30 May 2019

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment MoG changes

On 24 February 2019 PSA Industrial Staff and Delegates met with the Secretary of DPIE, Mr Jim Betts, and representatives of his team.

The Secretary advised he acknowledged the level of uncertainty from staff. He said he recognises the value in quickly telling people where changes are not happening to alleviate uncertainty. At this point, he says, structures have only been defined at senior levels. Phase 1 of the MoG changes will focus on these high level functional structures and what functions sit where. It is only post implementation (after 1 July) that there may be restructures, but there has been no decision made as yet.

Obviously whilst the budget in mid-June will be significant to the wider sector the Secretary has no clear efficiencies to attain yet. He advised that as much as possible he would address excessive bureaucracy as a means of making savings rather than targeting jobs.

Notwithstanding the above he said some areas would remain structurally much as they were. For example, DPI would remain as DPI under Scott Hansen.

Water would change on the basis that new water-related entities were entering the cluster. That, in itself does not mean significant restructuring. The Secretary advised he was aware that the functions of Water still needed to be performed. The PSA and delegates reiterated most strongly that members in Water have had their fill of restructuring over the past few years.

The PSA strongly raised concerns about expectations to do more with less and that the employer should actively promote the valued service of its employees to the wider public.

The Secretary advised he had no tolerance for bullying and that matters brought forth would be dealt with. The PSA advised that the employer needed to get some runs on the board for employees to have trust.

The PSA raised that the move of many services to Parramatta was significant to many members, some of whom have indicated it is simply a step too far and may impact on them remaining in their roles. Management will see this move as an efficiency but the PSA remains concerned regarding affected members. Further discussions and meeting will take place regarding this and other relocations within the cluster.

It was agreed that meetings would continue fortnightly with the next MoG consultation meeting set for Friday 7 June.

Member survey

The PSA thanks our members for responding to the PSA MoG changes survey. The overwhelming general feedback was how it would affect jobs, and whether VRs would be offered.

The Secretary made it clear that it was his intention that efficiencies should be made in many other areas before cutting jobs. The PSA stresses that this does not mean there will not be job losses in some areas, however it is encouraging that the Secretary does not see the MoG changes as an excuse to cut jobs.

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Any specific restructures, including any that consider losing positions, is required to be subject to full consultation with the PSA. Voluntary Redundancies will be looked at in the context of that consultation.

The Secretary also made clear that the functions that the Office of Environment and Heritage, and the Office of Local Government perform are not being abolished. In other words, he recognises that the work still exists, regardless of Machinery of Government changes.

While the MoG changes likely mean that there will be an amalgamation of flex arrangements for staff, the PSA made it clear that it was expected there would be no loss of accumulated flex leave balances as a result of any transfer or movement of staff. The Department confirmed that everything is business as usual and that there would be no rush to new systems or arrangements.

The PSA asked a number of specific questions regarding agencies and where they sit in the new structure. The short answer is that further executive structures will be released shortly (before the next meeting on the 7 June) and there will be more clarity once those structures are released.

The PSA will keep the MoG changes survey open. If you would like to submit any feedback, or raise any question, please click **HERE**. All feedback is handled confidentially.

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