

## CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

### PREFACE

We aim to be a cohesive and effective organisation. Effective communication between staff and management is crucial to achieving this goal.

The NSW Government and the Public Service Association of NSW (PSA) share an understanding that communication, information sharing and consultation between management, staff and unions is critical to the development of a strong, vibrant, effective, equitable and efficient public service. It is recognised that to achieve these objectives all public service agencies need to have effective channels of communication and consultative arrangements in place.

To support this commitment, the *Statement of Intent* of the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions Of Employment) Award 2002 states that the:

*'award aims to ... encourage the consultative processes at the service-wide and the various organisational levels, to facilitate, as appropriate, greater flexibility in the workplace...'*

Both management and unions have a legislative responsibility to develop effective consultative mechanisms.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the office's formal mechanisms for achieving effective consultation between management, staff and unions.

### RESPONSIBILITY

Not applicable.

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Not applicable.

### DEFINITIONS

Not applicable.

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NSW Ombudsman policy number:	8
Policy originally created:	July 2001
Last reviewed / updated:	17 August 2005
Version number:	1
Related policies:	Code of conduct

This policy supersedes all previous policies about consultative arrangements.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1. *What is consultation?***

Consultation is an effective mechanism for management and staff, through their union, to meet on a regular basis in order to discuss and determine matters of common interest. It is about:

- accepting that there is a common interest in the success of the organisation,
- developing cooperative attitudes towards solving problems rather than resorting to confronting, and
- recognising that all staff in the organisation have the potential to be innovative and creative about every aspect of their work.

Consultation enables staff, through their union, to participate in and influence decisions that directly affect them at the organisational level. It is a means of improving communication, information sharing and understanding.

Consultation is most readily achieved through management/union consultative committees formed to consult on either single or multiple issues involving or affecting the organisation or staff.

### **2. *Joint Consultative Committee***

The Ombudsman and the PSA are committed to strengthening consultation in the office. To facilitate the consultation process, the Ombudsman and the PSA have agreed to establish a Joint Consultative Committee (the JCC).

### **3. *Membership***

The Ombudsman's representatives

The Ombudsman will nominate four representatives from statutory officers and team managers to represent him on the JCC.

The PSA's representatives

Three workplace delegates as nominated from time to time by the PSA Workplace Group and one PSA official.

### **4. *Objectives of the JCC***

The aim of the JCC is to open dialogue between parties and to ensure good and timely consultation between management and staff on matters likely to impact on the work environment. Without limiting the matters that can be discussed, likely areas of discussion include restructuring, training and development, occupational health and safety, workplace reform, performance acknowledgment, new work arrangements, the introduction of technology and the introduction of flexible work practices.

### **5. *Frequency of meetings***

Meetings will be held on a regular basis, at a time and place agreed by JCC members, provided that a special meeting may be convened whenever requested by the Ombudsman, PSA officials or PSA Workplace Group.

It is agreed that all attempts will be made to ensure that each meeting will run for no longer than an hour.

## **6. Conduct of meetings**

The chair of the JCC will alternate between the PSA and management delegates.

A management representative will prepare an agenda for the meeting. This agenda will list business arising from earlier meetings as well as new items requested by members.

All actions, decisions and/or agreements, and issues where no agreement is reached by the JCC, will be minuted and a draft circulated to members for consultation within a week of the meeting about which the minutes relate for consultation. The minutes will be formally adopted at the next committee meeting and a formal record will be maintained by the minute taker.

## **7. Resources**

The Ombudsman will make such arrangements as are necessary to enable the PSA workplace delegates to participate fully in the JCC and to discharge the other obligations of the PSA under these terms of reference and in line with the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions Of Employment) Award 1997 and the Personnel Handbook, which are available from Personnel. The arrangements include agreement that workplace delegates may spend one hour per fortnight in addition to time spent in JCC meetings working on matters relevant to the JCC.

### **OMBUDSMAN APPROVAL**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. A. Barbour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Bruce Barbour  
OMBUDSMAN