

FACS Executive – tone deaf to staff needs

Members have heard rumours FACS was on the move to Sydney Olympic Park. However, when the PSA pursued the issue with Deputy Secretary John Hubby, we were told nothing could be said because the proposal was “commercial in confidence”.

This is not the first time the Coalition Government and senior bureaucrats have hidden behind commercial in confidence as an excuse to justify their reluctance to consult with the PSA and our members.

Now Deputy Secretary Hubby has put out an announcement that reads like a press release confirming FACS is indeed moving to Sydney Olympic Park and we’ve been told after the event there will be consultation with the PSA.

The way this matter has been handled to date is completely contrary to Clause 65.1 of the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009 which requires that:

“There shall be effective means of consultation, as set out in the Consultative Arrangements Policy and Guidelines document, on matters of mutual interest and concern, both formal and informal, between management and the Association”.

We’re told that the FACS Executive had a look at staff residential postcodes before making the decision. Beyond this token step there was no absolutely no consultation with staff. There was no staff survey which would have informed the Executive about the impact of the relocation particularly for those with caring responsibilities including young children and ageing parents.

Sydney Olympic Park is a far from adequate site. Since the introduction of new timetables, there are fewer trains stopping at Lidcombe to change for the limited service to your new headquarters. Car parking is limited and expensive. It will also be a very stressful place to work if the Government proceeds with its plan to demolish the Olympic stadium and build a new one.

To add insult to injury the Executive wants to impose a so-called agile work environment which means hot desking to save money. They would not be pursuing agile work if it was more expensive!

Your Departmental Executive is contracted to work for a Government that does not value public servants and their experience and corporate knowledge. Otherwise they would not be privatising everything that is not nailed down and you would not be treated in such a high-handed and inconsiderate way just before Christmas.

The PSA is seeking answers through a genuine and transparent consultation process which addresses critical factors such as the timeline, work, health and safety, office space and layout, flexible working, public transport, parking and recognition of caring responsibilities. We met with the Departmental officials today and outlined our position in clear and unambiguous terms. We’ve now secured an agreement for monthly meetings about the relocation commencing on 31 January 2018.

Should FACS fail to engage with the PSA and members we will exercise all available options through the Industrial Relations Commission to support you.

