

Instructions on your rights: Christmas closedown

The Christmas closedown

As Christmas approaches many staff will begin to receive directions from managers or supervisors in relation to the Christmas closedown. The Christmas closedown period for 2019/20 will take place between Monday 23 December 2019 and Friday 3 January 2020 inclusive. The PSA has already been informed of a number of instances where staff have been told that they must take leave over this period.

Can I work during the closedown period?

While the NSW Government encourages all 'non-frontline' areas to shut down, you are in no way obligated to take leave. Despite what may be said, staff are not required to present a justification or "business case" to explain why they wish to keep working. Unless you can be directed to take leave (see below), it is your choice of whether you work or not.

If your office is going to be shut, a reasonable alternative work arrangement must be made available for you. If practicable, this could include working from home for some or all of the time. You may have to work at a different location, but you cannot be expected to travel unreasonable distances and you may be entitled to be reimbursed for the additional costs of travel.

The PSA encourages members to regularly take recreation leave for their own health and welfare. Additionally, where possible the PSA encourages members to use their ability to bank flex days for use over the Christmas closedown.

Can I be directed to take recreation leave due to the closedown?

You can be told to take recreation leave only if you have an 'excess' balance:

If you have accrued eight weeks' (40 days') recreation leave, you can be told to take two weeks' leave sometime within the following six weeks.

If you have accrued 6-8 weeks' (30-40 days') recreation leave, you can be told to take two weeks' leave sometime within the following three months.

Other than in these two scenarios, you cannot be directed to take recreation leave.

Need help?

If you are a member and have any questions or are having difficulties in relation to the Christmas closedown, please contact your organiser Ben James on bjames@psa.asn.au or 0438 485 535.

