

Ministry of Health COVID-19 and Consultative Committee report back

Like our members who were first and second responders to the bush fire crisis, it is again PSA members who will be relied upon in the coming days, weeks and months to deliver critical and essential services to the community.

The PSA stands shoulder to shoulder with members to support you through these unprecedented times.

Important PSA bulletins to read on COVID-19

12 March

[COVID-19 and its effect on your workplace conditions](#)

20 March

[Member Support Centre Extends Hours for COVID-19](#)

Ministry of Health and COVID-19

The PSA has been briefed via teleconference, on the management of COVID-19 and the workplace. As members would know, the Ministry has distributed messages from Tim Reardon and from Elizabeth Koff outlining the measures the State Government and the Ministry of Health are taking in response to the COVID-19 virus.

The steps include increases in hygiene practices, cancellations and reviews of any travel and options for self-isolation if required. Preparations are underway in case the situation requires further steps. This includes preparing IT and remote access to enable staff to work from home or alternative workplaces.

We requested increased cleaning of public areas and areas such as lift buttons and door handles, sanitiser wipes in all pool vehicles, asking questions of incoming visitors to determine risk and a halt to any hot desk practices. The Ministry has taken our suggestions on board and are looking at ways to implement.

If your workplace is still hot-desking you should first raise this with your manager and, if no steps are taken to put in place protections, log a WHS incident immediately and contact the PSA on 1300 772 679.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has published a circular, C2020-01 Employment Arrangements during COVID-19, outlining arrangements for the NSW Government Sector in case employees not directly involved in the response but are unable to be work for specific

reasons. The DPC has provided up to 20 days' special leave.

MoH Joint Consultative Committee Update

Sub-JCC

New ways to work

The fit out is well underway for 1 Reserve Road with Level 1 almost complete, working their way up. The PSA will again be seeking to inspect the premises prior to staff moving in, the inspection was originally scheduled for April or May but we will seek further information on this given the current situation.

There will be workshops for managers about managing in an agile workplace and online modules for other staff. The administration support for the team will likely be located near the lockers as an anchor point. Employees will all have lockers near to where they will be working on their floor. The feedback to the Ministry from those who have inspected them is that the lockers are a good size.

The PSA raised that staff want reassurance that outside will be a non-smoking area/s and requested information on how this will be managed.

The scheduling for relocation isn't finalised but the first move is pencilled in for June. So far the timeline is on track.

Next Sub JCC Meeting is on 8 April 2020

Joint Consultative Committee meeting

Managing Change/Restructuring Policy

This policy is currently under review and the PSA and NSWNMA have both provided feedback on the policy. The Ministry advised it will send a copy of the final draft policy and if required the PSA will seek a meeting for further discussions.

Recruitment report

In the past two months there have been:

- 28 ongoing appointments
- 52 Temps/extensions
- 4 Secondments/extensions
- 1 EOI



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- 26 Externally Advertised
- 12 roles filled through recruitment pools
- 105 current contractors - 50 engagements/extensions

Restructure proposals

The Ministry confirmed that the Strategic Communications and Engagement Branch changes are currently with the Deputy Secretary for approval.

The initial information is there will be changes to reporting lines and the creation of two Executive Director positions (rather than one) in the Centre for Population Health and the Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch.

The PSA has requested a Change Management Plan if there are to be major changes or impacts on staff in these branches.

If you are affected by these changes you can raise your concerns with us through the Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679.

PMES Survey and Strengths Finder Assessment

The Strengths Finder Assessment is open to all ministry employees and is optional. Participants receive a book, do an online assessment and receive a report. They then send that to the team and book a one-hour coaching session with the employee to work on growth areas and how best to work with their strengths.

Fifty per cent of branches have committed to the program and 25 per cent of staff have now gone through their individual coaching. This came about due to the Ministry's People Matter survey results.

PSA asked about links with PDPs. The Ministry replied participants are encouraged to discuss their strengths and areas for growth with their manager but that it's not a requirement.

MoH categorically stated that this will not be used as evidence in a Performance Improvement Plan. It also confirmed Managers are clear that this cannot be used.

Flexible work

PSA raised a concern that with the Ministry does not support employees working compressed hours as a part of their flexible working arrangements.

The Ministry agreed to look at this and identify if there is a clear position. However, they would prefer to explore other options rather than compressed hours. The PSA is concerned that there is a blanket ban on this and raised the 'If not why not' Premier's Announcement/position.

The PSA's position is that this is part of a suite of ways to provide flexibility and should not be excluded.

Communication on difference Between HSU and PSA Award Conditions

The PSA raised concerns with members moving between Ministry and HSSG and the differences with the conditions.

The Ministry states it will not provide a fact sheet as the awards are on the intranet. However, it will pass this feedback on to HSSG HR and see if it will turn its mind to how better to communicate the differences upon appointment.

The Crown Employees Award is on the Mintranet under 'working at the ministry'.

Role of Administrative Staff

PSA previously expressed concerns as a result of the changes to level 11 Executive Assistants.

It has been noted that several restructures have seen the removal of administrative roles from teams and the PSA requested clarity around the Ministry's view on administrative roles. The Ministry stated in some cases restructures have recently created additional administration roles. The PSA will keep an eye on any future changes.

