

The Environment, Energy and Science (EES) realignment

On 19 August 2020, the PSA was engaged in a briefing session with EES senior management about the proposed Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate. This is a strategic realignment of Biodiversity and Conservation and Policy, Strategy and Science, as well as affecting Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability. The stated aims are to “support EES to more effectively deliver the strategic direction for biodiversity conservation and natural hazard management across NSW”.

The PSA understands this affects up to 700 staff and will cause further anxiety among many of those affected. However, we will endeavour to keep our members informed and ensure the best outcome possible for you under these stressful times. Under the proposal the Department has stated no jobs will be lost. This includes temporary and contingent roles, providing they are currently funded.

The key features of the proposal are (as stated by ESS correspondence):

- Unite Biodiversity Conservation, Science, Policy and Climate Change/Sustainability.
- Bring biodiversity and conservation functions into one Directorate
- Give specific Director-level focus to key programs and deliverables, including the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, Environmental Water & Water Planning and Threatened Species & Ecosystems
- Realign Greater Sydney Branch with the other regional delivery branches into one Directorate
- Establish a joint leadership model for policy and program delivery in the regions
- Consolidate Marine, Coastal, Estuaries and Flood functions
- Integrate sustainability functions by bringing climate change and clean air policy functions into the Climate Change & Sustainability Division
- Further strengthen the Science, Economics & Insights Division as a centre of excellence providing evidence and insights for all EES environmental policy and programs.

The Department has indicated that over the coming weeks, it will undertake extensive consultation with staff and unions, including the PSA and Professionals Australia. This will include an initial two-week consultative phase/feedback period, following the release of a ‘Q&A Package’. Members are strongly advised to review this material, to liaise and discuss with others and to express any concerns they have about the proposed changes to their local delegates or to the PSA organiser.

The PSA will take on these concerns and will keep members updated as more information becomes available in the following weeks. Please remember to encourage your colleagues to join the union so we can continue to advocate on your behalf. Remember we are a stronger voice as one collective. Again, the PSA supports the stance of no job losses, and will argue if any do occur during this difficult time is not only heartless, but economically destructive to NSW. The Department has committed to keeping the PSA informed and engaged. As such we will ensure members are informed of any future developments and we will strongly advocate for your needs as expressed.



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Although the union expresses strong concerns about the realignment with respect to perceived job security and impacts on staff well-being, we do welcome the apparent transparency from the Department and the assurances this is just a realignment with no job losses. However, we are acutely aware that this will further impacts members' mental health and well-being, and as such will endeavour to keep you informed of any progress over the next few weeks. Again, we strongly suggest you get active and express any concerns you or your colleagues have.

The PSA would also like to remind members that with the current working arrangements due to COVID-19, it is important to maintain your mental health. The PSA would encourage members to talk to their managers if they are feeling mentally fatigued. You can also contact the PSA at membersupport@psa.asn.au if you feel you are not receiving adequate support. Also seek the assistance of a confidential consultation with a counsellor from the Employee's Assistant Program (EAP), as well as seeing your doctor if you feel your mental health is being impacted.

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