



Resilience
NSW

Mr Stewart Little
General Secretary
Public Service Association of NSW
GPO Box 3365
SYDNEY NSW 2001

By email: Nick Player nplayer@psa.asn.au

Dear Mr Little

Re: Establishment of Resilience NSW

Thank you for the Public Service Association's letter of 2 November 2020.

The issues raised in your letter have been carefully considered and our responses are set out in the table attached.

If you have any queries regarding our response, please don't hesitate to contact me on bronwyn.jones@resilience.nsw.gov.au. We look forward to continuing to work with the PSA on these important matters.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Jones PSM
Director Corporate, Strategy and Executive Services
5/11/2020

RESILIENCE NSW RESPONSE TO PSA POINTS IN LETTER DATED 2 NOVEMBER 2020

PSA Points:	Resilience NSW Response:
1) There was significant discussion and queries regarding response teams and disaster welfare and recovery. It is unclear how these functions sit in the new structure. It seems to be the case that the operation of these functions will sit in the regional structures. However, members ask how State level co-ordination of these functions will be undertaken?	<p>These functions sit primarily in the centralised operations area: State Operations Branch in the Government Coordination and Partnerships Division.</p> <p>The structure has been designed to ensure collaboration between all branches, and it will be particularly important that the State Operations Branch works closely with the regional branches in the Local Engagement and Coordination Division.</p>
2) Operational teams seem to have been split over four (4) Executive Directors. Members have advised they need clarity about the regional structure and what it will do and seek advice on how this structure will operate in an operational setting.	<p>All divisions in the structure contain operational functions. This is a deliberate organisational design decision to ensure the senior leadership team of Commissioner and Executive Directors have collective accountability for the agency's operations and outcomes.</p> <p>More details about the Local Engagement and Coordination Division, as well as the other Divisions, will be provided when the full structure is released along with the Change Management Plan. The full structure will show details down to the level of teams and individual roles.</p>
3) How will different teams work together across Executive Directorates? How will collaboration work?	<p>Executive Directors, Directors and Managers will ensure divisions, branches and teams collaborate effectively in a variety of ways including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal governance structures (such as weekly senior executive meetings, division, branch and team meetings, and cross-team project and program based working groups) • formal and informal information sharing, and • seeking input from other teams and branches on projects and other initiatives as required. <p>Collaboration channels, governance structures and operating rhythms will all be fully developed once the senior leadership team is in place.</p>
4) Where does the State Emergency Recovery Controller (SERCON) role sit?	This role is a statutory appointment and sits with the Commissioner accordingly.
5) Where does the policy function for each current branch sit? E.g. DWS policy, Funding Policy, Recovery Policy?	<p>All policy functions are centralised in the Strategy, Policy, Programs and Insights Division.</p> <p>This is a deliberate organisational design decision to address the siloed and fractured approach to policy under the current structure. This feedback was provided directly by staff during Strategic Directions Phase 1, as well as from external stakeholders across government.</p>

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PSA Points:	Resilience NSW Response:
6) Grants funding section – Where does DWS grants processing function sit?	<p>Funding and grants functions sit primarily within the Finance and Funding Delivery Division.</p> <p>This centralised grant funding capability will ensure robust and effective oversight of a very significant envelope of public funds. This function will also provide clear points of communication with and accountability to NSW Treasury and Commonwealth agencies. It will also work closely with other divisions for program design and service delivery..</p>
7) How will the current roles in the Communications Branch be distributed across the new structure, and what are the reasons for this decision?	<p>The proposed leadership structure includes a role of Director Communications who will oversee the communications function and ensure all parts of the agency are sufficiently serviced.</p> <p>This model is consistent with other agencies across the sector and encourages communications excellence, as opposed to siloed approaches.</p>
8) Concerns have been expressed about whether people will need to re-apply for jobs. Where possible the PSA will want to see existing employees matched against positions. Resilience NSW has inherited a highly skilled, hardworking, passionate workforce who have already earned their roles in the Public Service. Loss of these staff would not only be detrimental to them as individuals but also to the agency. To commence on the right footing Resilience NSW cannot afford to lose such knowledge and experience.	<p>As advised in previous presentations to staff and in correspondence with the Association, a Change Management Plan in accordance with the usual requirements will be developed and will be the subject of consultation.</p> <p>Our view is that certainty is very important for staff and that implementation of the Change Management Plan will be an important mechanism to achieve this outcome.</p>
9) Where recruitment processes may be required the PSA seeks that all interview panel members are trained and have done appropriate courses and are fully aware of all legislative and policy requirements (including those under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977).	All recruitment processes will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and Public Service Commission policies and guidelines.
10) We also seek that opportunities be made available for staff to be provided with application and interview training.	This has been agreed in previous correspondence with the Public Service Association.
11) Last week's briefing established that the processes currently underway will take longer than originally anticipated, into the second quarter of 2021.	Extensions of fixed term employment contracts will be considered on a case by case basis.

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PSA Points:	Resilience NSW Response:
<p>Understandably those on fixed term contracts are concerned about their status. The PSA seeks that these employees be extended in relation to the extra time required to finalise this structure. In light of ongoing operations of the organisation, staff turnover during this period would be severely detrimental.</p>	
<p>12) It is anticipated that there will be many roles that will have an After Hours component to their work. The PSA seeks assurances that the current arrangements for after hours and emergency operations (e.g. operational overtime arrangements) will continue under the new Resilience NSW structure.</p>	<p>At this stage there are no plans to divert from the current arrangements under the <i>Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009</i> in respect of After Hours component.</p>
<p>13) Finally, but of much significance, members have raised further concerns that fatigue within some operational branches is still not being appropriately managed. Whilst a Work Health and Safety Committee has commenced there is still no fatigue management policy. Currently we are advised of some people still working excessive hours. This should be properly managed by their supervisors. Also, some staff have expressed the need for more specific support than being referred to an EAPS in relation to those coming out of operational roles from the last summer event. We seek that this be looked into and opportunities for support be offered to affected employees. Additional to this we seek that plans be put in place to address future events, noting unfortunately, that there is inevitability of such occurrences.</p>	<p>Comments on each issue raised are below.</p> <p><u>Fatigue Management policy</u> The ResNSW WHS committee has been working to develop a suite of policies, safe operating standards and tools to guide and support safe work practices across the agency. These are currently in draft form with priority being given to the policy on WHS Responsibilities and Authorities and a suite of Safe Operating Standards including fatigue and driving. The WHS committee met on 5 November 2020 and are progressing these matters.</p> <p><u>Excessive hours</u> Directors are aware of the need to reduce fatigue and it is understood that one recent case has been managed locally and is not an ongoing issue. Further, it is understood that none of the Health & Safety representatives have been contacted and nor has there been a reportable incident or near miss within the SAP system.</p> <p><u>More specific support</u> Following the intense period at the beginning of 2020, a number of strategies were employed to assist staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visitations by Therapy dogs to 180 Thomas Street and the former Phillip Street office. - Psychologists were brought into 180 Thomas Street for discussions over a period of weeks. - After Action Reviews of the season have been conducted across all the teams in ResNSW allowing voices to be heard. - Staff are regularly reminded of EAP services and to avail themselves of the services.

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PSA Points:	Resilience NSW Response:
	<p>These initiatives were communicated to staff. Services were available to staff working in the field through Red Cross and other providers who are trained in psychological first aid where they could not attend 180 Thomas Street.</p> <p>Once again none of the Health & Safety representatives have been contacted and nor has there been a reportable incident or near miss within the SAP system.</p> <p><u>Planning for future events</u> It is envisaged that the new structure will provide a greater capacity within ResNSW to surge our workforce to support operations. Further, ResNSW is considering guidelines for deployment that would limit the length of time prior to a break while on deployment. Consideration is also being given to the introduction of psychological first aid training for all staff.</p> <p>Finally, subject to operational requirements, ResNSW staff are encouraged to take leave over the Christmas and New Year period.</p>