

NPWS Industrial Bulletin

NPWS 'establishment review'

Over the past 12 months the NPWS has been undertaking an establishment review. This includes a review of Branch structures with the deletion or changing of many roles. To undertake such a 'review' by the agency requires prior consultation with the PSA and the development of a change management plan (as part of the consultation guidelines).

To date there has been no consultation with the PSA. On that basis the PSA has written to NPWS reinforcing the need to provide a change management plan to the PSA for consideration.

It would appear that a number of roles that should have been filled (consistent with the undertakings given to the PSA during the Future NPWS Restructure) have already been changed or deleted.

At a number of meetings with the agency over the past 12 months the PSA has consistently argued that all roles in the Branch structures should be filled (as agreed during Future NPWS negotiations) as they were all 'fully funded'. To date this is yet to occur.

The PSA also indicated in its correspondence that should the agency not seek to meet the PSA will consider further industrial options.

Workers' compensation legislation

The PSA has been concerned for many years about the use of chemicals by members undertaking fire-fighting duties and the health issues arising from using chemicals to do so. Schedule 4 in the *Workers Compensation Act 1987* lists those chemicals that may cause harm if used extensively and over a protracted period of time. Further to this it is now internationally recognised that some chemicals used in the workplace and smoke inhalation whilst fighting fires may be harmful to your health. Should you believe that you may be suffering from such symptoms you should advise the department and consult a doctor. The PSA is also able to assist in such matters.

Salaries Case

The PSA Salaries Case is still being heard in the Industrial Relations Commission. Dates have been set for further hearings in mid-August. The PSA has also put a case for backdating of the pay increase to first full pay period after 1 July 2020.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)

The department has advised the PSA that a new round of HSR recruitment will commence soon. The PSA encourages members to apply for such positions. These positions act as an independent watchdog on



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health and safety matters in the workplace. They work independently from the WHS committees of NPWS. It is important that these positions are filled and operating in each workplace.

Housing policy

A draft policy has been provided to the PSA in relation to staff housing. PSA Industrial staff and Delegates have reviewed the documents. Overall the policy documents appear reasonable. However, some minor changes and clarifications are required. Meetings in relation to the policy are ongoing. A final policy should be available in the coming weeks.

Flight allowance

Whilst agreement has been reached on the payment of the allowance to members there are still some minor issues with the form and information sheet. Feedback has been provided to NPWS in relation to these issues. Amended documents should be finalised in the coming days.

Uniform Reference Group (URG)

The Uniform Reference Group has had two meetings and is progressing well. It comprises representatives from a wide range of staff across NPWS – rangers, field staff, visitor contact staff and office-based staff. Nothing is set in stone yet – only some basic principles/guidelines established – but we are confident that this process is being supported by the Executive, and has the potential for long term positive outcomes and uniform options suitable for all staff across the full range of situations.

You have the chance to contribute to this process as a PSA member by contacting us with your concerns. To do so, please identify:

1. uniform items you wish to comment on
2. the issue you have with that item
3. (most importantly!) a solution to the issue you have raised.

Return it to us at danny.corcoran@environment.nsw.gov.au and martin.smith@environment.nsw.gov.au. At this stage we believe the main issues for PSA relate to equity of access, safety on the job and impacts on workers' rights and wellbeing. If you have any other concerns, please let us know.

Law enforcement training

Recently the PSA and NPWS delegates met with NPWS EDs in relation to law enforcement training. At the meeting the NPWS acknowledged that more training is required and gave an undertaking to investigate the status of training at present. A report back on law enforcement training will be provided at the next JCC meeting in early September.



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COVID 19 pandemic safety issues and increases in visitation to National Parks

With the advent of the COVID pandemic there has been issues at a range of locations, particularly in the ski resorts (including the Perisher STP) and at VICs across the state. There has also been a significant increase in visitation to National Parks (particularly, however not exclusively to, Greater Sydney Branch). This has also meant a jump in revenue but no subsequent increase in staffing numbers. Rather than NPWS cutting jobs through an 'establishment review', NPWS should be using the additional revenue to fill ALL vacant positions across NSW.

The PSA will continue to advocate for the filling of these positions to alleviate the significant increase in workloads for members dealing with the rise in visitation. Further, if members have any concerns at work with their welfare during the pandemic please raise it with your supervisor and/or PSA delegate or industrial staff.

Incident roles without pay scales in NPWS award

With continued pressure and submissions from the unions the NPWS has agreed to determine the pay scales for those fire roles in the award that do not have a pay scale. A meeting in relation to this matter is scheduled for late August.

Ranger progression

The PSA is aware of a number of Rangers (some of whom have been Grade 1 Level 6 Rangers for many years) who have had their progression payments delayed for an additional 12 months by NPWS. The PSA is seeking an urgent resolution to this matter. If no agreement can be reached quickly the PSA will consider further industrial options.

Leave balances

In past meetings with DPIE the department put a position to the PSA that any additional leave accrued by virtue of errors made in the accrual or granting of leave by the department would have to be covered by the individual employee. The PSA has fought this at every meeting at which the matter was discussed. The PSA is pleased to advise members that this proposal by the department has been withdrawn. Members leave balances will not be affected by any such errors made by the department.

Not a member?

Join the PSA today at www.psa.asn.au.

