



CPSU (PSU Group) Submission

Input into the 2012-13 Budget

**Budget Policy Division,
Department of Treasury**

January 2012

work practices actually hinder the provision of services. Employees who do these jobs should have a role in designing work practices and the development of new work systems.

There are a range of productivities that could be garnered through whole-of-government procurement; this includes areas such as information and communications technology, legal services, property, and travel. We note that the Government has already undertaken some reform in this area¹³. The design and implementation of these whole-of-government savings measures would be best achieved if there was a role for employees, as users of these services, in that process.

Accordingly, the CPSU seeks the implementation of processes at agency level which allows for the involvement of CPSU and employees in identifying better work and operating systems.

The agency level processes should be collaborative, with the involvement of the CPSU, and mechanisms for reporting to and receiving reports from the workforce. The purpose would be to identify improvements in existing work practices and operating systems and be involved in the development of new work practices and operating systems.

For this to work effectively, union representatives involved in the process should be given appropriate time and resources to consult with employees in their agencies. Such an arrangement would be consistent with the facilities arrangements that applied during enterprise agreement negotiations in 2011 and the delegates' rights provisions of the APS Bargaining Framework.

The agency processes should also be overseen by the working group made up of representatives of the APSC, Department of Finance and Deregulation, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the CPSU.

Maintaining a regional and rural presence

Given the tight budgetary circumstances, there may be pressure on some agencies to limit their regional and rural presence. Such a decision is short-sighted and reduces the Government's opportunities to directly interact with Australian communities.

Maintaining the footprint of APS agencies and services is important to Australian communities in regional and rural areas; providing greater accessibility to and visibility of Commonwealth Government services and ensuring APS agencies and department have strong ties to the communities they serve.

Furthermore centralisation of functions in Canberra, or other major cities, do not necessarily deliver savings – as the labour markets in these areas are often far tighter than regional areas.

Recent examples where this has occurred include:

- Over the last two years, the Department of Human Services has moved a number of positions out of Tasmania. A number of jobs in regional areas of Tasmania were lost when the Department decided to centralise scanning of mail in Canberra. In the same Department a restructure 18 months ago saw significant elements of processing work move out of Tasmania, including from regional areas. Other functions have been centralised to

¹³ p 45

Melbourne and Brisbane. The CPSU estimates that over the last eighteen months in DHS alone 30 jobs have been moved out of Tasmania.

- In the Department of Defence many functions have been moved out of regional areas or other cities to Canberra. This includes the audit function that was moved to Canberra approximately two years ago, Navy finance jobs which were moved to Canberra in 2010, corporate support functions moved from bases throughout the country to Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney last year, redeployment case managers centralised to Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne and Army career management which the Department is currently moving to Canberra.
- Over the last two years, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship has closed offices in Southport and Dandenong moving the work to Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra.

The CPSU does note that the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport have appropriately sought to increase their representation in regional Australia, opening an office in Adelaide. The CPSU supports further expansion of this Department into regional and rural Australia.

In addition to a loss of positions in regional areas, the classification profile of positions in regional areas has not kept pace with the rest of the APS and now differs significantly. For example, whilst the proportion of APS 3 and APS 4 in the whole of the APS has decreased from 37.24% in 2003 to 32.95% in 2011, in Tasmania over the same period as a proportion of all APS jobs in Tasmania it has increased from 50.31% to 64.99%. At the same time, while the proportion of EL 1 and EL 2 positions in the whole of the APS has grown to 26.42% in 2011, only 11.48% of all APS jobs in Tasmania are at these classification levels.

These trends demonstrate that the jobs that are kept in certain regional areas are less likely to be higher level positions. This itself has implications for the diversity of the APS workforce and its engagement with Australian communities.

The Government must ensure that the APS maintains a strong regional and rural presence.

APS reform processes

The CPSU seeks specific funding for APS reform. The 'Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration' set an ambitious and comprehensive reform plan for the APS. However, the implementation of this reform package has been impeded by budget cuts.

The CPSU calls for immediate funding to assist the implementation of APS reform processes.

Greater commonality of conditions and pay equity are important APS reforms. Achieving this goal would deliver significant efficiencies in APS operations, and also support greater mobility within the APS and its overall capacity.

All APS agreements will expire in June 2014. Early action by Government and greater co-operation and collaboration with the CPSU will be necessary if significant progress to these goals is to be made by that time.