15 February 2019

SafeWork NSW Inspectors update

The PSA will proceed to arbitration on clause 16.1 of the SafeWork NSW Inspectors Award and Competencies.

In response to the recent recruitment action undertaken by the Department, the PSA has been in dispute with the Department over its insistence it can appoint Inspectors who do not have the specified competencies to roles contrary to the provisions of the Award at clause 16.1.

Following consultation with Inspectors, it was the clear preference from a majority of Inspectors for the PSA to proceed to arbitration.

Following that, the PSA has informed the Commission it is unable to accept the Department's assurances and will be proceeding to arbitration. The Commission has issued a certificate of attempted conciliation and directions have been made for the filing of evidence by 8 March 2019 with an expected hearing sometime after 2 June 2019.

Current recruitment

Despite the PSA's very serious concerns about the appointment of Inspectors without the required competencies, we have not sought to disrupt the employment of new Inspectors as we equally recognise the significant impact on Inspectors' workloads that the long-standing under staffing of the Inspectorate is causing.

At the Commission, the Department reported it made 27 appointments, of which 11 were external. The external appointments comprised of two State Inspectors, three Assistant State Inspectors and six Entry Level Inspectors.

The PSA is working with your SafeWork Inspectors Vocational Group to monitor closely the actions of the Department through this recruitment process and while some of the issues will be addressed through the dispute, a number of other issues will be dealt with through the Joint Consultative Committee.

PSA members who have not been successful in the current recruitment process and who hold the relevant competencies for the ASI/SI roles are encouraged to contact the convenor and request feedback on why your application was not successful.

Members are also encouraged to raise their concerns with the PSA by email to svanvegchel@psa.asn.au

Excess travel time

After PSA representation, the Department has confirmed that ETT for Inspectors is at their ordinary rate of pay and are working with GovConnect to resolve the issue. Inspectors who were underpaid because of this error should have their ETT automatically adjusted to resolve the issue.

Support for a new Award

In our recent survey to Inspectors about the current dispute, we asked members their views on whether the PSA should look to enter into new Award negotiations in 2019. Members have overwhelmingly supported this, with 74 per cent of the membership voting in favour of new award negotiations.

AUTHORISED BY STEWART LITTLE, GENERAL SECRETARY,
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The PSA will keep members informed of any developments in this area and there will be substantial consultation if we proceed with this later in the year.

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