

General Assistants Advisory Group report back to members from 21 August 2018 meeting

The General Assistants Advisory Group (GAAG) held a meeting on 21 August 2018. The following topics were discussed and the action required agreed by all delegates in attendance.

Chemical training

The Department of Education (DoE) has advised School Administrative and Support Staff Reference Groups (SRGs) that the previous training in Chemical Handling Certificate 3 was no longer being funded by DoE.

DoE says this level of training is not needed for GAs to do their duties. DoE states GAs only use chemicals that are available at any hardware outlet. They also say that the amount of chemicals in a GA shed was also only at a household consumer levels.

This means that if the school wishes its GA to have this accreditation, it would have to be funded by the school. At this time a private company who now run these courses was canvassing schools aggressively to get GAs to do the course or upgrade their accreditation.

The PSA is aware the DoE intends to arrange its own chemical-handling training course for GAs in the future. The Advisory Group is concerned that this proposed course would not cover the full range of chemicals or quantities being used by GAs.

The Advisory Group has asked the PSA to write the DoE WHS and ask for a meeting to discuss the contents of the proposed course.

The Advisory Group has asked that selected delegates attend this meeting so that the DoE is fully briefed on the impact the use of chemicals in schools has at school level.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Entitlement

The last time the GA PPE entitlement was upgraded was in 2012. In the past six years there has been an increased impact and evolution in WHS. The Advisory Group believes the current entitlement is outdated and needs to be brought up to date.

The Advisory Group has agreed some of the items in the current list need to be removed and that an increase in what is now available should be expanded. The Advisory Group has compiled a list of the costs for the upgrade.

The Advisory Group has asked that the PSA contact the DoE WHS and ask that a meeting be held to discuss the GA PPE entitlement. Members of the Advisory Group will be part of the delegation who attend the meetings.

PSA bans

Due to the new maintenance contract and the expectation that jobs will now be raised using FmWeb, the Advisory Group would like to remind GAs of the bans that have been in place for many years.

These include FmWeb and the use of third-party software. The PSA has in the past asked the DoE to have discussions on the use of this software. The DoE has failed to come to the table and speak to the PSA on these bans.



General Assistants Advisory Group report back to members from 21 August 2018 meeting

The use of FmWeb and the logging of jobs should be completed by the Principal, DP or Business Manager.

Rostered days off (RDOs)

The Advisory Group would like to remind and encourage all five-day GAs that they are entitled to access and take RDOs. This is an award entitlement.

RDOs for GAs came about because GAs agreed to trade off their wash-up time and afternoon tea breaks. RDOs are not "free" days off. To accrue the time to have RDOs a GA must be on duty for eight hours plus 30 minutes for lunch each work day. Twenty-four minutes per work day is "banked" to allow for one rostered day off over a 19-day work cycle.

RDOs are still accrued when taking leave except for Extended Leave (sometimes called Long Service Leave or if you are on a period of Workers' Compensation). This is because you are not physically working to save up the 24 minutes each day to pay for the RDO.

Role description

The PSA is currently waiting for the DoE to reply to the latest PSA submissions on the GA Role Description.

Due to the Role Description being a totally new requirement under the Government Sector Employment Act, the PSA has asked for the DoE to develop a plain English explanation about the new Role Description.

The DoE has agreed that it would supply this plain English guide to make it easier for GAs to

understand what is now expected under the Role Description.

Your GAAG delegates are

Douglas Ashton - Cambridge Park High School
Douglas.Ashton2@det.nsw.edu.au

Michael Burrell - Chifley College
Michael.Burrell10@det.nsw.edu.au

Alison Crittenden - Warilla North Public School
alison.crittenden@det.nsw.edu.au

Philip Crowe - Northern Beaches College
Freshwater Campus
Philip.Crowe@det.nsw.edu.au

Wayne Gaw - Duval High School
Wayne.Gaw@det.nsw.edu.au

Brett Hammond (Chair) - Kirrawee High School
Brett.Hammond@det.nsw.edu.au

Michael Jedniuk - Hinchinbrook Public School
MICHAEL.JEDNIUK@det.nsw.edu.au

Boyd Kellner - Byron Bay Public School
BOYD.KELLNER@det.nsw.edu.au

Alan Livet - Woogoolga High School
ALAN.LIVET@det.nsw.edu.au

Bill Martin - Vincentia High School
william.martin13@det.nsw.edu.au

Steve Smith (Secretary) - Cobar High School
stephen.smith130@det.nsw.edu.au

Next Meeting 20 November 2018.

If member would like any issues raised. Please email or contact their nearest delegate.

