

PSBUDGETCUTSNEWS

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FAST TRACK TO TERMINATION

This week unions met with government representatives who unveiled a proposal allowing public sector workers to be sacked after a six month redeployment period

NOT only does Government have a proposal to sack workers, but in the state budget it will be announcing which programs and services will be slashed as part of its cost cutting exercise - all without any consultation with you or the Tasmanian community.

The other changes highlighted at the meeting were amendments to the State Service Act to give heads of agencies the power to terminate employment where they believe a worker *'is not performing his or her functions to the standard and requirements identified in the performance management plan.'*

How this would work would be determined by a Ministerial Direction which wasn't provided, and this is a serious concern given our recent experience where an MD was drafted, signed and implemented before any consultation occurred.

This anti-worker strategy to be rolled out by the Premier is another tool to terminate public sector workers without redundancy.

This is how the proposed process will work:

Some programs will cease immediately and those of you working in these will be identified as *'surplus employees performing targeted duties'*.

Other targeted programs will cease in the future and employees in those will be identified as having *'potentially targeted duties'*.

After the budget, agency heads will notify employees if they're performing targeted or potentially targeted duties and will then try to redeploy surplus employees performing targeted duties into suitable vacancies that arise.

If that's unsuccessful - and it only needs to try for 1 day - the agency can delared the employee surplus to requirements and place them on the Section 47 Redeployment List.

It then becomes the responsibility of the Public Sector Management Office to try to redeploy the employee into a suitable vacancy across the whole of the public sector.

The employee may be offered redeployment to a lower classified position and if they accept this their salary would be maintained for 12 months then they would be declassified.

Employees must accept positions offered to them if it's determined they're suitable for the role.

Suitability is only based on skills it does not include assessment of a person's other needs or responsibilities.

If after 3 months PSMO has been unable to redeploy the employee and the likelihood of being redeployed in the next 3 months is low a voluntary redundancy may be offered, and this may include an incentive to leave on a date proposed by the employer.

There were no criteria provided under which workers would be offered a voluntary redundancy at this stage and many agencies have already made it clear they can't afford redundancies.

If after 6 months PSMO hasn't been able to redeploy the employee the State Service Commissioner will be advised redeployment isn't possible and employment will then be terminated.

An involuntary redundancy payment may be made at this stage, and the amount of any payment is unknown

but it was made clear it would need to be reduced to reflect the period on the redeployment list.

Unions made these observations about the Ministerial Direction 25 designed to enforce this regime:

- *It includes significant flaws that would render it unenforcible*
- *It has the potential to be used to discriminate against particular workers*
- *It is a thinly veiled process designed to hasten termination through Section 47*
- *It can't be supported by unions because it results in the forced termination of workers*

The Ministerial Direction also arrogantly usurped the role and powers of the independent statutory office holder, the State Service Commissioner, by:

- *Assuming he will automatically accept employees onto the section 47 Redeployment List following a process determined by the employer rather than the Commissioner*
- *Assuming he will accept the central vacancy management process as being 'reasonable and practicable' to redeploy surplus workers*
- *Assuming the Commissioner will allow the Minister to terminate surplus employees after 6 months on redeployment based solely on advice from PSMO that redeployment has not been possible*

Copies of the draft MD25 and the proposed targeted voluntary redundancy program are available at www.abettertasmania.com



BUDGET DAY RALLY

**Parliament House Lawns
2:30 - 3:30pm Thursday June 16th**

Contact your union to pledge your attendance

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COMPARE THE APPROACHES

FACED with the same problem the Victorian Government has addressed its budget shortages in a far more strategic, sustainable and socially responsible way.

The new Liberal Government in Victoria handed down its first budget this week.

Faced with a situation where expenditure has outpaced revenue growth over the past decade and forecast GST revenues have been reduced by \$4.1 billion due to the slowing national economy it decided to grow the state economy and ensure services keep pace with demand.

It's taken a longer term view and shown a willingness to go into

debt in the short term to build a stronger economy.

It's taking control of the state's future by committing to productivity growth that will drive higher standards of living and economic prosperity.

The Victorian Government is truly courageous and is making the hard decisions.

But Tasmania's Labor Government is faced with almost identical challenges yet has decided to cut jobs, cut services and drive the already fragile economy down.

This isn't smart or courageous and it's time Premier Giddings took the lead from her interstate colleague and changed course right now.

Tasmanians have the same expectations of those they elect as those across Bass Strait.

As Victorian Treasurer Kim Wells said on May 3:

"Victorians have high expectations of government. They expect government to honour commitments and support them in their daily lives.

They want their state to grow and they want the growth to be managed, for services to keep pace with demand. They want new infrastructure to serve new communities, and for our streets and civic spaces to be vibrant and safe"

STAND UP CAMPAIGN PLAN

UNIONS have developed a comprehensive campaign to force government to choose an alternate path rather than its plan to cut jobs and services. To be successful we need Members to become involved in all these activities:

1. Political Lobbying

Delegations of Members have been established to meet with Labor politicians across all five electorates to raise concerns about the threat to jobs and services and to remind them of the voter backlash that will occur if they abandon their election commitments. Union officials have also met with each Labor politician and written to all Labor Party branches asking them to lobby the Premier to change course.

2. Community Campaigning

Members living and working in Huonville have been provided with a pretend currency, the 'Lara', and asked to 'spend' those notes in their community. Meetings have been arranged with the local council and business community to discuss the impact on that small economy of mass public sector sackings. This will highlight the dependance of communities like Huonville on public sector salaries, and the strategy will be repeated in communities across Tasmania.

3. Developing an Alternate Plan

Unions have commissioned a report on the impact of the budget cuts on the Tasmanian community. This report shows the Premier's plan will cause an increase in unemployment and a reduction in business activity, shows it's the wrong stage in the economic cycle to make spending cuts and questions the need to take such urgent action on the basis of budget forecasts that have proven to be very conservative in the past. This message will be communicated across the state with a media campaign starting soon.

4. Budget Day Rally

The first stage of the campaign will be highlighted by a rally outside Parliament House on Budget Day. This is the day public sector workers learn if they're to be declared surplus to requirements and the process of redeploying or terminating them begins. ***It's important that all Members attend this rally to send a clear message to the Premier that we oppose and will continue to oppose her heavy-handed approach.***