



Privatisation of POLAIR threatens community safety

The Public Service Association of NSW (PSA) is gravely concerned with recent developments at the NSW Police Force (NSWPF) Aviation Support Command (POLAIR).

Amongst other cultural and safety issues currently being addressed at POLAIR, the PSA has been made aware of a push towards the privatisation of pilot positions.

This initiative by NSWPF will risk the lives of the community and Police. POLAIR pilots are represented by the PSA.

PSA members were advised on Friday 10th March 2023 that 6 vacant positions (4 Rotary and 2 Fixed Wing) would be outsourced and filled by contracted staff, privatising these positions which would usually be held by fully trained and qualified Special Constables.

“Contract pilots lack the experience and specialised training that is provided to Special Constable pilots who up until now have operated NSWPF aircraft,” says Stewart Little PSA General Secretary.

“Special Constables are trained to use weapons and to use equipment like bullet proof vests.

“Without this training and experience, the PSA holds serious concerns that the utilisation of contract piloting staff will lead to a serious incident or accident.

“The circumstances around this initiative are also troubling, there has been no consultation with the PSA, with staff only being notified last Friday about the commencement of contract pilots.

“There has been no information in relation to whether there was a fit and proper tender process conducted by the NSWPF in awarding the contract for pilot services.

“There is no information as to how this private company was able to secure these positions and provide services usually performed by members of the NSWPF.

“This lack of transparency or consultation is the norm for current POLAIR management.

“This is privatisation by stealth, it’s the pilots this week, next week it’ll be the engineers who maintain police aircraft.

“These are full time public service roles, the public has an expectation that POLAIR pilots have their mind fully on the job not on moonlighting as skydiving pilots on weekends.

“The PSA position is firm – the government needs to reverse this appalling decision immediately.

“The PSA has sought a meeting with the Commissioner of Police to discuss this matter urgently,” says Stewart Little PSA General Secretary.