

## Sheriff's Office bulletin – June 2020

### SOVBAG update

#### Flex Time Agreement

There was much discussion among Delegates about the flex time agreement, particularly the issues of accumulating maximum hours but not being able to take flex time when members wanted or needed to. These issues affect regional sheriffs, who are often driving long distances to satellite courts and may be working more than a 10-hour day. The inflexibility of the flex time agreement is related to ongoing vacancies, recruitment and retention of staff.

Currently, the system benefits management and not Officers, who are being exploited by the flex time agreement. The PSA needs evidence of members not being granted flex time by managers and the reasons for these refusals. The PSA also wants to hear from members who have to travel long distances and work long days. The PSA may be able to resolve some of these issues through local arrangements with Regional Commanders, for example for Officers travelling a long distance to a satellite court being paid for excess travel rather than accruing flex time.

The review of the flex agreement circulated by the Department of Communities and Justice only relates to bringing FACS/DOCS staff onto the existing agreement. It is not a review of the entire flex agreement.

Members are encouraged to contact the PSA if they have been denied flex leave or lost flex hours due to accruing too many hours within the 12-week period.

#### Flex time and COU

The PSA notified the Sheriff of a dispute over COU Officers not being able to access flex agreement. The PSA met with the Sheriff and their matter has been resolved with COU Officers able to accrue flex time.

#### Incident at Newcastle Court House

The PSA is very concerned with the way security was conducted at Newcastle Court during a recent high-profile case.

Members would be aware of the media and supporters who were in attendance during this case.

Officers were spat on by some of the supporters, criticised by management and the media over the handling of the incident. The PSA has written to the Attorney General about this as Officers were left to manage the incident with little support.

#### Talent pool for Sergeant's positions

Delegates discussed the long-running recruitment process for sergeant positions. It has been nearly six months since the EOI was put out by the Sheriff's Office. It is not known when the process will be finalised or whether the pool will be used to fill permanent vacancies or relieve 2ICs on leave. There may be other Sheriff Offices who need a 2IC position, for example in Wagga Wagga and Liverpool.



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### Sheriff protective vests

Many members report the white writing on the SPVs has rubbed off over time. The result is the SPV looks worn and unprofessional. This has been an ongoing issue for 18 months. It is not known when the carry vests will be replaced with new ones or whether Velcro patches will replace the existing ones.

### Uniforms

Uniforms for Court Officers are going to be ordered through Uniform Central. Delegates raised concern over the type and quality of the uniform, particularly, footwear (as a bulk order was done for shoes). Delegates want to establish a uniform committee to look at the uniform to ensure it is appropriate for staff.

### SMET and directives from the Sheriff/Regional Commander

Delegates discussed the recent directives from the Sheriff and Regional Commander Turner regarding SMET and field enforcement. A roster for metro SMET teams has been done.

### Alcohol and drug testing

Delegates discussed this issue. The Sheriff's Office is looking to have an AOD policy. Delegates have not seen any draft policy. Any policy needs to cover all staff within the Sheriff's Office. Similar agencies within the cluster have policies e.g. Youth Justice and Corrective Services.

### Training for HSRs

This issue was discussed at both meetings. There are four Officers at Newcastle waiting for HSR training. The Sheriff stated she would talk to the manager of the WHS unit about the training. The PSA runs this training and the local labor council in Newcastle may offer this training as well.

### Sheriff's Office Joint Consultative Committee update

#### Flex time agreement

The Sheriff was informed the flex agreement was an issue for members and the PSA would be looking at options to address the concerns of members.

The PSA notified the Sheriff of a dispute over COU officers not being able to access flex agreement. The PSA met with the Sheriff and their matter has been resolved with COU officers able to accrue flex time.

#### Talent pool for Sergeants' positions

The lengthy process was raised at the JCC with Superintendent Gordon stating candidates would be informed in the next two weeks about whether they have been successful. He could not say whether the talent pool would be used to fill permanent vacancies or not. The pool time period will commence after it has been finalised.



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Since this discussion, the talent process has been finalised and all applicants should have been notified by now if they have been successful or not.

### **Sheriff protective vests**

This was raised at the JCC with Senior Assistant Sheriff Mayer. Advice from management is that all OIC's should be contacting staff to note which vests are damaged so they can begin swapping them over.

Members are to please notify their local delegate or the PSA if this has not occurred.

### **Uniform committees**

This was raised at the JCC and the PSA has arranged for uniform committees to be re-established so staff can have a greater say on uniform and make sure uniform is fit for purpose.

If you have any concerns about uniform or any submissions, please contact your local delegate or the PSA.

### **SMET and directives from the Sheriff/Regional Commander**

This issue was raised at the Joint Consultative Committee with the Sheriff stating that all sheriff officers would be undertaking field enforcement as part of their normal duties.

Alcohol and drug testing

Delegates were informed the department is working on rolling out a number of departmental policies and the AOD policy will be a priority once this is completed.

### **Body worn cameras**

Delegates were informed at the Joint Consultative Committee meeting that the body worn camera roll out has been held up by Parliament in relation to getting the relevant legislative changes through. It's not known when this will occur but the PSA will be notified in due course.

### **Training for HSRs**

After raising this issue at the JCC, the PSA can confirm that the overdue training has now been organised for members.

### **Recruitment and vacancies**

Thirty-one new probationary officers completed the Alpha Course. At the JCC Superintendent Gordon reported the feedback from the course was positive.

There will be a Bravo Class around August 2021. Targeted recruitment for difficult locations is being carried out by the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff was unable to state how many vacancies existed within the office.



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All members are encouraged to contact their local delegate or the PSA regarding any concerns with recruitment or training.

All members are requested to print and place on your PSA noticeboards – please speak to your colleagues or any non-members to join the PSA.

### Your SOVBAG delegates

**Marko Petrovic** Sydney City

**Stephen Hancock** Sydney City

**Glenn Elliott-Rudder** Wagga Wagga

**Joseph Safour** Wagga Wagga

**Tian Salter** Forster

**Paul O'Shea** Newcastle

**Rob Dickinson** Newcastle

### Your PSA Staff

**Latu Sailosi** Organiser [lsailosi@psa.asn.au](mailto:lsailosi@psa.asn.au)

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