



# WORKING for a better PUBLIC SERVICE



[www.together.org.au/betterpublicservice](http://www.together.org.au/betterpublicservice)

# A STRATEGY TO MANAGE GOVERNMENT CHANGE AND BUILD BETTER LIVES

The change of government has seen a wave of changes sweep through the public sector.

These changes will affect each of us in different ways. We don't know what all changes will bring but we do know that the changes are going to continue for some time to come.

In this time of uncertainty, when jobs are potentially coming under threat, nothing is more important to public sector workers than secure employment.

We are stronger together. By standing as one and speaking with one voice, we can make a real difference to the lives of Queenslanders and build better services for our state.

This moment of change is a key point for the future of the public sector in Queensland.

To ensure your union has a strategic response to the current and future changes a draft position in the form of a nine-point plan has been developed for members to consider.

If adopted it will be the basis for our union's position on change of government issues to be pursued sector-wide and with each agency.

Alex Scott

Alex Scott, Together Secretary



# WHAT IS HAPPENING

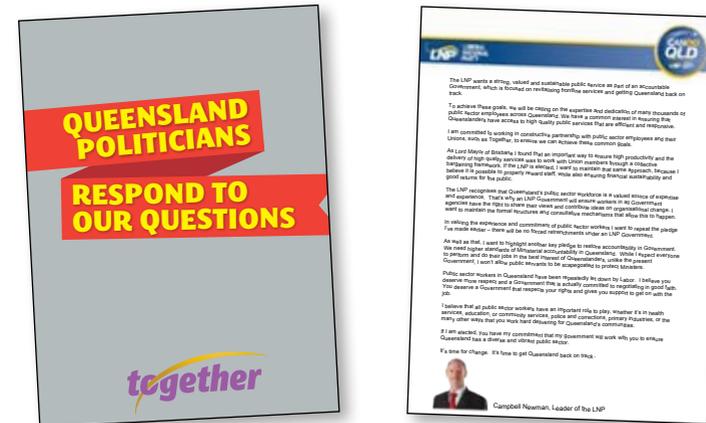
After the election, the new government announced wide-ranging changes to the structure of state government departments – a Machinery of Government change or MOG change.

These changes included abolition of some departments, like the Department of Environment and Resource Management and DEEDI, the creation of new departments in their place, and modifications to other existing departments.

Prior to the change of government, there was a round of voluntary separations – the VSPs – which saw about 5,000 jobs disappear from the public sector.

The government's objective to reduce the size of the state's deficit could potentially see further cuts in positions, with resulting increases in workloads.

The Establishment Management Program (EMP) has seen a freeze in positions, and a focus on what staff constitute "front line" versus what are "non-front line." In practice, this artificial and unclear distinction means that staff who do vital work to support government services are being left short-handed and do not have the staffing resources to deliver services that the community needs.



Above: Politicians were asked to outline their plans for the public sector during the state election campaign. The LNP indicated it would support no forced retrenchments in government.



# MORE CHANGE ON THE WAY?

The government's Commission of Audit into the management of the public sector will deliver its report soon. The commission will most likely be recommending cuts in expenditure to protect the state's budget position.

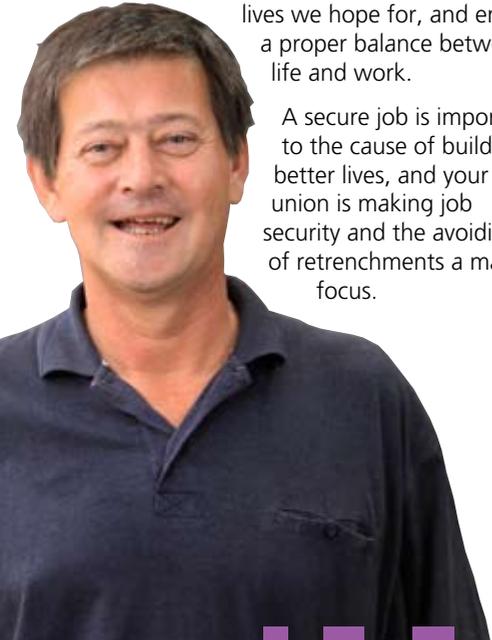
The government will probably be announcing more big changes over the coming weeks and months. These will include an audit of "front line" staffing numbers, policies to reduce red tape, and a policy on establishment numbers, which will set out formally how many staff government agencies should have.

## PROTECTING YOUR JOB

Members have said employment security is their first priority. Change can always bring new challenges but no change by any government should have the effect of making a worker's job less secure.

Without employment security, we cannot plan for the future, have the stable lives we hope for, and enjoy a proper balance between life and work.

A secure job is important to the cause of building better lives, and your union is making job security and the avoiding of retrenchments a major focus.



The government is planning a "War on Waste" program that will see agencies asked to provide additional efficiencies and nominate opportunities to save money by reducing waste. This will be on top of the existing announcements of the freeze on the hiring of consultants and changes to travel arrangements.

These policies are still in development, and there is an opportunity for union members to have a say to make sure that the views of workers are taken into account.

Your union's representatives are meeting with heads of agencies to work out what their plans are for delivering services and managing jobs and workloads.

Your union campaigned during the state election to make politicians commit to no forced retrenchments in government.

Politicians of all parties, including the current government, answered members with a promise that no forced retrenchments would be made.

Winning promises during an election campaign is one thing – now as a union we need to focus on turning these promises into government policy.

In the public sector there are many long-term temporary workers who, if they worked for in the private sector, would be considered permanent and have the legal rights that go with permanent employment.

Your union believes that any loss of permanent staff, or long-term temporary staff, should be treated as forced retrenchments, and therefore a violation of the government's election commitments.

# WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

A challenge in the new regime is the management of workloads. As new priorities appear, existing service delivery requirements still exist. This can create serious problems and unreasonable expectations in managing workloads.

If the government believes they do not need to deliver particular services, then they should be articulating this clearly and openly, rather than just attempting to deliver services in a way that public sector workers are unable to manage.

Your union will ask the government for a workload management tool to be made available to managers in all agencies to ensure that workloads are managed responsibly and staff are not overwhelmed by their workloads.

## A STRONG VOICE DURING WORKPLACE CHANGE

The MOG process will mean many departments are going through major organisational change.

People should have a voice about the new organisational structures that are proposed. We can achieve this by developing a united position as a union that we can take to government.

As a government employee, you know how important it is to have a structure that makes service delivery efficient and keeps workloads manageable.

If the government is considering making a determination that a worker's position is not "front line", staff should be able to have a say in that decision.

Often a position may not meet a strict definition of "front line" but still be necessary in providing government services and ensuring that workloads for workers in all areas become manageable.

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# TOGETHER WE CAN WIN

Standing together, we can make a difference – we've seen this many times in the past.

Together we can protect job security, prevent forced retrenchments, and make sure workloads are manageable.

To do this we all need to be speaking with one voice as union member.

When people speak with a united voice as a union, the employer has to listen to you and your perspectives.

The first stage is for members to decide what issues we want to pursue and how.

Next, when members have agreed on the strategy for managing this change, your union delegates will take this position to our employer and articulate to the government what needs to be done.

With the support of thousands of union members, your union delegates will be able to make the government and politicians listen to our priorities.

This strategy is about addressing the issues which members have said consistently are important: their job, their workloads and the quality of the services they provide every day.

With your support, we can bring public servants through this change process in a way that secures jobs and better workloads, and helps make life better for all public servants.

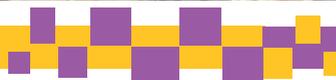


# 9 POINT PLAN TO MANAGE CHANGE

To achieve a better public service our union seeks that the government will guarantee that:

1. There will be no forced retrenchments of permanent public servants or long-term temporary employees.
2. There will be real and meaningful consultation with public servants about the new organisational structures for departments as part of the Machinery of Government changes.
3. Public servants will not have to re-apply for their positions as part of the organisational changes resulting from the Machinery of Government changes.
4. Public servants will be consulted prior to any decision to change the definition of functions or work groups to being non-frontline.
5. As a priority, the government will put in place a process for the audit of non-frontline positions and the creation of establishment numbers for these positions.
6. The Public Service Commission will issue a directive to better facilitate the voluntary transfer of public servants to priority positions which are vacant.

7. The Public Service Commission will issue a directive to facilitate merit appointment to fill vacant positions by way of promotion with applications limited to existing public servants.
8. The Public Service Commission will as a priority review the existing directives and guidelines relating to discipline, investigations and dispute resolution to reduce the bureaucratic red tape involved and provide a greater emphasis on workers' rights and effective resolution.
9. As part of the Establishment Management Program:
  - a) Any decision not to fill a position will be accompanied by a decision that the remaining work will be reorganised, re-allocated or no longer performed.
  - b) The remaining staff affected by this decision will be advised and genuinely consulted.
  - c) Any decision not to fill a position will be accompanied by the use of the workload management tool.



Australian Unions  
  
Working for a  
better life.

*together*

Authorised Alex Scott Together Secretary  
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