

CPSU NSW and Hunter Valley Disability Services first Joint Consultative Committee update

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On Friday 6 April 2018, your delegates and industrial staff from the CPSU NSW/PSA met with Hunter Valley Disability Services (HVDS) to discuss collective member issues at the first Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting in Sydney. Many of the issues discussed also related to our members from Mid North Coast Disability Services (MNCDS) given that Ability Options is also partner in that consortium.

The JCC is an important forum, where CPSU NSW industrial staff and delegates are able to consult with management on workplace matters of mutual interest and concern. It is here consultation between management and the CPSU NSW enables members, through your union, to participate in and influence decisions that directly affect working conditions.

Consultation is an integral part of your award conditions and the obligations for management to consult with your union are set out at *Clause 65 of the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009* ('the

Conditions Award') and within the framework of the 1997 *Consultative Arrangements: Policy and Guidelines* which can be found [HERE](#).

The CPSU NSW commends management for a positive commencement to consultative arrangements and acknowledges the constructive contribution made by the management and delegate representatives.

Attendees

CPSU NSW representatives and delegates: Dean Allen, PSA/CPSU NSW Industrial Officer, Rachel Smoothy and Kate McGrath (delegates).

Management representatives: Michelle Hodge, Regional CEO – HV Disability Services and Adele Cashion, People and Culture.

Issues discussed included:

1. HVDS payroll issues

The CPSU raised member concerns regarding underpayment and incorrect payslip information. HVDS detailed software and personnel data issues that have affected payments to date. HVDS has assured the JCC it is actively working to resolve any issues. If members experience any ongoing payroll issues, HVDS has advised you should register your issue using the internal TICKIT system for further assistance.

Members have reported that payroll issues have not been fully resolved and accordingly the CPSU NSW will raise this further with HVDS for a resolution.



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2. HVDS communications

The CPSU NSW raised member concerns regarding some recent HVDS communications including those which were signed off as 'info' and therefore with inadequate contact or follow up information. HVDS has given an assurance that all future communications will be personalised with sign-off particulars. Despite this members have reported that a further HVDS communication has been circulated to staff using the sign-off 'info'.

3. Work Health Safety (WHS) issues at Warabrook

The CPSU NSW has recently undertaken a WHS inspection of the HVDS site at 26 Warabrook Boulevard, Warabrook, as a result of significant non-compliance with the *Work Health Safety Act 2011* regarding the work environment and facilities.

Examples of the non-compliance included inadequate access/egress points, poor lighting, cramped working conditions and poor workstation ergonomics, inadequate document sorting tables, excessive noise levels, and inadequate kitchen facilities for a number of staff, insufficient toilet facilities for staff, no fire extinguisher and non-compliance with mandatory Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

At the JCC the CPSU NSW highlighted further WHS concerns in respect of leaking water flow and a further impediment to safe access and egress particularly that there was only one door in the event of a fire or other emergencies.

The CPSU NSW highlighted our concern that the WHS issues had been raised by members for a number of months, although previous management assurances to address the work health and safety failings at Warabrook were not followed through. Our members have therefore been working in an unsatisfactory and WHS non-compliant work environment.

At the JCC HVDS gave assurances that HVDS was taking steps to address the WHS failings and since the JCC members will be aware of several communications from HVDS indicating that urgent and concrete steps are being undertaken to resolve the WHS issues at Warabrook. This has included relocating some staff to office locations at Maitland and Charlestown and within alternative office space at the Warabrook site.

Should members have any ongoing WHS concerns at both Warabrook or any other HVDS work sites we encourage them to raise those concerns either with their local manager, workplace delegate or with the CPSU NSW. A copy of the *SafeWork NSW Code of Practice – Managing the Work Environment and Facilities* can be found [HERE](#).

4. Policies and procedures – request for consultation

HVDS advised a review is underway in respect of all HVDS employment policies and procedures. The CPSU NSW has requested consultation in respect of all current policies under review in accordance with the mandatory requirements of *Clause 65 of the Conditions Award*.



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The CPSU NSW understands that this will include the HVDS Code of Conduct.

The CPSU NSW will update members further and seek your feedback as consultation proceeds.

5. Transfer of HVDS disability services to individual consortium partners at the end of the two-year guarantee period.

The CPSU NSW raised member concerns regarding recent communications by HVDS managers asserting that staff will no longer be employed by HVDS at the end of the two-year employment guarantee period and instead will be employed by the individual member companies (Ability Options, Finding Yellow and ConnectAbility).

HVDS advised that this messaging formed part of the original HVDS tendering information to the NSW Government and was included in HVDS presentations to FACS staff prior to privatisation of the disability services.

The CPSU NSW is investigating the issue further and wishes to **assure members your conditions of employment are guaranteed for two years and up to five years** in accordance with the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NSW Enabling) Act 2013* as set out in previous CPSU Bulletins which can be found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

6. Information Technology (IT) issues

The CPSU NSW raised member concerns regarding IT issues, including variable internet speeds between partner offices which have hampered access to the TICKIT system including timing out. HVDS was also advised that some staff have been unable to access their email due to IT issues and consequently they have not had access to payslips.

HVDS acknowledged the concerns and advised the issue has been logged for further investigation and improvement.

7. Next JCC meeting date

The CPSU NSW and HVDS will meet for a follow up JCC meeting during mid-May 2018 and we will keep members up to date therefore should you have any collective issues that you would like raised at the JCC would you please notify your CPSU NSW delegate or the CPSU NSW?

Do you know someone who is not a member? Get them to join online [HERE](#).

