSNSW has confirmed that employees in Community Corrections – Parole Units, Offender Services and Programs and Store positions will receive back pay in due course.

PSA is also aware that some Senior SAPO and SAPO positions have had their Environmental Allowance payments placed 'on hold' whilst the matters have been before the IRC. CSNSW has confirmed these positions will also receive back pay to the date the allowance was placed on hold. CSNSW is working with the Department of Justice to resolve this issue.

PSA has an understanding that no back pay claim will be sought as a consequence of the Environmental Allowance Review. If you have received a request to repay an overpayment for Environmental Allowance, please contact the PSA.

Please quote call number 72253.

The PSA will continue to pursue fair outcomes for members in relation to the Environmental Allowance. Members with concerns about how the Allowance is applied to their role are encouraged to bring their concerns to the attention of their local Delegates as soon as possible.

Regards,

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Chair Non-Custodial Departmental Committee

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