



# Quarantine strike action to go ahead on Friday 19 August, as last-minute talks fail

Quarantine staff will walk off the job for four hours at international airports from 6am tomorrow following the breakdown of last minute talks between the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and the CPSU.

According to the CPSU, DAFF management again refused to improve its current 3% pay offer.

CPSU National Secretary Nadine Flood said it was clear that the Federal Government's 3% pay cap on public sector agreements is preventing departments from having genuine negotiations with staff.

"Despite our best attempts today, discussions failed to resolve the pay issue.

"We would urge people collecting inbound international passengers tomorrow morning to factor possible delays into their plans," Ms Flood said.

The industrial action is also expected to impact on other DAFF services including cargo inspections, the release of imported goods and x-ray screening of international mail.

"Taking protected action is a last resort for DAFF staff, but we have been driven to this by the lack of progress on negotiations, and the refusal of the Federal Government to offer a pay deal that will not leave staff worse off after three years," said Ms Flood.

"Quarantine staff perform an essential frontline role in protecting Australia's borders, but they are not prepared to accept a sub-standard agreement that devalues their work."

"They have a tough, dirty and often dangerous job and they deserve a reasonable pay rise.

"Staff have been offered just 3% a year over three years, while the most recent figures from the ABS showed the CPI is now 3.6% and the Analytic Living Cost Index rose by 4.5 per cent over the year to June."

Friday's protected action is part of growing dissatisfaction within the public service about the way the Federal Government is handling pay negotiations.

Over the last month, over 80,000 staff in agencies such as the Immigration Department (DIAC), Customs, the Tax Office and Defence have voted overwhelmingly to reject new enterprise agreements because they contained low pay offers and in some places, cuts to conditions.

"Unless there is a change of attitude from the Government, and a move to genuine bargaining, then we are likely to see more industrial action," Ms Flood said.

**For comment:** Nadine Flood 0407 731 330 or Michael Tull 0418 557 380

## **CPSU member meetings**

*Adelaide International Airport:* From 10:30am CPSU members will gather at the corner of Sir Donald Bradman Drive and Airport Rd. Contact Liz Temple 0408 814 337

*Sydney International Airport:* From 9.30am CPSU members will gather in the carpark near Santo's coffee shop. Contact Michael Tull 0418 557 380