

Committee: *Estimate*

Paper No: *5-1* Date: *14.6.18*

Tabled By: *McCarthy*

Signed: *[Signature]*

Minister's Opening Remarks:

The 2018-19 budget provides appropriations for the operation of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment. There is a continued commitment to the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2015-20 with an allocation of \$0.8 million over the remaining implementation years.

As Minister for Public Employment I am responsible for advising other ministers on policies, practices and procedures to be applied to the employment management in the public sector.

This is undertaken through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment and this office supports the Commissioner for Public Employment who is the statutory employer of NTPS employees as defined in the Public Sector Employment and Management Act.

The Office is responsible for public sector workforce management and development, industrial relations and public sector appeals and grievances.

In 2017-18 the Office has completed negotiations for new agreements for Jacana Energy employees and employees, such as administration, professional, technical and physical officers covered by the NTPS General agreement as well as confirming a new Police Consent Agreement. Negotiations are also underway with Teachers, Firefighters, Correctional Service Officers, Power and Water, Territory Generation, Aboriginal Allied Health Workers, Dentists, Medical Officers and Nurses and Midwives. The Teachers' negotiations have advanced quite some way and their union has provided in-principle agreement.

In other areas, the Office is preparing for a pulse survey of the Public Service in 2018 and a full survey in 2019. This pulse survey will provide a snapshot of employee opinions across a small number of measures such as job satisfaction and employee engagement, after agencies have been continuing the implementation of strategies to address issues identified in the previous survey.

The previous survey received the strongest response to date – 42% of all employees completed a survey – which is the strongest result amongst all Australian jurisdictions.

Analysis of the previous survey results shows:

- More than 80% of employees agreed that **their organisation provides high quality services to the Northern Territory community**
- 70% of employees are **proud public servants** and
- 66% of employees are **satisfied with their job**

Building on previous survey results, the information collected in the 2016 employee survey will help shape future workforce policy development and I look forward to the results in the upcoming pulse and full surveys.

Improving inclusion and diversity across the public sector has been a strong focus in 2017/18. A significant information and awareness raising campaign has been launched, and includes unconscious bias workshops, disability confidence training, and a range of resources that agencies can draw on to improve inclusion and diversity within their workforce.

The past 12 months has also seen the development of an NTPS Ageing Workforce Policy Framework. The tools and initiatives included in the Framework will assist in keeping older employees in the workforce for longer, as well as help managers and employees in navigating the transition to retirement process. The launch of a new Northern Territory Public Sector Disability Employment Strategy was also implemented in the past financial year.

The Indigenous Employment and Career Development Division was established in 2015 and is responsible for implementing the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy across the sector.

The strategy outlines a global target of 16% Aboriginal employment in the public sector by 2020 as well as a 10% participation target in senior / executive roles.

To assist in achieving this goal all Chief Executive Officers have been given annual specific targets to their agency and the Office of the

Commissioner for Public Employment will work with agencies to assist them in meeting those goals. One strategy to assist Chief Executive Officers has been the implementation of special measures recruitment plans. The use of special measures in recruitment of Aboriginal staff has been the single most effective way of increasing Aboriginal employment while still ensuring the NTPS maintains a high calibre workforce of employees suitable at level.

An all of government basic cross cultural program has been launched and is available to all agencies for the induction of new employees. The program based on an e Learn platform is not meant to replace existing agency programs but to ensure that employees have access to cultural awareness from the moment they commence employment.

This is an area that I have a specific interest in and will be carefully monitoring the implementation of this strategy.

Significant work has also been undertaken in the area of recruitment and selection with the development of the simplified recruitment initiative to streamline and improve the quality of NTPS selection processes. Since simplified recruitment was introduced there has been a significant increase in numbers of applicants, time for completion of selections has decreased and the number of appeals and grievances about selections has decreased.

I look forward to developments as they unfold in the area of Public Employment as our public servants are one of our most valuable assets and their work is highly regarded by this Government.

I would like to acknowledge the Witness attending today from OCPE, Craig Allen, Commissioner for Public Employment.