

National Parks Vocational Branch February update

The National Parks Vocational Branch (NPVB) met on Monday 1 February to discuss a range of industrial issues affecting PSA members in the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Stimulus package

Due to the lack of consultation by NPWS on the makeup of roles in the package, there are 62 FOGOs and 23 Field Officers Grade 1/2. Hence 85 new roles (more than half the roles) are for new lower-remunerated roles, with no focus on the many vacancies already existing in NPWS. There are no Project Officers; only 12 Administration/project support roles and one Ranger. The PSA is advocating that as a minimum, these vacancies are urgently filled to address the current workload issues.

NPWS has embarked upon a course of action that is not supported by the PSA. In South Coast Branch 18 new positions are being created. All are field staff with no additional Project Managers; Rangers or Admin support for the Branch. This is totally unacceptable to the PSA.

This being the case the PSA directs its members:

NOT TO UNDERTAKE ANY EXTRA WORK RELATED TO THE STIMULUS PACKAGE in South Coast Branch!

The same applies across the state. If your Area or Branch does not support these projects with the necessary roles, then don't do the additional work...enough is enough!

Law enforcement

The need to have a state-wide data base for offenders was discussed along with the use of body cams, CAMMs reporting, the lack of a duty solicitor and the dearth of technology applied to law enforcement in NPWS. NPWS no longer regards law enforcement as a priority (or, it would appear, the safety of staff undertaking such duties). The PSA will continue to agitate for improvements to how members perform law enforcement; the systems and technology available for members to effectively undertake such duties safely. The safety of members is paramount. This doesn't appear to be the case for how NPWS views safety in the workplace for its staff.

The PSA reminds members that the mandatory minimum training needed to safely undertake law enforcement and compliance is the level 1 (two-day) law enforcement course and the dealing with threatening and aggressive behaviour course. Any members who have not completed this training should NOT be undertaking law enforcement and should contact their manager about plans to undertake this training.



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Ranger qualifications; progression

The PSA has been advised that some short-term vacant Ranger positions are being filled by applicants without degrees. This is not consistent with the NPWS Award in maintaining the integrity of the Ranger classification as a degree is an essential requirement. If you are aware of any cases where there are issues, please advise your local delegate or PSA staff. The PSA is waiting for conformation from NPWS executives regarding the progression from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

Matters affecting women

A number of issues were discussed including pay equity, gender equality in roles and recruitment, and the lack of flexibility for women undertaking fire shifts. The NPVB will place these matters as standing agenda items at the NPWS JCC meetings.

Uniform Reference Group (URG) update

The progress to the new issue of uniforms continues. Garments have been provided for members of the group to evaluate with regards to style and durability. Advice is that the garments are of a high quality however the colours need to be reviewed. Also there are issues with the provision of fire PPE for the 120 new fire fighters. There is also a subcommittee of the group working on high vis garments.

Additional Delegates required for the NPVB

There's still one vacancy for a Delegate on the NPVB. The Branch is particularly interested in any member in the western area of NSW to join to put forward issues specific to the west of NSW. Further to this the NPVB would encourage any Aboriginal members from across the state to consider becoming a Delegate.

More reasons to join the PSA

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little also joined the meeting. He outlined additional benefits to members when they join the PSA. These include Emergency Ambulance Cover (for those without private health insurance) and counselling services for drug, alcohol and gambling addiction. Further to this the PSA has also signed up to the Gidget Foundation Australia to support members experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety. Please visit the PSA website at psa.asn.au/member-services/member-benefits for further information about these additional benefits for members.

