

## Special Constables short-changed in meal breaks mess

Special Constables are now covered by the *Police Administrative Officers Award*. Police have notified the union of a ridiculous plan to implement this. In order to avoid paying extra to Special Constables, Police have decided to put in place an unachievable system of meal breaks. Field Supervisors will spend half their day running around trying to cover posts for meals and those staff “lucky” enough to get relieved for a meal break will have to work an extra half hour at the end of their shift. We all know operational Police on 12-hour shifts do not have to work the “changeover”. This would introduce yet another inequity between Police and Special Constables.

At a meeting held last week regarding Special Constables’ entitlements under the *Police Administrative Officers Award*, Police told the PSA they believe the Award applies, which means members must have an unpaid half-hour meal break.

The PSA has examined the rosters and it is clear that there are not have enough staff to relieve everyone for a meal break. The PSA asked Police to negotiate a payment in lieu of the meal break entitlement, which can be done under the Award. This would provide a substantial increase in take-home pay for Special Constables.

Police flat-out refused to negotiate a payment, claiming they could provide relief for all meal breaks by using surplus staff and the Field Supervisors. This is impossible. They also advised their intention to require Special Constables who get a meal break to stay at work for half an hour after the shift changeover.

The PSA today wrote to Police advising that our analysis shows they will not be able to provide relief for meal breaks and that it is unacceptable for them to use Field Supervisors to perform the duties of base grade officers in order to cover their staff shortages.

In the letter, we insisted that either the Police create enough additional base grade positions to cover meal breaks or negotiate a payment and continue the current system of shorter paid crib breaks.

Police want to implement the change on 1 July. Members should get behind the union campaign to stop the meal breaks farce and get an allowance and a paid crib break.

### Make the union stronger – ask your colleagues to join

Achievements such as improvements in award coverage and having a strong voice to management are only possible because of strong union membership. Ask your colleagues to join you in fighting for better conditions for Special Constables.

Anyone wishing to join the union should contact the local PSA delegate, your organiser Glenn Duncan at [gduncan@psa.asn.au](mailto:gduncan@psa.asn.au) or join online at [www.psa.asn.au/join](http://www.psa.asn.au/join).

