

## Ministry of Health - Temporary relocations, contractors, mental health and more

The JCC and sub-JCC meetings were held on Wednesday, 20 February 2018. Key issues discussed were:

### 1. Temporary relocations

Moves to temporary sites will take place over May-June 2019. The PSA advised we will be undertaking WHS inspections of the three temporary locations to ensure compliance with WHS requirements. The PSA further advised that a number of policies may require review as a result of the relocations and flexible working. This includes the current policy on Equipment Removal from Ministry of Health Premises. We recommended a review of all relevant policies as a priority so that staff do not inadvertently find they are contravening a policy because of new technologies and flexible working. If you have concerns that you could be placed in a difficult position because of an outdated policy, please contact the PSA.

### 2. Productivity and agile working

The PSA raised the following issues which reflect concerns expressed to us by members: what evaluation mechanisms are being put in place to measure if moving to agile working has delivered the productivity the Ministry expects; how is the Ministry intending to measure/ensure that work is not unreasonably creeping into home life and affecting work/life balance negatively; and has the Ministry communicated to all staff that working at home must still be done within the bandwidth?

The Ministry advised that evaluation mechanisms could include: satisfaction surveys; trends emerging in PMES Surveys; soundings at town hall meetings; use of Microsoft Workplan to measure how work is allocated and shared; and regular meetings with staff located on agile floors in temporary locations. The Ministry affirmed that the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009* and Flexible Working Hours Agreement will underpin working from home/flexible working arrangements so clearly work at home or another location must be done within the bandwidth. The Ministry will provide further advice that flexible working discussions between manager and staff member should provide clear expectations about remote work, including hours of work and the importance of setting boundaries. The PSA recommended that a more thorough

evaluation plan was required and will keep this matter on the agenda.

### 3. Contractors and recruitment

There are now 96 contractors in the Ministry. Details about contractors and recruitment can be found [HERE](#).

### 4. Mental health

The PSA referred to recent correspondence to the Secretary about a resolution passed by members concerning mental health (Refer [HERE](#)). We were advised Deputy Secretary Phil Minns has written to the Public Service Commission seeking their views before responding to us due to the sector-wide nature of the resolution passed at the PSA's mental health conference in October 2018. We sought a meeting with the Secretary so we're not sure why that needs to be run past the PSC. We will continue to promote the development of a mental health strategy for the Ministry.

### 5. NSW Government's Work, Health and Safety Sector Plan

The PSA again raised the issue of the Work, Health and Safety Sector Plan to which the Secretary is a signatory and asked what progress had been made. We were advised Workplace Relations is liaising to determine which part of the Ministry has the major responsibility. This is a completely unsatisfactory response on a matter that should be a high priority and on which work should have commenced in consultation with the PSA and Health Unions. The PSA has no choice but to raise our concerns formally with the Secretary.

### 6. WHS Committee

The WHS Committee meets four times a year. The Ministry agreed to post approved minutes on the Mintranet.

Employee representatives self-nominate through an EOI process. There are vacancies on the committee and the Ministry will shortly call for nominations. The PSA strongly encourages members to nominate and strengthen the committee, particularly in view of the relocations and the concerns raised about agile work and workplace bullying.

