

Special Constables: PSA dispute over disastrous plan for meal breaks

Management sticks stubbornly to unworkable plan

At a meeting today, SMU management confirmed Special Constables have once again drawn the short straw. Management plans to go ahead with introducing unpaid meal breaks from 11 July. They plan to "comply" with the new Award provision requiring meal breaks in the first five hours by:

- rostering day shift meal breaks at breakfast time
- dropping patrols
- leaving posts unstaffed.

They will also make staff stay back an extra half an hour during shift changeover. All this to avoid paying reasonable penalties in lieu of giving award-compliant breaks.

No lunch for Parliament staff

Draft rosters produced for Parliament House show that meal breaks for staff starting at 7:00am will be directed starting at 9:00am. This is because they do not have enough staff to let anyone go on a meal break after 10:00am. Management also plans to make an additional two staff start work at 8:00am, so they can take late breaks at 1:00pm. Patrols will be discontinued between 9:00 and 10:30.

Working short everywhere

Management also stated that staff at two-person sites like PEO will take their meal break by leaving their post. If they leave the site, they will be called back if there is need of another officer, but no penalty will be paid. During meal breaks, there will be insufficient staff at most posts to guarantee safety.

Staying back after school

Management plans to require staff who have been given meal breaks to stay back an extra half hour at the end of their shift. They are prepared to have a whole shift kept back, milling around with nothing to do twice every day, wasting up to 50 hours of paid staff time each day.

PSA takes SMU to the Industrial Relations Commission

This plan is simply not acceptable. Your union, the PSA will be taking dispute proceedings in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) on Wednesday, 7 July. We will argue that meal breaks taken in the first three hours of a 12-hour day shift do not comply with the Award, as they do not coincide with normal meal times. We will argue our position that management could continue the current informal breaks arrangement without breaching the Award by paying a meal allowance each shift where a complying break is not given.





6 July 2021

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We ask that members take this time to support each other and the PSA because your rights at work are worth fighting for. Now is the time for all members to be united and stand together. The PSA is committed to resolve this but we need your support. We will provide you with an update after the IRC.

If you know someone who isn't a member – now is the time to ask them to join. United we stand, divided we beg.

