

CPSU Member Advice & Support Team Service Policy

The Process

The Member Advice & Support Team (MAST) provides advice and representation on workplace matters to members of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). MAST organisers are trained to provide detailed advice on both general work entitlements and individual grievances. Where possible matters will be resolved at the time a member makes contact with the union. Where further assistance is needed members will be asked to complete a member assistance form (MAF). A MAF can be obtained from www.cpsu.com.au, by contacting our office or from a delegate or organiser. The MAF will provide the basic information needed to research the issue and develop a plan to resolve it. Once the MAF has been submitted an organiser will contact the member within four working days to discuss the resolution plan. If a matter is urgent this should be indicated on the MAF and every effort will be made to respond to the issue in the necessary timeframe.

What we do for members

The MAST specialises in workplace grievances, collective agreement negotiations, industrial disputes and Commission hearings. Industrial issues with which the MAST can provide assistance include:

- Misconduct investigations
- Grievances and fair treatment appeals
- Workplace harassment and bullying
- Discrimination
- Access to entitlements
- Performance management processes
- Reclassification and appeals
- Workers compensation (advice only)
- Unfair dismissal
- Workplace Health and Safety

Much of the work of the MAST is done over the phone, via email or in writing. MAST organisers provide advice and support to members to enable them to resolve workplace issues where possible. Ordinarily, organisers would not attend routine work meetings or interim reviews in performance improvement processes.

External Tribunals

MAST organisers may appear on behalf of members or act as a support person where appropriate, in the Tasmanian Industrial Commission, Fair Work Australia, Office of The State Service Commissioner, conciliation conferences at the Anti Discrimination Commission or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Appearance by an organiser in any of these tribunals where the member is the complainant or appellant requires the prior approval of the MAST Manager. In determining whether or not to grant such approval, the MAST Manager will consider factors such as the likelihood of a successful outcome, the impact of any outcome on the wider union membership (positive or negative) and the resources required to pursue the matter.

Resolution of a matter

Wherever possible the organiser assigned to a matter will see the matter through to the agreed resolution. If it becomes necessary to reassign the matter to another organiser a full briefing will be provided to ensure a seamless transfer.

There may be circumstances where the union may be unable to provide further representation on a matter. If this situation arises, the organiser will advise the member of alternative options.

Pre-existing issues

Members who apply for membership with pre-existing issues or new members who are experiencing issues in their workplace which pre-date their union membership or whose membership had lapsed at the time the issue arose are ineligible for assistance from the MAST for that issue. A member may seek approval from the General Secretary for assistance to be provided. In determining whether assistance is provided the General Secretary will consider whether the member had a reasonable opportunity to join the union prior to the issue arising, whether resolution of the issue will have a positive impact on other members and whether the member has the means to engage support or advice from another source. If accepted, the General Secretary may require the payment of an entrance fee equivalent to 12 months subscriptions prior to the issue being assigned. It is the responsibility of the member applying for assistance to detail any relevant circumstances. The General Secretary will provide a response to their request within 5 days.

Legal and Financial Advice

MAST organisers are not qualified to provide legal or financial advice. If you require such advice an organiser can refer you to our partner law firm or to a financial planner.

Counselling and Medical Advice

MAST organisers are not qualified as personal counsellors or to provide medical advice. If you require such advice an organiser can refer you to your employer's employee assistance program or you should seek advice from your GP.

Conflicts of Interest

All CPSU members are entitled to fair and equal representation from the MAST. Occasionally, our union is called upon to represent members who are on opposing sides in a particular matter. In this circumstance the members involved would be assigned to different organisers and systems and processes implemented to ensure each member's confidentiality is respected.

Conduct

Union staff will treat all members with dignity and respect. Likewise, union staff should be treated with dignity and respect by members. Abusive, hostile or threatening behaviour or the bullying or harassment of union staff will not be tolerated. The MAST Manager may withdraw the provision of advice or representation to a member if it is considered the member's conduct towards a union staff person is inappropriate.

The MAST Manager is obliged to report threats made by members to commit an illegal act to relevant authorities.

Complaints

Our union takes its commitment to providing quality service to members very seriously and therefore has a mechanism for resolving situations where members may be dissatisfied with the service or advice they have received from the MAST. In the first instance concerns should be raised with the MAST Manager and if it is not resolved satisfactorily escalated to the CPSU General Secretary.

Privacy

The CPSU collects and holds personal information, such as name, address, employer, occupation, contact details, and information related to providing members with support and assistance with grievances. Only authorised officers of the union have access to stored data and appropriate measures are maintained to ensure its safe storage. Information is used to assist the Union in the delivery of services to members, to inform the Union's campaigns, and for communication purposes and will not be disclosed to other organisations except in progressing these purposes.