

## Salaries Case concludes

The hearing for the PSA's application for a salary increase concluded on Wednesday 12 August with final submissions from all parties. The Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) has reserved its decision.

Originally just an application covering the majority of PSA members employed in the public sector of NSW, it has grown to be so much more due to the actions of the government, in joining the applications of the Health Services Union (HSU), Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation of NSW (ASMOF) and NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA).

The attempt by the Government to introduce a new wages policy of a zero per cent increase for 12 months for the whole of the government means this has potentially become a test case, with ramifications for all public service workers in NSW, including teachers, police, doctors, nurses and transport workers.

Above and beyond the productivity based evidence of a usual salaries case, this year has been fought on economic grounds.

The PSA has relied upon independent evidence from Dr Andrew Charlton of Alpha Beta, showing the value of wage increases to the financial health of the state and the broader economy. In response, the Government claimed the money would be better used for infrastructure projects. However, the infrastructure projects referred to were already planned and approved and some were funded from different funding sources. The PSA argued the Government did not present any evidence that denying public sector workers a wage rise would assist the economy or the state of NSW.

Despite reports in the media, the Government has at no point offered any guarantees around job protections, future wage increases or any other matters allegedly raised with us.

In addition, all efforts by the PSA to seek an undertaking from the Government that it would agree to the back dating of any pay increase have been refused.

The unions have made submissions to the Full Bench that any pay increases should be back dated to 1 July 2020, based on special circumstances.

As repeated on several occasions, it is worth remembering the PSA flagged our claim in December of last year, and lodged our application in early March and has continued to vigorously pursue our claim.

This has been a long and arduous process but has ensured that, whatever decision is made by the Full Bench, the interests of PSA members have been fully represented.

We now await the outcome of the Full Bench's deliberations. The Chief Commissioner has acknowledged the need for a quick decision in this matter, but this case has involved a lot of evidence and any decision may take some time.

The PSA thanks members and delegates for their support throughout this process and will let you know as soon as we hear more from the Commission.

