

Stay safe and have a wonderful Christmas



Merry Christmas and Stay Safe Over the School Holidays

The PSA General Secretary, Delegates and Staff would like to wish you all a wonderful Christmas.

School holidays are just around the corner and the PSA reminds all GAs to ensure that a Working Alone Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the holiday break.

Principals should also make arrangements for how contractors will be managed during school holidays prior to the end of term. GAs should not be expected to supervise contractors as this is well outside the GA role Description.

In addition, all staff who are going to be on the school site during the holidays must have keys and the codes for the alarm systems.



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General Assistant Case Study: why we need to increase the formula for GAs

A General Assistant (GA) employed in a Goulburn primary school has highlighted the absurdity of using student numbers to devise staffing. Mark Brown is employed as a GA at Wollondilly Public School, which has about 400 students.

Under the Department of Education's formula, this means Mr Brown is allocated 19 hours of work a week to care for the school grounds and facilities. The only problem is that the school sits on about six hectares of land: about 15 acres in the old imperial measure.

The grounds all up take Mr Brown about 24 hours to mow; more than his weekly allocation of hours. Yet on top of the mowing there are a multitude of other jobs he is required to complete. If the school had about another 100 students, it would hire the GA for a full week. This would be regardless of how big the school is or how old and run-down its facilities.

The current formula allows for a full-time, five-days-a-week GA to be hired if a school has more than 500 students. As student numbers drop, the amount of time allocated for a GA is reduced. In the most extreme case, one remote school with only two students currently enrolled hires a GA for four hours a week. The PSA's policy is for "a five-day-a-week GA in every school".

Failing that, the union is pushing for a better way for the Department to work out what hours a GA should work. The age of buildings and the size of the school grounds should be taken into account more than the number of students.

The fight for General Assistants and Farm Assistants continues in 2020!

The PSA will not stop looking for ways we can win for you. Below are just some of the areas we have been working on over the last year:

Staffing Formula The PSA has been consulting with the Department on the need to update the staffing formula to better reflect the needs of schools. The case study above is just one of many examples of how the outdated formula is impacting members. We will be pushing for schools to have a full time GA in every school.

Increasing the clothing entitlement The PSA has called on the Department of Education to increase the clothing entitlement for GAs and FAs. To find out what you are currently entitled to [CLICK HERE](#). The PSA believes that you should be provided a pair of shorts and a shirt for each day that you work as well as a winter jacket. We will be continuing to push for this in the coming year.

Protecting the GA role The PSA has ensured that all advertised positions use the agreed Role Description, not ones made up at the school. As soon as we become aware of Principals forcing GAs to either work outside their role description or making up alternate role descriptions we take it up immediately with the Department. This has proved highly successful.

First Aid The PSA has fought for all GAs to have First Aid kits in their rooms and workspaces.



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Training and development

The PSA has heard from many GA members that they are not happy with the current training offered to them. The union has been consulting with the Department of Education on the provision of training and your delegates have developed an extensive list for their consideration that is based on member feedback.

The PSA will continue to work with your delegates on the provision of training and ensuring it represents staff needs.

We value our GA members and will continue to fight for them

The PSA is a strong union committed to the improved conditions for all our members. Over the last few years our GA membership has grown, leading to better outcomes for you. We value our GA members and urge you to encourage others to be part of our union.

Forward this email to your colleagues and encourage them to [JOIN](#) today so they can be part of the next big win.

