

Travelling Compensation dispute

A communication from the Department's Chief Financial Officer has been sent to all Department of Customer Service Staff in relation to the following:

- Use of Purchase Cards (P Cards)
- Meal expenses on one-day Journeys – Field vs Non-field staff

The PSA is in dispute with the Department in relation to Travel Expenses and the use of P Cards and will be seeking the assistance of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission to resolve these matters.

Some of the issues that the PSA has been attempting to resolve in this time has been:

1. Payment of incidentals

Since the introduction of P-Cards the PSA has raised concerns as to the discrepancies involved in applying this across the Department. For example, some managers will choose to accept toiletries and a bottle of water while others won't.

The PSA's position is that the incidental allowance should be paid in full as per the Award on every occasion, regardless of whether an employee has a P-Card or not.

2. Use of P Cards – Allowance vs Actuals

This is a significant area of difference between the PSA and the Department. The PSA's preferred position would be that the allowance be paid as per the Award.

The Department has a contrary position that by providing staff with a P Card they have met the requirements of clause 26.7 of the Award – "If meals are provided by the Government at the temporary work location, the employee shall not be entitled to claim the meal allowance".

The Department states that by providing the P-Card, they are providing the meal.

The union has been attempting to resolve a number of individual claims and it is the unfortunate situation that some members who have made claims for allowances have been without reimbursement for a considerable period of time.

3. Meal expenses on one-day journeys – Field-based vs Non-field-based

The PSA will be seeking urgent clarification from the Department as to its classification of 'field-based' employees as the advice is not clear as to who this applies to and notes that the Award at Clause 29 makes no distinction as to whether an employee is field or non-field based.

Additionally, Clause 29 simply states that an employee who is authorised to travel on official business which does not require the employee to obtain overnight accommodation shall be paid the appropriate allowance. It does not have any option for actuals, whether via a P-card or not.



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In the interim the PSA advises members that if you have been previously eligible to claim for this expense you should continue to do so.

It is clear the Department and the PSA have vastly different interpretations of meal allowances which have not been resolved, and will need the assistance of the Industrial Relations Commission.

