

Guide Dogs consultation update

Dear Member,

On Tuesday, the Health Services Union met with management representatives as part of ongoing consultation around the proposed changes. Management provided some further clarification and responses to questions recently put to them by the HSU.

Timeframes

Management had already confirmed that there would be a minor extension of the timeframe for impacted employees to submit an application for the jobs. For some employees who were on or taking leave, that had been extended till yesterday.

Application Process

Management has confirmed that impacted employees applying for new Location Lead or Connector roles would not be required to participate in the Assessment Centre process. However, they would be required to undertake psychometric testing, an interview and some form of activity/paperwork assessment. Those applying for the Area Manager roles would be required to undertake all assessments.

While we note the shift, the HSU believes that when impacted employees are applying for roles that have been deemed by the organisation to be of a lower level on the EBA, such employees already meet the criteria for the lower role. The application process should simply be an expression of interest and direct appointment. It is extremely disappointing that employees are required to interview for jobs that they are quite literally overqualified for.

Discussion was held around the ability of affected team managers to access field positions if they wished should they be unsuccessful in applying for the new positions. Management agreed that while this would not be guaranteed, it may be possible to apply for positions on a case-by-case basis depending on the demands of each region.

Leave accrual

While management stopped short of agreeing that impacted employees could maintain their leave accrual at the rate it was accrued at, should the employee take a lower paid position, they have agreed to allow employees to take leave or cash out leave at the higher rate before transferring to their new position.

Classifications

Management has undertaken a review of the Connector role and disappointingly maintained the position that the roles are level 2. The HSU expressed concern about the downgrading of positions. Any systematic attempt to shift what were 'essential' to 'desirable' qualifications would not be taken lightly. In this case, the requirement for an

applicant to have relevant tertiary qualifications is 'desirable' rather than 'essential' allowing management to downgrade this new position from level 3 to level 2 in the EBA, thus affecting salary levels. Not only would such an attempt have a detrimental impact on employees, but also the support and services provided to clients. Management categorically denied that there were any current or future moves to downgrade roles.

Restraint of Trade

Management confirmed that the restraints on an employee taking up a position with a sister organisation were limited to not actively contacting clients or GDN employees to change providers. This is distinct from a client seeking to change providers of their own volition. Management will be circulating this to impacted employees.

Future employment

Management said that in principle there is no concern about an impacted employee seeking employment at GDN in the future, save for a break of at least two months due to the Long Service Leave Act take on continuity of service. Employees may also need to seek advice about the ATO views on genuine redundancy as it might impact on taxation.

Next steps

The HSU will continue to monitor the rollout of the restructure and work with impacted members. If you have any questions about the consultation, please contact your local HSU Delegate or the HSU Office on 1300 478 679.

Thank you Metaxia!

HSU Delegate Metaxia Tsoukatos is sadly leaving Guide Dogs. Metaxia was heavily involved in bargaining the agreement and supporting many of her colleagues over her time with the organisation. She has been a fierce advocate for the profession and for clients in the various forums she is involved with. On behalf of HSU members, we thank Metaxia for her hard work and dedication.

Welcome back Carolyn!

Long term union member Carolyn Bates has agreed to join our HSU Delegates Matt Wood and Peter McKenzie to form your HSU Delegates Team. If you are interested in becoming more involved in your union contact the HSU at info@hsu.asn.au to find out more information.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD