

## General Assistants: update from your Delegates

On Monday 1 March 2021 your General Assistant Advisory Group (GAAG) delegates met to discuss the concerns of members and workshop with Industrial Staff at the PSA ways to progress is each issue.

### Supervision – reminder to GAs

The PSA was heavily involved in the consultation around development of your GSE Role Description to make sure the concerns of members were heard and your rights protected.

General Assistants (GAs) are reminded that part of this process clarified who supervises a GA in a school

The GA reports to the school principal or their nominated delegate (such as a Deputy/Assistant Principal or School Teaching Executive). As in all workplaces, the supervisor may seek for another staff member to deliver work requests on their behalf.

If a GA believes there is a problem or concern with the work being requested by someone other than their supervisor, they should seek clarification from their supervisor.

Download the GA Role Description [PSA QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE](#).

### Air-Conditioner cleaning

After a very unpredictable, wet and humid summer, air-conditioning cleaning was a topic of conversation at the meeting.

The PSA advises that extensive cleaning of air conditioners is not part of the GA role. It requires a technician and should form part of the air-conditioning contract with the supplier. There also may be Work Health and Safety (WHS) concerns around possible exposure to airborne particles.

When the PSA has raised WHS with the Department of Education on behalf of GAs, they have advised that they consider minor air conditioner maintenance part of the GA role description as long as you have been given the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

In most cases cleaning of air-conditioning units requires much more than just taking the cover off and cleaning the vents. In schools that have large numbers of air-conditioning units, cleaning each one is a large and time-consuming job.

This task takes time. If you are asked to perform minor maintenance, such as filter cleaning, on air-conditioners you should talk with your supervisor about the length of time it will take you and talk with them about which tasks they would like you to prioritise and which may not need to be completed so that you can take on the new work.

### Mowing outside of school grounds

If you are asked to mow outside of school grounds you should discuss this with your supervisor. WHS and other safety issues must be looked at by you and your supervisor before you start this type of work. This can include



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undertaking a risk assessment, making sure the school has insurance in case passers-by and/or their property is damaged (such as if a rock is thrown by the mower and damages a car window) and workload issues.

You must be issued with the appropriate PPE and have been trained to operate mowers on nature strips in a responsible and safe manner. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) requires by law that all mowers more than 250kg must be registered. If the mower is not registered, you (not the school) can be fined and lose demerit points. Fines can be imposed by TfNSW, Council Rangers, Police and Work Cover. Lawn mowing signs also need to be displayed during the job.

It is also a good idea to be provided with a direction in writing to undertake the mowing.

If there are large or tricky areas to mow outside school grounds, you should talk with your supervisor about the length of time it will take you and talk with them about which tasks they would like you to prioritise and which may not need to be completed so that you can take on the new work.

### Next GAAG Meeting 18 May

The next meeting will be on 18 May. If you have issues you would like discussed at the GA Advisory Group, please contact your Delegates.

PSA DELEGATE	SCHOOL	REGION
Alison Crittenden	Sutherland North Public School	South East Sydney
Michael Burrell	Blacktown Boys High School	Western Sydney
Philip Crowe	Northern Beaches College – Freshwater Campus	Northern Sydney
Stephen Smith	Cobar High School	Far West NSW
Wayne Gaw	Armidale Secondary College – Duval Campus	North West NSW
William (Bill) Martin	Vincentia High School	South East NSW
Salvatore (Sam) Sale	Wadalba Community School	Hunter/Central Coast





7 May 2021

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### Do you know someone who still needs to join the PSA?

You can support the work of the PSA and delegates to get better outcomes for everyone just by asking your colleagues to [JOIN](#) the PSA.

