

National Parks and Wildlife Service update

Name change from POVB to NPVB

Recently the POVB (Professional Officers Vocational Branch), under the PSA constitution, moved to change the name of the group to the National Parks Vocational Branch (NPVB). The change of name to NPVB ensures it is inclusive off ALL staff in the NPWS. This will strengthen the vocational branch and we encourage all of you to join. Joining details can be obtained from Branch Secretary Janet Cavanaugh.

NPWS JCC meeting 10 June

Due to the significant range of issues specific to NPWS the DPIE decided to have a separate JCC to the rest of the Department. At the recent meeting, Atticus Fleming, Rob Quirk and Naomi Stephens were in attendance representing NPWS. Simon Kempson was there representing DPIE. The PSA were represented by delegates of the NPVB with the assistance of PSA staff Michael Sinclair and Kim de Govrik.

Matters discussed included the need to fill all vacant positions in the NPWS organisational charts, as agreed during the Future NPWS restructure. Unfortunately, during discussions DPIE indicated that it did not support the structure. If this matter is not resolved by further discussions, the PSA will have the matter listed in the IRC.

A new draft housing policy has been released by NPWS for comment. The intention now is to put Parks staff back into housing from which they were removed. The proposal is this will be at full market rent.

The PSA was thanked for its submission to the Royal Commission on fires. It is believed the recommendations from the submission assisted in additional fire staff being assigned to NPWS. Whilst at the moment funding for these roles is for one year, the PSA is advocating for them to be permanent. The PSA also advocated for funds to fill all vacant positions in the FIMS RTO to expedite training of the new fire fighters. These positions will be recruited in the coming weeks. New staff will be located in depots and form part of the current works crews.

The PSA also advocated for additional staff in the Ranger, administrative and Project Officer ranks to support these staff. They have had a significant increase in work load with post-fire recovery; capital works projects; additional vertebrate pest control programs and roads and walking track projects.

The PSA also acknowledged that visitor numbers to National Parks during the COVID-19 pandemic had doubled, yet no additional staff were recruited to assist. Additional law-enforcement training is also required to support staff to deal with an increase in illegal activities.



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Corporate systems were also discussed and the failure of these systems to support staff during the fire season and recovery period. The DPIE gave undertakings to have further meetings with the PSA and with staff who maintain these systems to discuss a range of issues.

Commissions of inquiry to the bushfires

The PSA has tendered submissions to the Royal Commission and the Independent Inquiry into the bushfires. The Association thanks all members who assisted the PSA with our submission by completing the survey on fires. The Royal Commission is currently hearing evidence from the respondents.

PSA visits to NPWS workplaces

Industrial Officer Michael Sinclair and Organiser Kim de Govrik are visiting NPWS workplaces around NSW. The PSA intends to visit on a regular basis over a 12-month period. If you wish to host such a meeting at your work place, please call the PSA on 1300 772 679. If you wish to discuss an individual matter you can also arrange a meeting by calling that number.

PSA members' pay rise

The PSA is currently in the process of negotiating your Salaries Award with the Government in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC). Despite vague statements in the media, the PSA has not received an offer of “no forced redundancies” from the Government as part of the negotiations which have been in the IRC since March. The Government attempted to introduce a wage freeze via Regulation which contained no such job security protection; it was subsequently disallowed by the NSW Upper House.

The only thing the Government is offering is a wage freeze, with no guarantee of any future increase in 2021 or beyond. However, if this position changes, we will give members a say on any substantial offers, and any clearly articulated proposals put to us formally by the Government.

The granting of a pay rise to all public servants will put much-needed spending money into the economy and this will create jobs for many people looking for work.

Your job security is only guaranteed until the next restructure and the Government will not agree to guarantee that there will be no more cutbacks to jobs in the NPWS. Further to this, they are yet to honour the promise given when Future NPWS developed new organisational charts that all the positions in the new organisational charts were fully funded and would be filled. Unfortunately, at least 100 positions remain vacant.

When it comes to job security, the Government's track record speaks for itself.





24 June 2020

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Not a member?

Join the PSA today to protect your working conditions at www.psa.asn.au.

