

1 May 2020

PSA Update – Covid-19 now Level 3

Tena koe

Meeting with Carolyn Tremain CE and the DCE's

PSA leaders namely Glenn Barclay (National Secretary); Basil Prestidge (Assistant Secretary) and Janice Panoho (National organiser) met last week with Carolyn Tremain and the DCEs to discuss MBIE's Recovery Plan for moving from Alert Level 4 to 3 and from 3 to 2. A key focus was the health and wellbeing of staff during each transition. We will continue working together to ensure that we are addressing key issues for employees working in the office or at home. This has been an incredibly challenging time for everyone, and PSA and MBIE will continue to keep you updated.

Carolyn Tremain acknowledged the work being done by essential workers and said maintaining the health and wellbeing of staff is key.

MBIE Recovery Plan - main drivers

- *maintaining people's wellbeing, health and safety*
- *balancing the trade-offs between productivity and cost-effectiveness*
- *attempting to have a simple process and reducing complexity around logistics as much as feasible.*

Contact Centres including ICC Survey

A survey will be sent to contact centre members. It is important to complete the survey to give us a better understanding of the key issues you are experiencing at work whether in the workplace or working from home. This will provide us with the information about your wellbeing and looking at other options to consider and discuss at our meeting with MBIE. If you have any issues, please discuss these with your delegates who can raise them at our weekly meetings.

Other Essential Workers

We would like to hear from members who are essential workers who are still operating. We are preparing a survey to be sent out to essential workers for feedback to support the work you do, either in the office or at home.

Border INZ

We have arranged regular Zoom meetings with Border Delegates. With fewer international flights operating and less staff working in the office, we want to hear from border staff how they are coping and if they have issues for us to raise with MBIE.

Health & Safety

If staff feel like their workplace health and safety (their home) could be improved with additional equipment then they should request it. Mbie has extra monitors, keyboard/mouse and even cardboard desks available to help make working from home easier.

Reimbursement of Expenses

This is covered by Section 37.1 of the Collective Agreement which states:

The principle for all expenses incurred by employees while undertaking MBIE business is that employees should not be out of pocket but neither should they profit... MBIE will reimburse all actual and reasonable expenses upon the production of receipts.

Some members may be out of pocket due to increased expenses caused by working from home e.g. increased power and internet bills, or working in a different office which is further from home than their normal place of work. SSC and MBIE guidance on this is that increases in home expenses should be offset against savings in normal travel costs of attending a workplace e.g. petrol, parking, public transport fares etc.

Reimbursement of expenses should be discussed with and approved by your manager in the first instance and claimed through the usual mechanisms e.g. Flexipurchase.

SSC Guidance on Pay Restraint in the Public Sector

The State Services Commission (SSC) has published a letter from the Commissioner sent to all Public Service Chief Executives on the SSC website here: <https://ssc.govt.nz/our-work/er/>

This letter sets out an expectation of a pay freeze in the Public Service until June 2021, particularly for tier 2 and 3 managers (DCEs and GMs at MBIE) and staff paid more than \$100,000. The letter advises that for employment agreements with discretionary pay clauses, any pay increases should be nil or the minimum allowable. However, the letter also states "current employment agreement obligations to be complied with where they require an increase to pay". This includes our Collective Agreement which expires in September 2021, so all members under coverage i.e. all roles on the Pay Ladder except advisory roles in People & Culture (in old terms, everything up to and including Band 19), will receive their annual pay increases from Pay Progression after 1 July 2020 and 2021 as set out in the Collective Agreement.

Updates

All updates can be found on mbie@psa.org.nz