

The below is an excerpt of an email received from Public Service Commission on Thursday August 27, 2020.

It provides further context for the PSC's organisational redesign and restructure.

A new approach to business planning

This year the PSC has taken a new approach to business planning, one that provides a clear pathway for the agency over the financial year 2020-2021. The plan is the result of a rigorous process by senior leaders focusing on responding to sector needs, whilst being realistic about what is achievable for the agency over the coming year during a time of significant change. The PSC's new business plan for 2020-2021 has been developed to transition our work to be more responsive and focused with a deeper impact.

The process has also clarified the capabilities required to ensure successful program delivery. We will work within our budget parameters and help the government achieve its priorities, including budget targets.

Directors are currently developing branch business plans which will cascade down to individual performance plans. Each employee's performance objectives will link with the PSC's 2020-2021 Business Plan.

Feedback through PMES and staff led feedback on performance management has consistently told us that staff want their individual objectives to tie into the PSC's strategy.

The performance planning process is an opportunity for a two-way discussion between leaders and employees to plan individual performance goals that link to the PSC's strategic goals. This provides an opportunity for the employees to define development goals and for a mutually agreed program of work to be captured for the set period.

The branch business planning process, coupled with the organisational and role design process, have been the impetus for Directors to consider the capabilities they require in their teams to ensure successful program delivery. Enhanced role design will also allow for teams to be more agile and focus on priority programs of work as the needs of the sector change.

Leveraging efficiencies to improve the way we work

We're committed to continual improvement and role modelling best practice. Over recent months there have already been strides made to improve the way we work which have resulted in efficiencies and we'll continue to do so. These areas include:

Coordinated approaches to the sector

- More planning around how and when we approach the sector, including streamlined communications
- Enhanced processes to manage our engagement and group themes to streamline how we partner with the sector and how they provide input

Better procurement practices

- Improved workflow for procurement approval now allowing input from key personnel to resolve issues earlier in the process before expenditure commitment
- Use of automated invoice recognition software to use a three-way verification system to seamlessly pay vendors with much less intervention required by our employees
- Targeted staff skill development on finance processes, including how to get the most from automated programs

Streamlined financial management

- Greater technology utilisation to remove manual activities and streamline the end to end finance project management process
- Leveraging existing project codes for Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) to track and monitor costs
- This integrates with the project management process in our finance system to provide seamless reporting and reduce the workload for those managing programs or projects (usually clerk grade 11/12 employees)

Technology to collaborate

- During 2020 use of collaborative digital platforms has become universal at the PSC. For example, real-time collaboration on documents avoids the need for manual and lengthy review and approval processes
- Digital platforms also enable more ways to meet and interact on programs of work more efficiently.

Improved reporting

- New Business Insights software is available to for our employees to create dashboards to view key insights in a more automated and efficient way, in the past a lengthy and manual process was needed to source this information

As we transition to the new structure, there will be further opportunities to work more efficiently which we will implement as appropriate. These include:

- Transforming our mode of delivery to sector partners, and moving towards models where we enable the sector to act, rather than act on their behalf
- Where we are asked to act on behalf of the sector, negotiating appropriate fee for service or similar arrangements
- Trialling simple, scalable interventions across the sector to exemplify and encourage leading practice

Leveraging collective expertise

To effectively facilitate delivery of our strategic objectives, we'll promote a culture where collaboration, information and idea sharing are foundational to the way we work.

We'll work together as 'one PSC' towards a common purpose that is focused on having a positive and meaningful impact for the sector. Our new structure will reduce siloed ways of working and promote more collaboration between teams.

Our programs of work will leverage the expertise of many from across varying business units for optimal outcomes.

Our corporate teams will join work programs from the outset as a crucial enabling partner. This will allow business delivery teams to be guided on the best approaches to sector engagement, communications, financial management, procurements, legal matters and people planning.

Improved collaboration can also enable our clerk grade 11/12 employees having the opportunity to lead a more varied program of work to diversify their experience and grow their leadership skills. It will provide a greater level of autonomy at the clerk grade 9/10 level, as this level will have more sharply defined projects that feed into broader programs of work managed by clerk grade 11/12s.

A comprehensive leadership development program is set to be launched in later this year which for PSSE and clerk grade 11/12 employees. The program will further promote effective collaboration and help managers to lead transformation and change.

Wellbeing at the core

The PSC has a strong culture of looking after its people and has processes, structures and control mechanisms in place to ensure this continues. It is an agency where wellbeing is protected and valued because it is a core foundation of an effective organisation.

In June 2020 we conducted a pulse survey to understand the impact of the COVID-19 situation and working from home was having on our employees. The 5 key themes of the survey were engagement, support, **wellbeing**, productivity and return to office. These themes aligned with those being surveyed by other public sector agencies.

Feedback from the pulse survey and other channels has informed our approach to boosting our focus on wellbeing. The work that's underway includes:

- Implementing the benchmarking tool used by SafeWork NSW to create the NSW Mentally Healthy Workplace Strategy 2018-2022. The tool defines five segments of capability to create a mentally healthy workplace and will inform the development of our own Mentally Healthy Workplace Strategy
- Providing free access to Headspace for our employees to support wellbeing, focus and help our employees to achieve a calm and clear mind.
- Recent Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) certification for a cohort of our employees. They will help support those who may be developing or experiencing a mental illness.

Guardrails to protect staff

The approaches we take to cascade our business plans into clear deliverables for each of our employees will assist leaders and their people to collectively agree on programs of work, outcomes and delivery timelines.

These programs of work can be monitored throughout the year to ensure work outcomes align with resource allocation and delivery timelines.

We report monthly on recreation leave balances to encourage our people to take a break from work, especially when recreation leave balances for staff are greater than 30 days.

Where there is a recreational leave balance of more than 30 days, the employee and manager are automatically notified. The manager must discuss and agree with the employee an appropriate time to take leave (within three months of being notified).

We also monitor employee flex time through flex sheets. Flex sheets can be reviewed at any time by the manager or HR team, sheets are approved by managers at the end of the six-week flex period.

If it appears excessive hours are being worked, managers must discuss with the employee the reasons why and look at options to support the employee and reduce their working hours.

Design principles for our new organisational structure

We established design principles to guide our approach and ensure we're well positioned to deliver on our strategy, they include:

Support the PSC Strategic Focus Areas, goals and priorities

- A more focused program of work responding to sector needs advance the sector and add value to be most impactful
- Improve how we phase our work, noting it is appropriate for priorities to shift from year to year and to build towards long term benefits

Foster nimble, wholistic and collaborative approaches to addressing the sector's opportunities and challenges

- Better engagement and partnership with the sector
- More transparent and robust decision-making around resourcing to ensure resources are deployed to priorities, even as those priorities shift and change
- Strengthen models of engagement with senior leaders in the sector
- More cohesive corporate function to influence how and when we deliver to the sector

Eliminate or minimise any existing duplication and inefficiencies

- Better role design with greater clarity and more collaboration
- Business plans that cascade to individual accountabilities and deliverables
- Smarter ways of working
- Technology as an enabler

Empower staff by devolving responsibility to the lowest appropriate level

- Empowering people with the appropriate delegations needed to best do their work while avoiding unnecessary layers of approval
- Confidence for those with expertise to make the right decisions about our work.