

Staff Report June 2015

This report covers the period from May 16th to June 14th.

1. COLLABORATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

1.1 To build and maintain strategic relationships with politicians, bureaucrats, unions and the community to help us achieve our vision

- Coordinators met with Labor candidate for the seat of Solomon Luke Gosling. Unfortunately Senator Peris was not able to attend. This was an introductory meeting to explain the role of the NTWWC and raise industrial issues for NT women. Another meeting with the Senator will be arranged.
- The Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick will be visiting Darwin in August as part of her final tour before she completes her term. She has requested that the NTWWC in conjunction with the NTADC organise a community event. We have agreed with enthusiasm and are in the preliminary stages of doing this.

1.2 To build and maintain our reputation as industry leaders advocating for the rights of women at work and for workplace cultural change

The NTWWC assisted the ACTU in its collaboration with Lateline on Domestic Violence as an Industrial Issue – see the full story here:

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4243059.htm>

2. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

2.1 To establish and implement a clear community education framework

NTWWC delivered a session to Social Work and Humanitarian CDU students about basic rights at work and a brief introduction on the role of the NTWWC as part of law week.

3. FUNDING

3.1 To ensure ongoing financial sustainability and viability of the NTWWC

The NTWWC will need to replace the Centre's server this year as the current server is more than 5 years old. We have commenced discussions with our IT providers as to an appropriate replacement; the two options are to replace the server and software (at a cost of \$20-\$30,000) which would last another 4-5 years. Alternatively, we could move to the cloud at a cost of approx. \$20,000 per annum. We are still waiting for final quotes. Coordinators have written to the Fair Work Ombudsman and Department of Business to see if there might be some surplus funds in their budgets that would assist us with the cost. The FWO have responded that this is not a possibility, we have not yet received a response from DOB. **It would also be great if COM were able to investigate possible grant funds for this purpose. Possible grant options being considered are the Community Benefit Fund Major Grant program (although this is an unlikely option) and the NT Speaker and Press Gallery's Build Up Ball.**

4. CULTURAL ACCESSIBILITY

4.1 To ensure the NTWWC is accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and caters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's needs

4.2 To ensure the NTWWC is accessible and culturally appropriate for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women and caters for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women's needs

5. REGIONAL AND REMOTE WORK

5.1 To explore opportunities for increasing awareness of and accessibility to the NTWWC in remote communities

The Alice staff are planning a trip to Tennant Creek in August. Please let us know if you have any contacts there that may be useful.

6. STAFF

6.1 To maintain the status of the NTWWC as a model employer and workplace

6.2 To maximise and maintain our capacity and competency

- The four WWCs (SA, Qld, NT and Timor Leste) are gathering together for a 2 day Professional Development and Networking Workshop in Darwin on July 22-23. The Workshop will include team building to foster connections between our services, as well as presentations from FWO, FWC and Unions. Staff members will be presenting mini-skills development sessions.
- Rachael and Claire attended a 3 day Supervision training workshop in Darwin.
- Rachael will be attending First Aid training later this month.
- We are purchasing one stand up desk each for the Darwin and Alice offices, to contribute to staff health and wellbeing.

7. GOVERNANCE

7.1 A well-functioning, enthusiastic and supported COM.

7.2 Effective compliant and transparent risk management.

7.3 Up to date policies and procedures are in place and adhered to.

The draft policies that were circulated at the last meeting (History of the NTWWC and Returning to Work after parental leave) have not yet been circulated for e-decision, as far as we know. We would like to add a third policy amendment (see below) to clarify that an employee's termination entitlements (ie their unused annual leave and unused long service leave) may form part of their salary sacrifice package. We have been advised by CBB that this is only allowable if it is expressly written into an organisation's EBA or an employee's contract. With this amended policy we can update all individual contracts to cover this.

Recommendation: Coordinators have drafted amendments to existing policies and recommend that they are endorsed by the COM.

8. SERVICE PROVISION

8.1 Maintain the provision of an accessible, ethical and effective service to empower, support and advocate for Northern Territory working women, both individually and at the structural level, within a feminist framework.

PROPOSED POLICY AMENDMENT

2.13 SALARY SACRIFICE

Reviewed and amended ~~16/2/14~~ 10/6/15.

The objectives of salary sacrificing are to enable the NTWWC to attract and retain well-motivated staff of a high calibre who will be of significant value to the NTWWC in the most cost effective manner.

The NTWWC offers salary sacrificing by utilising its fringe benefit tax exemption status as the Centre is considered to be a Public Benevolent Institution by the Australian Taxation Office.

Salary sacrificing will be available to all staff other than those who are casual or employed on a contract of 3 months or less.

The maximum proportion of salary to be sacrificed will be equivalent to \$16,049 or a grossed up amount of \$30,000 or the current amount as provided in the applicable commonwealth legislation.

Superannuation is to be paid on the salary sacrificed component of an employee's wages as well as the taxable component of the wages.

Staff may choose up to 3 benefits from the Schedule of Benefit Items, to which the proportion of salary to be sacrificed will be paid, up to an amount not exceeding their entitlement. This choice may be altered once a quarter or in special circumstances. Periodic payment details must be provided at the commencement of the salary sacrificing operation.

An employee may package that portion of their termination pay that relates to unused annual leave and unused long service leave.

Procedure

The following is the Schedule of Benefit Items from which staff may choose up to 3 items;

Credit card debt, periodical payments, mortgage payments (owner occupied residence), rent, health insurance, private school fees, HECS and Post graduate study fees, holiday travel (fares, meals and accommodation), computer hardware and software, committee of management rates, insurance, utilities (electricity, gas, water, sewerage), motor vehicle costs (registration, insurance, service, vehicle loan or lease, repayments), childcare fees or expenses, school fees, telephone, professional organisation magazine subscriptions, sporting equipment and sporting club membership fees.

The Schedule of Benefit Items may be amended from time to time, subject to advice from the Australian Taxation Office.

The salary sacrifice component will be paid on behalf of the staff member each fortnight to the amount of the accrued benefit entitlement. A computerised accounting printout may be obtained at any time itemising the benefits paid.

In addition to the \$30,000 grossed up limit, staff may salary package up to 1 portable electronic device (such as a laptop, mobile phone, ipad, portable GPS or portable printer) in each FBT year. The item must be primarily for work-related use. These items are exempt from Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). This means you can salary package one of each of these items per FBT year (1 April - 31 March) and pay for it with your pre-tax salary.

The NTWWC must purchase the device and then the staff member purchases it from the NTWWC via salary sacrifice payments.

The Coordinator will advise a staff member of their right to choose a salary sacrifice arrangement.

A staff member who chooses a salary sacrifice arrangement must provide to the Administrative Officer written evidence of a debt owing. The staff member agrees and undertakes to indemnify the NTWWC from any fringe benefits taxation or other liabilities incurred as a result of payments made where a debt is not owed by the staff member.

Leave loading is a taxable component of wages paid to a staff member that will be paid at the applicable rate.

If the law governing the tax treatment of salary and benefit paid by NTWWC is altered by legislation or otherwise, the NTWWC will review the operation of the salary sacrifice arrangement in conjunction with staff. In the event that salary sacrificing is no longer available, the NTWWC will enter into negotiation with staff and the union to minimise any financial impact upon staff.

Any staff who wishes to access CBB to manage their salary sacrifice is entitled to do so. Any fees levied by CBB for this will be paid by the individual staff member.



CBB

the not4profit people

Wednesday 6 May 2015

Anna Davis
Northern Territory Working Women's Centre Inc
98 Woods Street
Darwin NT 0800

Dear Anna

RE: Staff Termination Entitlements and Salary Packaging

As you are our valued client we like to ensure that we are providing you with up to date advice along with any changes associated with salary packaging. The Not for Profit sector is currently experiencing a great deal of change, and with that change has come increased conversation around staff termination entitlements and how salary packaging could help to minimise the tax implications for employees.

CBB has sought further extensive advice on how termination pays should be treated in respect to salary packaging. These findings indicate an employee can package that portion of their termination pay that relates to unused annual leave and unused long service. This is only where the employee has it expressly written into their individual employment contract. This would also include any bonuses that the employee may receive.

In instances where an agreement does exist, but does not contain a clause in respect of termination payments, an addendum will need to be added to each individual's employment contract. If no agreement is in place this can also be added as an addendum to each employee's contract.

CBB is aware that for privacy reasons we would not be privy to an individual's employment contract conditions. We will therefore implement a policy by which we treat the salary packaging of termination pays and bonuses as permitted by your organisation from 1 July 2015.

This policy will presume that all your employees have such clause(s) included in their contract. Should this not be the case CBB will require in writing that your organisation does not wish to allow employees to package either termination pays or bonuses. This will then be kept on file until further notification from you.

Should you wish to discuss this further please feel free to contact me on the details below.

Kind regards

Jo Swingler
General Manager
CBB Salary Packaging

CC: Lianne Blanch

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