

Monday, 14 April 2014

Hon Jeremy Rockcliff
Minister for Education
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Minister,

Re: Public Holidays for 40/42 Week School Support Staff

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election victory and on your appointment as Education Minister. The CPSU represents a significant proportion of employees at the Department of Education and looks forward to having a positive and constructive working relationship with you.

I write to raise concerns about the way the Department have implemented changes arising from the 4 term structure that is impacting on school support staff. This Easter the Department has decided that as Easter coincides with the first term break they will not be paying 40/42 week school support staff for the public holidays that occur over this period.

Furthermore they have now informed the union that 40/42 week employees:

- will only be paid for public holidays that fall during term time and on days they would normally work; and
- they can't take recreation leave during term breaks.

If these two edicts are applied it will mean that 40/42 week employees will only be paid for 4 public holidays in 2014 out of the 12 that other employees will enjoy. It will also mean that 40/42 week employees will be required to take their recreation leave during school terms – leaving schools understaffed and special needs children without necessary support. These outcomes seem to be in conflict with the policy the Liberals took to the last election, a policy designed to increase the time school support staff had to support children.

The CPSU and AEU sought to resolve this issue through the negotiation of an Agreement that would ensure 40/42 week employees received a fair proportion of the public holidays fulltime staff receive but this offer was rejected by the Department. There is something wrong with a system that ensures highly paid, fulltime workers receive payment for public holidays that are denied to a group of low paid, part-time workers.

We seek your support and intervention to require the Department to resolve this issue through the negotiation of an Agreement that provides 40/42 week employees with a minimum number of public holidays based on the pro-rata number of weeks they are employed and allows them to take recreation leave in a manner that balances the needs of their school and their own needs.

I would be keen to meet with you to discuss and progress this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Lynch
General Secretary
CPSU (SPSFT) Inc.