



Australian Government
Australian Public Service Commission

The **career** transition
and **support**
centre

Better Practice in
Managing Redeployment

Introduction

The Career Transition and Support Centre (CTSC) has been established within the Australian Public Service Commission to provide a range of support services to excess and potentially excess employees, with a view to securing their ongoing redeployment in the Australian Public service. The CTSC also provides advice and support to agencies on redeployment and recruitment matters.

The following checklist, has been devised by the CTSC to assist agencies in developing and implementing a staged staff reduction and redeployment plan should that become necessary. A well managed process will ensure that capability is maintained and where required, skills can be supplemented quickly through recruitment of qualified excess staff.

Stage 1: Strategic Framework

- Revisit the agency's strategic planning framework to help identify and manage the impact of staff reductions on agency performance. Important factors to consider include:
 - Preservation of corporate knowledge
 - Maintaining workforce core skills – current and future
 - Maintaining appropriate diversity profiles
 - Succession planning capability in the longer-term
 - On-going management of staff who remain
- Consider how the funding cuts are distributed throughout the agency. Are they due to an efficiency dividend, budget cuts or abolition of a programme? This may influence the approach to identifying excess and potentially excess employees. Re-examine the staffing profile of the agency and reconfigure if necessary.
- Determine the amount of savings that need to be achieved and confirm the role staff reductions must play. Have other options such as property operating costs, or discretionary administrative expenditure, been considered and factored in?
- Establish a team of appropriately resourced and skilled staff, with clearly assigned responsibilities, to manage the process. Ensure that the team can draw on people with expertise in the legislative and policy employment framework that applies in the APS.
- Develop a communication strategy. Clear, timely and frequent communication from the outset should underpin a fair and transparent process. A lack of information for staff on changes occurring can engender fear, uncertainty and resistance to change.

Stage 2: Time Frame

- Determine the target date by which the reduction plan must optimally be completed e.g. beginning of financial year.
- Work back from that date to establish 'trigger' dates by which other actions or formal processes must be instituted or accomplished. These will largely be determined by provisions in your agency's workplace agreement regarding consultation, consideration, notice, retention periods and so on.

Stage 3: Identifying Staff for Redeployment

It is the government's intention to retain corporate knowledge, expertise and skilled workers and an agency redeployment strategy must reflect this goal.

Possible approaches include:

- Identify skills and experience to be retained in the light of the agency's longer term corporate objectives and workforce skills profile.
- Decide whether the need to identify staff for redeployment should be contained to the work areas directly affected, or considered more widely through the agency.
- Is training/retraining an option and has funding been allocated?
- Identify high performing staff who should be retained.
- Establish 'order of merit' (this may be able to be done 'on the papers' using your Performance Appraisal system) of staff likely to be excess.
- Apply order of merit in reverse, from bottom to top, in identifying excess or potentially excess staff, but also having regard to what impact it will have on the longer term agency diversity, age profile and skill needs.

Some agencies may seek expressions of interest in redeployment or redundancy. If this process is used, it should be handled carefully to avoid misplaced expectations and low morale. The communication should make clear that there is no commitment to any course of action by either the employee or the agency. Where appropriate, include exemption categories or describe skill sets that will **not** be considered for redeployment and indicate approximate numbers being considered.

It should be made clear that staff reductions are not a tool for solving managers' individual staff performance problems. The identification of inefficient staff should be independent, and seen to be independent, of identification of potentially excess staff. An employee terminated due to unsatisfactory performance should not receive a severance benefit.

Stage 4: Redeployment Options

If it is likely that internal vacancies cannot accommodate displaced staff and they have been identified as excess or potentially excess, several options are available:

- Encourage identified staff to be proactive in seeking new employment opportunities in other agencies, including direct transfer to a like agency.
- Assess their redeployment prospects to determine whether they have skills valuable in the wider APS.
- Collaborate on placements with other agencies
- Encourage registration with the CTSC for personalised assistance and support regarding redeployment (see Stage 5).
- Voluntary redundancy

Whilst voluntary redundancies may be offered (Principle 7), they should be avoided. It is expensive for the agency and can result in the loss of high quality, experienced staff. Natural attrition can generally enable an agency to adjust its staffing levels. Agencies need to assess the risks and practicality of delaying or avoiding VR action. Could the funds that would otherwise be paid out in severance payments be used to manage a more gradual transition to the new staffing levels? During the transition, will there be enough work that is required to be done, for all employees.

If it is necessary to retrench some employees these should be targeted, with the identification of employees based on objective and transparent processes. As mentioned above this can include past performance, future skill needs, etc.

As clearly articulated in the redeployment principle 8, compulsory retrenchments should be avoided.

Stage 5: Redeployment Services offered by the CTSC

- **For Agencies**
 - Advice on the implementation of the redeployment principles
 - Advice, assistance and support on best practice approaches to the handling of excess staff situations
 - Provision of personalised and tailored support services during periods of structural change
 - Referral services for excess staff to a redeployment register
 - Recruitment service through referral of appropriately skilled and experienced staff from redeployment register

- **For Individuals**

The CTSC provides a range of tailored and personalised services for excess and potentially excess employees seeking redeployment. These include:

- providing a conduit between agencies and redeployees to explore alternative work opportunities
- assisting redeployees to establish/evaluate their career goals
- encouraging a thorough understanding of the job market
- identifying orientation and personal skills necessary to maximise job opportunities
- assistance to participate effectively in recruitment processes
- assessing and arranging the provision of training and other support services

The CTSC will work in partnership with home agencies to ensure that the most practical and relevant suite of services is developed and delivered to centre clients.

Stage 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitor, evaluate and document the outcomes of the staff reduction and redeployment exercise to assess short and longer-term impacts on agency performance and to identify areas for improvement in future similar exercises.

Collect information on the use of temporary and contract staff and consultants (if used) to assess the costs and benefits of alternative strategies to achieve the desired skills profile.

Further Information

Career Transition and Support Centre
Australian Public Service Commission
16 Furzer Street
PHILLIP ACT 2606

Phone: 02 6202 3756

Fax: 02 6202 3880

Email: ctsc@apsc.gov.au

Attachment

Redeployment Principles

1. Individual agencies should explore redeployment options for excess staff internally and, if no suitable positions are available, within the wider APS through collaborative arrangements with other agencies.
2. Agencies with staff who are excess (or potentially excess) will need to consider staff that require placement before undertaking the normal requirement for external advertising.
3. Agencies recruiting employees should give consideration to staff seeking redeployment opportunities from other agencies.
4. Agency downsizing processes need to be clear and transparent, with strong communication and consultation with employees and their representatives.
5. Agencies should make every effort to continue training and skills development.
6. Agencies should be cautious to ensure that downsizing does not unreasonably reduce the diversity of their workplaces.
7. Targeted voluntary redundancies may be offered, consistent with agencies' workplace agreements, and with a view to retaining highly valued employees.
8. Compulsory retrenchments should be avoided.



Contact Information

Phone: 02 6202 3756

Fax: 02 6202 3880

Email: ctsc@apsc.gov.au