

## Sheriff's Bulletin – December 2019

### SHO JCC Update

On Thursday, 28 November 2019, your SOVBAG delegates and PSA industrial staff met with Sheriff Hall and her management team for the final Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting of 2019 (**November JCC**). JCCs are quarterly meetings between management and the PSA and are an opportune forum for the PSA to raise the concerns of members.

At the November JCC, SOVBAG and the PSA raised a number of issues including:

- » WHS: One-Out Sheriff's Officers – The PSA wrote to the SHO on 30 October 2019, detailing their concerns with Sheriff's Officers working one-out and whether this is compliant with the Work Health and Safety Legislation. The PSA requested a response to this correspondence and advised one-out officers will be a continuing focus in 2020.
- » WHS: Extreme Heat - the PSA expressed concern about appropriate measures being in place to mitigate the risks associated with extreme heat. The PSA requested SHO re-issue its 'Safety Bulletin 2019-001 Effects of Heat'.
- » SPV – the PSA sought clarification on whether SPVs are mandatory. To which we were informed of SHO's intention to issue a directive on Friday, 29 November 2019, making the wearing of SPVs mandatory in public facing areas. Further, we were advised that if officers experience issues with the comfort or fitting of their SPV, they should contact Daniel Gordon,

A/Commander – Security, Intelligence and Risk Command

([daniel.gordon@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:daniel.gordon@justice.nsw.gov.au)).

The SHO raised a number of issues, including:

- » Customer Survey Update – The SHO is rolling out iPad based customer feedback surveys for court users (lawyers, police, offenders etc.) to give feedback on their experiences interacting with Sheriff's Officers. They are being located near security scanning areas for a period of two weeks within select court locations. Court users will complete a number of questions, with pre-set responses indicating satisfaction to dissatisfaction. The PSA has been informed by the Sheriff that the data will not be used to performance manage Sheriff's Officers, but will provide the Department of Communities and Justice with generalised feedback on court users' experience.
- » Charlie Class – 31 Sheriff's Officers within Charlie Class will be commencing duty in the new year, following their graduation ceremony on 20 December 2019.
- » Mobile Phones at Scanners – SHO expressed their intention of reissuing their directive that mobile phones must not be in use whilst assigned to scanners.
- » Tattoo Directive – At the conclusion of the JCC, the SHO stated their intention to issue directive requiring the covering of tattoos, in light of 'ordinary long sleeved



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shirts' and other garments having been provided to Sheriff's Officers.

### SOVBAG and PSA Update

Your SOVBAG delegates and PSA industrial staff provide the following end of year update.

#### Award Issues

A common question of Sheriff's Officers is that why has pay remained the same, while the threat level has increased and the equipment and training has changed?

To address this question, SOVBAG, in early 2020 will be meeting specifically to look at our current Award, with a view to commence discussions around the creation of a new Award.

The NSW Government, by way of the State Wages Policy, has capped the maximum yearly pay increase at 2.5% per annum. Any increase in pay above 2.5% must be offset by sufficient employee related savings elsewhere, i.e. reduction in leave entitlements. SOVBAG will investigate whether an allowance under a new Award, that recognises the changes to our work environment is a possible option, and SOVBAG will review whether there are any other available options to increase pay.

#### Use of Force Policy and Perimeter Security Policy

SOVBAG and the PSA have provided extensive feedback on a number of draft policies this year, including the yet to be released Use of Force and Perimeter Security policies. We await the final draft and release of these policies, but we expect it to occur in January 2020.

SOVBAG and the PSA will be looking closely at how the SHO implements these policies and in particular the training and briefings provided to staff. These policies are important and Sheriff's Officers need to know what is expected of them. Accordingly, SOVBAG and the PSA is strongly against the implementation of policy without sufficient training and education.

#### Tactical Training Recertification Policy

The PSA and SOVBAG are concerned with the current policy in relation to Sheriff's Officers who do not complete the recertification training due to injury or who are deemed not yet competent and the requirement for these Sheriff's Officers not to wear their Sheriff's uniform (including the removal of insignia), until they have successfully completed it. The PSA and SOVBAG believe this is a punitive and unnecessary way to treat officers who may be injured.

In other law enforcement agencies, officers are allowed to wear their uniform on light duties due to injuries. Sheriff's Officers rightly feel that they have had their dignity stripped away when told they can no longer wear their uniform. The PSA will be writing to the Sheriff seeking that the policy be changed. This policy is one reason as to why morale is low amongst Sheriff's Officers.

#### WHS

A key focus of SOVBAG and the PSA in 2020 will be that of compliance with the Work Health and Safety Legislation. The PSA receives frequent concerns and complaints from Sheriff's Officers undertaking duties one-out.



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The PSA wrote to the SHO on 30 October 2019, particularising members' concerns and using Windsor Courthouse as an example. To date, the SHO has not responded to this correspondence. To support the representation being made by the PSA on behalf of members, we request that Sheriff's Officer notify the Work Health and Safety Team within Courts and Tribunal Services, as well as your SOVBAG delegate or industrial staff, where incidents that pose a risk to WHS arise in the workplace.

An additional Sheriff's Officer concern is that of heat exhaustion and other risks associated with working in extreme heat. Remember that the SHO has an obligation to take reasonable steps to mitigate foreseeable risks, and this can include the provision of water, regular breaks and the rescheduling of field duties when practical. Again, if you believe a risk is being posed to your health and safety, or the safety of your co-workers, record the incident and notify Work Health and Safety.

### Health and Safety Committees and Representatives

Aligning with next year's focus on WHS concerns, the PSA and SOVBAG will be advocating for the appointment of Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) and the formation of Health and Safety Committees (HSC) for each Hub in NSW.

HSRs have strong enforcement powers under the WHS Legislation and can ensure staff work in a safe and secure environment.

The PSA encourages all members to take interest and participate in these processes, and we wish to

thank the vocal members who have thus far pushed with the creation of HSRs and HSCs.

### TATTOO Directive

The PSA is aware of a recent directive requiring the covering of tattoos. In accordance with this directive, Sheriff's Officers should have been provided with long sleeved shirts.

If you have not been provided with a long sleeve shirt, you should contact your OIC or Daniel Gordon, A/Commander – Security, Intelligence and Risk Command ([daniel.gordon@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:daniel.gordon@justice.nsw.gov.au)).

This directive will be the subject of further discussions with the SHO, and we encourage aggrieved Sheriff's Officers to contact their delegate or PSA industrial staff to discuss their views on the matter.

The PSA wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### Your SOVBAG delegates are:

Edward Lia – Campbelltown Court  
Stephen Hancock – Downing Centre  
Glenn Elliott-Rudder – Wagga Wagga  
Joe Safour – Wagga Wagga  
Monique Muir – Coffs Harbour  
Marko Petrovic – Downing Centre

### Your PSA Staff are:

Latu Sailosi (Organiser)  
[lsailosi@psa.asn.au](mailto:lsailosi@psa.asn.au)  
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