



30 October 2013

Dear Member

Use of Contractors - Protection Officers

Attached (see below) is a notice from Queensland Rail advising QR employees of a decision to use external protection Officers on some occasions to supplement network staff for various reasons outlined in this notice.

It should be noted that QR has indicated that they are prepared to consult on this decision.

The RTBU has some safety concern concerns relating to impacts on current staff working with external contractors as there are some fundamental question marks over the training of such contractors who would be assigned to work in the rail corridor with work groups without route knowledge for planned or unplanned works as well as overall competencies possessed by these employees.

There are also questions that require answers in relation to the appropriateness of the selection of these contractors in respect of their concentration abilities in carrying out such a safety critical role within Queensland Rail, which could have negative consequences for other workers.

The consultation period concludes on the 5th November 2013 and the RTBU is therefore seeking feedback from members before COB Monday, 4th of November in respect of this matter in order that your Union can consider your views and input prior to finalising our response to QR.

Payment for Higher Grade Duty

It has come to the attention of the RTBU that members have been asked not to book codes that allow for higher grade payment

All Infrastructure employees, asked by their supervisor/manager to perform higher grade duties, are entitled to be remunerated at that level as provided in your current Enterprise Agreement.

Before continuing to participate in, or taking up, a higher grade position, please seek confirmation that it is the intention of Queensland Rail to pay you at that rate.

The RTBU strongly advises members not to act in higher grade positions if Management does not confirm you will get paid at the rate applicable to the position.

LNP State Government Removes Workers Rights

The Newman Government is in the process of passing legislation through Parliament to take away your right to choose to pay your Union subscriptions by Payroll Deduction (PRD).

There is no publicity about this and the Government has not consulted with the tens of thousands of Queenslanders who prefer the convenience of having their Union subscriptions deducted prior to receiving their wages.

Please clearly understand that your employer, Queensland Rail is still quite happy for your union subscriptions to be deducted by PRD, but the legislation proposes to make it illegal for your employer (QR) to deduct Union Subscriptions in the future.

If you are still paying by PRD, I would ask you to choose one of the alternative methods contained in the correspondence you receive to continue with your Union subscriptions. Simply fill out the relevant form and return it in the *“reply paid”* envelope enclosed (with this correspondence) for your convenience.

You have to move quickly with this as the draft legislation is currently at the Parliamentary Committee stage which has to report back before 14 November and **the withdrawal of your right to pay this way is expected to become law by the end of November, 2013.**

Yours in Unity



Owen Doogan
State Secretary
Queensland Branch

Use of External Protection Officers

21 October 2013

Decision

Please be advised the following decision has been made by Queensland Rail's Network leaders:

- Network will use contractors to supply external Protection Officers to supplement Network staff performing Protection Officer roles.

The reasons for the decision include:

- Queensland Rail's workload typically falls into three categories; faults response, routine maintenance and major renewals/construction. The typical cycles of peaks and lows is driven by the timing, location and track access requirements. Network's asset management strategy has to consider the cyclic nature of the work demand, the resources required to deliver this and the need to deliver a safe, reliable, efficient and cost effective rail asset for people of Queensland. To deliver projects on time and ensure 100% maintenance tasks are achieved, additional Protection Officers beyond those required for our day to day activities are needed. Queensland Rail does not maintain a permanent workforce in order to meet the peak work arrangements.
- Contractors can be quickly engaged to match the work demand and cover the peak work demands. Queensland Rail's recruitment and selection process typically takes several weeks from when the additional labour requirement is identified. Once contracts are in place contractors can be onsite as early as the next day. Conversely if works change at short notice contractors can be reduced quickly.
- There are a number of contractors that specialise in rail systems works including having staff that perform Protection Officer roles. Such contractors can supply Protection Officers that are experienced and competent to perform the role with minimal on the job training.
- Suitable contracting arrangements can be implemented to suit the dynamic nature of work.
- Contractors will be used to supplement the existing workforce to ensure 100% maintenance tasks and work milestones are achieved.
- Improved staff work and life balance.
- Implementation of this proposal would improve Network's ability to deliver a safe, reliable and value for money infrastructure asset.

The likely impact on employees (as well as measures taken to avert/mitigate adverse impacts) include:

- Network staff will be required at times to work with external Protection Officers.
- It is expected that this proposal will improve staff work life balance.
- It is acknowledged that for Queensland Rail to be sustainable over the long term it must maintain a core of experienced and competent staff. Network has sought to maintain its current Network front line staffing skill sets in line with current business needs. The use of external Protection Officers is not intended to disadvantage the training and progression of existing Network staff.

Consultation

As this decision is likely to have a significant effect on employees, Queensland Rail is required to consult about the implementation of the decision. To be clear, through this consultation process, you have an opportunity to provide feedback about the following two elements of implementation which are deemed necessary to give effect to the decision:

1. Proposed commencement date

The changes are proposed to occur on Monday 11 November 2013

2. Necessary process to give effect to the decision

In order to give effect to the decision outlined above, the following implementation components are proposed:

- Establishment of contracts for the procurement of external protection officers. The contracts will also cover matters relating to the training and competence of protection officers.

The Consultation Process

If employees have any comments/feedback regarding the proposed two elements of implementation of the decision outlined above, please provide them to Barry Hamilton, Protection Officer Coordinator, by COB Monday 5 November 2013.

Leaders will also be available to discuss the implementation of the decision.

Matters raised/discussed about the implementation of the decision will be promptly considered.

Following the close of the consultation period, a final decision regarding implementation of the decision will be communicated to all relevant employees and their union representatives.