

General Assistant Advisory Group (GAAG) End of year bulletin; 2018

This year has been a very busy year for the PSA and its General Assistants (GAs) in schools. This bulletin reports back on issues covered during 2018, including the November meeting of the GAAG.

GAAG/Department of Education (DoE) teleconference

Delegates from the Advisory Group along with PSA staff had phone conference with DoE 16 October. The purpose of the phone conference was to discuss:

1. Chemical Handling Safety and Training

Members had raised questions regarding the Cert 3 Chemical Training. It appears the DoE will no longer centrally fund this training, which GAs believe is important for them. It has however been left to the individual schools to fund if they wished for their GA to be accredited.

The DoE considers that the Cert 3 course is too involved and contains a level of training that it considers beyond the needs of a GA. The DoE is currently putting together its own Chemical Handling Course to offer GAs.

The PSA has requested that this course carry accreditation for those who complete the course. The DoE is considering the PSA request.

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Entitlement

The PSA requested a review of the GA PPE entitlement as the current entitlement has not been upgraded since 2012.

The PSA has asked that the entitlement be changed to one shirt and one pair of trousers or shorts for each day that the GA works at a school.

It was also proposed a winter jacket be included in the entitlement.

3. Exam desks

A member had raised concerns that a new model of school exams desks had been purchased by his school.

These new model desks weighed 12kg each which made them three kilos heavier than the current desks. These desks also were much bulkier than the current desks and would take up a third more storage space as the current exam desks when not in use.

The PSA was informed these desks had most likely purchased from outside the procurement list. They do not conform to the current specifications required by the DoE purchasing contract.

Also, there did not appear to be any work health and safety risk assessment undertaken prior to purchase. The PSA believes that these new desks require two persons to set up and bump down.

The PSA is still waiting for a response from the DoE on all these issues.

SAP HR payroll and RDOs

The PSA has requested that, under the new SAP HR payroll, that Gas' Rostered Days Off (RDOs) are tracked. The PSA believes this will help schools better manage the accumulation and taking of RDOs.

There is also no way to record taking RDOs by GAs. The PSA's position is that without a form of leave being in the system, the DoE is in breach of maintaining accurate time and wage records as is required of all employers in NSW under the *Industrial Relations Act 1996*.



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At this stage the DoE has refused this request as it believes it would be cost too much to make adjustments to the SAP system. The PSA has pointed out that while the consultation has been extensive, it occurred far too late in the game for fundamental issues such as a GA's RDO to be considered in the contract.

It has been brought to the attention of the PSA that the DoE has included the tracking of RDOs in another classification working for the DoE.

The PSA will continue to pursue the issue of GA RDOs with the DoE.

Working Alone Risk Assessments

The GAAG reminds members that with the school holidays rapidly approaching their Principal is responsible for undertaking Working Alone Risk Assessments for the holidays.

If you have not yet undertaken a Working Alone Risk Assessment, speak to your Principal.

End of year 2018/2019 public holidays and other leave

The 2018 – 2019 Holiday season is upon us. Members are reminded of leave arrangements for the following days:

- Monday 24 December 2018 – 1/2 day Christmas concession leave
- Tuesday 25 December 2018 – Public Holiday – Christmas Day
- Wednesday 26 December 2018 – Boxing Day
- Thursday 27 December 2018 – Public Service Holiday
- Tuesday 1 January 2019

The PSA and your GAAG Delegates would like to wish all members a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Your GAAG delegates are

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Next Meeting 19 March 2019.

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

