

**SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**  
**EVIDENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION—**  
**22 MAY 2007**

At today's hearing the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) undertook to provide further information and clarify some of it.

**Machinery of Government changes and Redeployment, reduction and retrenchment arrangements**

Ms Tarjan, Group Manager, Policy gave evidence in relation to machinery of government changes.

Information on Machinery of Government changes is set out in a joint Commission, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and Department of Finance and Administration guide, *Implementing Machinery of Government changes - A Good Practice Guide* which is available on the Commission's website at <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications07/machineryofgovernment.htm>

Under section 72 of the Public Service Act, the Public Service Commissioner has the power to move employees between APS agencies, or into or out of the APS, in order to give effect to an administrative re-arrangement (defined in the Act as any increase, reduction or reorganisation of Commonwealth functions).

The Public Service Act and Public Service Regulations (regulations 8.1 and 8.2) also set out the arrangements that apply in relation to the remuneration and other conditions of employment of staff affected by an administrative re-arrangement. DEWR has primary responsibility for matters relating to terms and conditions of employment.

The Government's Policy Parameters for Agreement Making in the Australian Public Service (APS) provide the policy framework within which APS agencies negotiate collective agreements and/or Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs). The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) has overall responsibility for the Policy Parameters.

In relation to redeployment, reduction and retrenchment (RRR) arrangements, Policy Parameter 4 provides that all agreements are to include compulsory RRR provisions, with any enhancements not to exceed existing redundancy arrangements. The Commission has policy responsibility for this parameter.

Policy Parameter 4 also provides that an Agency Minister may, in consultation with the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service, approve separate financial incentives to resolve major organisational change. Such incentives are to be cost neutral to the agency in the context of the major organisational change.

DEWR has issued Supporting Guidance on the operation of the Policy Parameters and on workplace relations policies more generally. The Supporting Guidance (including the Parameters) is available on DEWR's website at <http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Organisation/Government/Federal/AgreementMaking/>

### **Whistleblowing—Mr Ellis**

Further to this morning's evidence in relation to whistle blowing reports from Mr Peter Ellis, the Commission advises that Mr Ellis wrote originally to the Commissioner on 30 May 2005 and this was referred on 24 June 2005 to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for handling.

Mr Ellis wrote to the Commissioner on 31 October 2006 seeking a further investigation of the Department's conclusions, and raising additional allegations. The Commissioner wrote to the Secretary of DFAT on 24 November 2006 requesting papers in relation to the first investigation and noting that the Secretary had agreed to investigate the further allegations raised in the 31 October 2006 correspondence. The Secretary of DFAT provided papers to the Commission on 21 December 2006.

Mr Ellis wrote to the Commissioner on 22 March 2007 seeking a further investigation of the Department's conclusions in relation to the second matter. The Commissioner wrote to the Secretary on 2 April 2007 seeking papers on the second investigation; these papers were received on 30 April 2007.

The Commission is investigating both matters concurrently. No further correspondence has been received by Mr Ellis in the interim.

### **The decision to move from Barton to 'The Glasshouse', 16 Furzer Street, Woden and painting of the Commission's premises in the Edmund Barton Building**

The Commission started investigations into alternative accommodation for its Canberra-based staff in 2005. Then on 27 February 2006 (not October 2006), the Executive decided to move to a building under construction in Woden, known as 'The Glasshouse'. No painting of the Commission's Barton offices has been undertaken since then.

### **Expenditure on photographs of Senior Executive Service employees**

The Public Service Commissioner gave evidence in relation to photographs taken.

The Commission made a number of new appointments to its senior executive team in February and March 2006. The Commission took the opportunity to take fresh photographs of its leadership team and the Commissioner in March 2006 for Commission publications and promotional material.

The Commission will respond to the question on notice within the timeframe in relation to total photography costs for 2006–07.

### **Corporate Retreat and Group Planning days**

The Commission held its annual Corporate Retreat on 26-27 February 2007 at The Stamford Plaza, 33 Cross Street, Double Bay, NSW 2028.

The Public Service Commissioner, the Deputy Public Service Commissioner, the Merit Protection Commissioner, seven Group Managers, including acting Group Managers (SES Band 1) and the adviser to the Merit Protection Commissioner attended, although two officers stayed an additional night for operational reasons.

The costs of the Retreat (including GST) were:

Accommodation (including breakfast)	\$2,390
Dinner	\$880
Alcohol	\$293.50

Airfares and ground transport	\$4,903
Equipment, room hire, conference package (including lunch)	\$4,072.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,539.10</b>

Since 1 July 2006, three Group Managers have also held a total of two full and one half planning days for their respective groups at external venues in Canberra.