

7 September 2021

Union Demands Safer Libraries For Staff

City of Gold Coast Library staff have been working tirelessly to deliver for your community week in week out throughout the pandemic and continue to do so. Our Union surveyed library staff in May and the response was huge! We have worked closely with delegates and members to collate your feedback and have met with Council to share some of our findings while keeping staff's identities anonymous.

The survey has highlighted significant areas of improvement for Council and should send alarm bells ringing for management. Here are some of the findings:

- **33%** of respondents believe the way they are directed to work is a risk to their health and safety
- **45%** of Library staff have witnessed or been the victim of workplace bullying
- **51%** have experienced problems applying for or gaining leave
- **59%** of Library Staff believe their workplace is becoming more unsafe
- **63%** of Library staff do not think the systems at Council adequately protect against bullying
- **69%** have not been consulted before being directed to undertake extra duties
- **71%** said their happiness at work was decreasing
- **80%** would like to stop working rotation in any of its designs
- **88%** said more should be done to support staff mental health

We also gave employees an opportunity to provide further information and below are some of the responses.

- *"I sometimes feel my workplace is unsafe"*
- *"I work in a highly stressful environment due to inadequate staffing numbers and unrealistic expectations of what staff can achieve"*
- *"Rostering is unnecessarily complicated and totally external to my library site"*
- *"Being listened to would help a lot and take staff feedback into consideration"*
- *"There is significantly less staff cohesion; less pride and ownership of library roles & responsibilities, lower productivity, increased personal leave and library customers are also feeling negative effects and less part of a "community" in libraries"*

What next?

After Union delegates and officials met with Council management recently, Council have agreed to set up working groups within Library Services to start to address some of the concerns we have raised. Please engage in this process and make your voice heard. While this process may not resolve issues overnight it is a good starting point.

Our Union has made it clear that there is no going back! The workplace culture must improve!

What can you do if you feel unsafe at work?

You are strongly encouraged to contact our Union on **3844 5300** for advice and representation from an experienced Industrial Officer.

What can you do to help?

Help us continue to build a stronger Union in Library Services by speaking with your colleagues and ask them to join us if they're not yet a member - <https://www.theservicesunion.com.au/member-information/join/join-now/>

If this communique has caused emotional stress for you, or if you are experiencing difficulty at work due to the current environment, you can call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636, or the Workers' Psychological Support Service on 1800 370 732 or by email info@wpss.org.au