



PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

General Secretary Stewart Little  
President Kylie McKelvie  
ABN 83 717 214 309

Mr. Brendan Thomas  
CEO  
Legal Aid NSW  
323 Castlereagh Street  
Haymarket NSW 2000

26 September 2018

Dear Brendan,

**RE: Grants Restructure**

The Association's central concern with the restructure is the proposed move to an open plan office.

As you will be aware, the Association is of the view that all solicitors at Legal Aid should retain offices. I refer you to last year's industrial dispute over the open plan office proposal at the Parramatta office. Although grants officers are already in an open space, the space will be significantly reduced, increasing work health and safety risks.

The Polaris report you mention in your correspondence clearly states that Legal Aid should avoid open plan and hot desks arrangements (see page 16). Also it does not appear that the Deloitte report supports an open plan office arrangement either.

The Polaris report recommends that Legal Aid

- KEEP – workstation/place as is (page 16)
- ACHIEVE – Improved communication from management (page 17)
- ACHIEVE – Quieter workplace (Page 9)
- ELIMINATE – Unclear decision making – something not merit based (page 12)
- ELIMINATE – Noise (page 10)

It is unambiguous that the proposal to move to an open plan office has no evidence base at all. The move to an open plan office is contrary to the outcome of the Polaris workshops and goes against the desire for Grants staff for improved communication from management. As such, the refurbishment of the Grants space is a waste of resources and a profligate use of public money.

Further, while the Association does not support open plan arrangements, it is astonishing that the director and other managers will not be in the open plan space as well. At the very least, if Legal Aid management want to promote the alleged benefits of open plan offices, anything less than the director and management sitting alongside their staff in the open plan space is hypocritical.

As stated in our letter to you on 7 September 2018, the research demonstrates the inefficiency and work health and safety risks of open plan offices. We will provide you a literature review, a summary of key research findings in the field, and ask for your response.

We seek an urgent meeting about the above issues.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'Monika Wunderlin', written in a cursive style.

Monika Wunderlin  
For Stewart Little