



Community & Public Sector Union
Civil Service Association of WA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Civil Service Association of WA Inc

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Union challenges threat to quarantine decision

The Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association will be in the WA Industrial Relations Commission this Thursday to oppose the reduction of dog handlers performing quarantine duties at the Perth domestic airport.

The Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) recently decided to halve the number of handlers from eight to four which would remove late night and weekend inspections.

This will increase the risk of prohibited insects, animal pests, plants, animal diseases and weeds from making their way into WA.

The union said if the government was serious about bio security and not just trying to save money it would focus on night flights as well.

Originally the decision was to be effective from July 1 but it was 'quarantined' after being referred to the Commission.

The CPSU/CSA application to the Commission made it clear DAFWA had breached the Notification of Change clause in the Public Service Award 1992 by failing to notify employees or the union about who may be affected by the proposed changes.

The union is pushing for the positions to remain in place.

In June Agriculture Minister Terry Redman denied the cutbacks were driven by the Barnett Government's 2 per cent efficiency dividend, which was disputed by employees who said it was spelt out in internal documents.

One dog handler on secondment to another area was due to return to the unit but has since been told it is not possible due to budget cuts.

CPSU/CSA Branch Secretary Toni Walkington said the agricultural industry contributed \$6billion to WA's economy and there an estimated 12 million passengers moving through the Perth airport in 2011, meaning biosecurity should not be compromised.

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“We don’t understand the logic behind the decision, particularly with record numbers of people flying into Perth every week,” Ms Walkington said.

“We know there is funding for two extra staff at the Eucla checkpoint which is recognition that quarantine is a high priority so why are they cutting resources at the airport?”

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