

## Labour Relations Division of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: Sue Howard 9222 7668

### CIRCULAR TO DEPARTMENTS AND AUTHORITIES NO 5 OF 2001

#### **AMALGAMATION – WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION**

Cabinet has recently approved recommendations arising from the “Machinery of Government Task Force” report. The recommendations set in train the reorganisation of public sector structures and call for agencies to establish clear communication channels with key stakeholders. The Directors General of Departments will have already received some advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet about the communication of machinery of government changes.

Departmental planning processes should involve provision for consultation to occur with all employees, including where possible those on extended leave or secondments, during the process. All possible steps should be taken to ensure employees are well informed and given opportunities to provide feedback on issues that affect them.

To assist the process, Government has approved a set of principles and guidelines for reorganisation. A copy is attached.

In respect of workplace communication, procedures must recognise obligations arising through ‘Notification of Change’ clauses in awards or agreements. Consultative mechanisms developed should balance managerial responsibility with the need to ensure procedural fairness when undertaking changes in the reorganisation of work. The intention is to ensure minimal disruption to normal work and the provision of customer service.

Please bring this circular to the attention of all officers who may be directly or indirectly involved in facilitating the amalgamation and reorganisation of agencies.

Yours faithfully

**JEFF RADISICH**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

4 July 2001  
Att

## PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR REORGANISATION

The Government is committed to a more cohesive public sector. This will involve structural change consistent with work undertaken by the Machinery of Government Taskforce, and will result in some changes to the roles undertaken by public servants, but no loss of employment.

The following principles, in conjunction with the overall reform outcomes, will guide the people management aspects of this change.

**1. NATURAL JUSTICE** - the principle of natural justice will prevail in all decision making.

Process:

- All decisions are transparent;
- All decisions are adequately documented;
- A review process exists for affected employees, with agencies utilising existing or revised grievance processes to enable employees to raise issues arising from the change process;
- Decision making takes into account both the individual and employer needs.
- Relevant and current policy and procedures are well documented and accessible by employees.

**2. PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION** - Planning will be undertaken in advance of any organisation change, and communication processes exist that extend across the organisation and involve the participation of all key stakeholders.

Process:

- Change management strategies are articulated to the portfolio Minister and all employees prior to any structural changes being undertaken;
- Participation of relevant persons in planning the change program occurs where appropriate;
- Chief Executive Officers take a key role in communicating the change program, ensuring that all employees are well informed about the organisation change program via the most appropriate mechanism available;
- The opportunity for regular across agency information updates is provided to all employees;
- A key priority is to minimise disruption to the daily operations of the organisation so that ongoing service delivery to the community is not affected;
- All decisions take into account the need to maintain the level of expertise, corporate knowledge, accountability and service levels within the organisation.

**3. CONSULTATION** - Consultation with relevant parties is undertaken.

Process:

- Relevant parties are invited to contribute to any organisational change recommended;
- A well defined consultation process is undertaken within the organisation that provides opportunities for input from employees and union representatives;
- Formal consultative mechanisms are established to capture the contribution of stakeholders;
- Employees and unions are given as much notice as practicable of changes within the organisation.

**4. REDEPLOYMENT** - Current government policy concerning the overall management of redundancy (as detailed in Part 6 of the *Public Sector Management Act, 1994* and the associated *Redeployment and Redundancy Regulations, 1994*) is followed.

Process:

- Individual employees are assured that they have security of employment in the public sector, and are provided with information on relevant legislation, standards and policies;

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- Employees are informed that jobs may either cease to exist, or be significantly altered, and are encouraged to be flexible in considering redeployment and redundancy options;
- Chief Executive Officers retain responsibility for the management of employees affected by changing work situations and, as a first priority, actively seek placement opportunities within the portfolio department for any affected employees;
- A process for the internal filling of positions is implemented, providing for like to like transfers, placement of redeployees and advertising of promotional opportunities.
- Employees are registered for external redeployment where they are unable to be placed in the new portfolio department.
- Employees are kept fully informed about redeployment, retraining and severance options, and have access to support services, including career transition services;
- The Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet is available to provide advice and support to agencies and employees in the change management process.

**5. SUPPORT MECHANISMS** - Support mechanisms exist that are understood by all employees and how to access these is articulated.

Process:

As far as is practicable support by the organisation is provided in the form of:

- Personal counselling.
- Financial counselling and advice.
- Access to career guidance programs (eg. career transition workshops).
- Appropriate training and retraining to meet the needs of employees is provided in the context of the redeployment opportunities being considered.
- Agencies and employees have access to advice and assistance from the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet.

Confidentiality is assured in relation to the choices employees make regarding whether to access these services.