

Mobility pathway a road to nowhere

Your PSA representatives met with counterparts from Treasury and the Department on Monday 18 September regarding the mobility pathway.

The PSA has been literally inundated with responses from members in recent weeks and months regarding their frustrations as to how the mobility pathway is operating. Given it is clearly struggling at present, the PSA also has grave concerns with respect to its capacity to deliver later in the year when members subject to current and future FACS restructures join it.

The PSA used the meeting to outline members' concerns, including inadequate matches to jobs, inappropriate matches to jobs, inadequate information being provided to members when they are matched to jobs, the "quarantining" of frontline positions, lack of contact from Career Placement Officers (CPOs) and the stress and anxiety the process is creating for our members.

What became quickly apparent however is the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) has almost a blind faith in the capacity of the mobility pathway and its contracted providers, INS.

There was an immediate dispute as to the success rate of the program. The DPC claims there are far fewer participants who have been placed at a much higher rate than what the PSA was previously advised at a meeting with INS on 23 August 2017. The PSA has demanded these figures be provided to us. If the reports the PSA has received are correct and the placement rate of the program is anything like the measly 10 per cent it has been advised, then the viability and value of the program must be questioned.

The PSA attacked the inability of the DPC and INS to force hiring agencies across the public sector to consider FACS employees on the mobility pathway for vacancies. The DPC and Treasury claimed everything that could be done was being done. However, the PSA pointed out that if FACS itself as a hiring agency was choosing to advertise externally and not making what it described as frontline positions available to its own employees on the pathway. What hope was there any other agency or Department would do so? The FACS representative at the meeting claimed to have no knowledge of this decision and has undertaken to look into it.

The PSA also raised the issue of suitable positions that were not being identified for participants, unsuitable positions that were being identified, and, bizarrely, the limited information on a position that was being provided when it was being given to a candidate. DPC and Treasury tried to argue that this information was given by the INS CPO, but the PSA was able to demonstrate through information given by members that this was not the case, and they have agreed to improve this element of the process.

Finally, DPC advised that it had recently undertaken a "review" of INS's performance and found it to be satisfactory. The PSA made it clear that in the opinion of its members, the results and experience of the mobility pathway bore out a different story.



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A repeated theme in negotiations yesterday was the PSA raising concerns of its members and the resultant detrimental impacts the mobility pathway was having on their well-being, and the DPC asking to deal with matters individually to assist those persons better in the program.

The PSA's position is that it is the mobility pathway that needs to be repaired – not the individuals participating in it.

The mobility pathway as a concept was initially well received by the PSA in good faith as an additional mechanism that would assist members the large volume of members displaced by the restructures and privatisations underway in FACS to remain in public sector employment and minimise redundancies. It was also a test for the much-lauded capability framework introduced in 2014. On both accounts it has been an abject failure, where we hold the genuine concern that it now poses more harm than good by creating unreal and unachievable expectations.

The parties will meet again in two months. The PSA has made it clear that unless there are significant increases in employees getting permanent jobs and improvements in the processes of the mobility pathway, it will consider withdrawing support for the program. We will not stand idly by and allow members to be subjected to a potentially demeaning and demanding experimental process that produces slim prospects of a positive result.

Encourage your colleagues to **JOIN** the PSA online, or see your delegates for membership forms.

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