

## PSA win! Sleep Count safety and workplace rights

Late last year PSA members and delegates raised serious safety concerns about the Department of Communities and Justice – Housing, undertaking homelessness initiatives involving outreach to street sleepers at night.

The PSA was alarmed to discover the department had undertaken programs without consultation with the union, with insufficient consultation with workers to address their safety concerns, poor risk assessment and referred to employees participating as “volunteers”, failing to provide information about their remuneration (consistent with the Award) and assurances concerning employee workplace rights and entitlements.

At the PSA’s consultative meeting with the Deputy Secretary in December last year, the PSA asserted that the safety concerns and industrial issues be addressed through consultation with the association and with the workers involved for all future homelessness initiatives the department is planning - including the upcoming state-wide Street Counts.

As a result of the hard work of our delegates and Health and Safety Representatives bringing this matter to our attention, the PSA has been successful in winning significant improvements for members.

### **WIN – New consistent risk assessment tool and Street Count safe work procedure**

As a result of the PSA’s involvement, DCJ Housing has now designed a comprehensive risk assessment tool that is to be used consistently across the state. This tool will record who has been consulted in addressing safety concerns-including the District Health and Safety Reps (HSRS). The Department has also prepared a specific Street Count Safe Work Procedure document.

This is a significant improvement for members and shows what you can achieve with strong delegates, Health and Safety Representatives and the union behind you.

### **WIN – Workplace rights and entitlements upheld**

The PSA has also been successful in reinforcing with DCJ Housing that staff are not “volunteers” and as such all award entitlements must be applied. A helpful one pager on what your workplace rights are in relation to the street count has been developed. This includes clear advice that when involved in the Street Counts, it is your choice whether you are paid overtime or receive time in lieu

The PSA reminds all members they are entitled to breaks both during your work day and that there should be an appropriate number of hours between the end of one shift and the start of the next to allow you to rest.

The PSA has requested that the new documents be placed on the intranet and added to the checklist of documents provided to participants in the compulsory Street Count Training to ensure transparency in future street counts.

### **Incident reporting begins with YOU. Report, report, report!**

The PSA will continue to work with delegates to improve incident reporting at Housing offices. Members are reminded that both psychological and physical injuries, as well as near misses and hazards, should be logged in SAP. This includes observing incidents.

The best way to improve your workplace safety is to ensure that the Department has realistic data about safety issues.

In relation to the Street Counts any WH&S incidents should be recorded on SAP to contribute to "Lessons Learnt" in the post Street Count review.

### **Two easy things you can do to support your union**

- Support the work of the PSA and delegates by asking your colleagues to JOIN their union.
- If members you work with have not received this bulletin, forward the survey link to them and ask them to update their details at:

[membership.psa.asn.au](https://membership.psa.asn.au).

