

This submission will focus on workforce development of the state service, particularly on improving diversity.

More intentionally developing the workforce would contribute to improved service delivery, promote innovation and long-term capability, and foster a public service that is reflective of the community it serves.

The sector should have a Workforce Development Plan that identifies the actions to achieve these goals.

### **Enhanced workforce management processes – Grow our own.**

Employee performance is currently managed by the employee's line manager. Line managers are not necessarily skilled developers of the workforce. Employees should be supervised by a **workforce development professional** to assist in their skill development, in opportunities to apply and develop new skills, and career progression.

Supporting employees to grow into higher skilled roles within the public service means that the focus can be on recruitment for entry level positions, knowing that many of those people will be skilfully developed into public servants with higher levels of responsibility.

Increased focus on recruiting entry level workers positions would mean the TSS has the capacity to support the careers of young people and people from groups currently under-represented in the TSS.

### **Diversity**

Diversity increases innovation through inclusion of a wider range of views. Just as importantly, it is good for democracy to have a workforce that reflects the general population. When everyone knows someone who works in government, confidence and trust in government is increased. The TSS need to ensure that no groups in the community are being excluded from working in government in a way that causes them to be disproportionately under-represented.

Focussing on **entry level positions** and **developing the workforce** allows the flexibility to focus on recruiting for diversity, with an aim to reflect the general population.

The first step would be to determine who is missing. This would require analysis of the general population and to find population groups missing or under-represented in the TSS. This may vary across different areas of government, such as policy, front line services etc, and would include people from particular socio-economic groups, cultural/racial groups, disability, gender etc.

If a recruitment is not specifically aiming to fill a diversity gap, then job applications should be blanked for details of name, address and gender for the initial shortlisting to reduce unconscious bias on the basis of gender, socio-economic status and culture/race.

### **Young people**

Following COVID-19 young people face increased disadvantage in securing employment and making a positive transition to adulthood through work. The government should specifically focus on recruiting young people, especially young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and have a

strong workforce development program through traineeships, cadetships and ongoing skill development to grow the workforce of the future.

This is workforce development – developing the workforce. As opposed to expecting to recruit a ready-made workforce already skilled and developed, which excludes entry level workers.

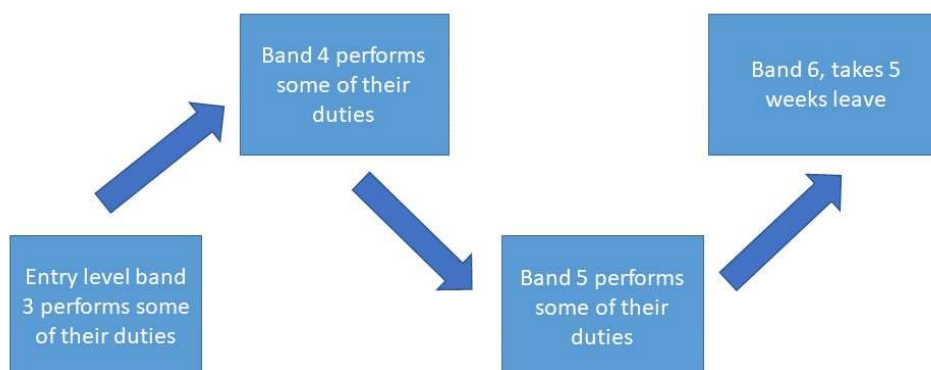
### Flexibility

Job security is important. At the moment it is difficult for TSS employees to move between the public service, the private sector and non-government/community sector due to a hesitancy and unwillingness to release people from their position for a period of time. Again, making more use of skilled workforce development professionals in the supervision of employees (rather than just the line manager) would increase weight on ensuring the flexibility for secondments and leave without pay to work outside of government. This would broaden the perspectives of employees in their capacity to serve the Tasmanian population and government of the day.

Flexibility to cater for **caring responsibilities** is an area that needs to be improved in the TSS. The same hesitancy to release people for unpaid periods applies to flexible work arrangements to cater for caring responsibilities. If an employee reduces their hours for school holidays or other caring responsibilities, the role is not back-filled, which means the workload falls on the rest of the team. This creates stress and as such is not genuine support for the flexibility of reduced hours. Genuine support of employees with caring responsibilities would be to back fill the reduced hours, when needed, so that there was not a negative cost of workplace stress associated with the reduced hours. This negative cost is a disincentive and reduces flexibility.

### Workforce development

Better workforce development would have skilled professionals involved in the performance management system. The TSS would have an organised system of opportunities to act in other roles so that employees experience was broadened. For example, when someone takes annual leave, or has time off for school holidays, or a team needs some backfill, a colleague steps in. This leaves a gap in their role, which gives someone else an opportunity to gain new experience. In this mix, if there is a strong system of recruiting entry level positions and developing these roles, then ultimately the back filling will be undertaken by these roles as part of their skill development. It requires having enough entry level positions for those employees to be able to be released from their usual role. If there are not enough employees in these roles then there will be difficulty in releasing them for development opportunities as it will create a resource shortage in their team.



In this model the focus is on developing well-rounded, skilled employees in the TSS. It complements and supports the concept of time off to gain experience outside of the public service, as there is a developed workforce to backfill any position. It supports flexibility in the workplace to accommodate employing people with caring responsibilities. It supports entry level roles to encourage the employment of young people and increase diversity in the TSS and it supports skill development and career paths.

To get the highest skill level for delivery of public policy and services to support the aims of government and meet the needs of the community the TSS needs a comprehensive and well-designed system of workforce development to support employees to grow their skills.

To support more flexible movement of employees between the private sector, non-government and community organisations, and the public sector, the TSS needs a more pro-active and supportive approach to unpaid leave.

To help develop the long-term capability and agility of the TSS, the system of performance management and workforce development needs to be more tailored to developing individual employees. The current public sector management development program is a good example of this. The same approach needs to be applied at all levels.

Facilitating areas of cultural change within the TSS (e.g. promoting risk-based decision making, increasing diversity, promoting innovation, improving accountability and identifying ways to enhance performance) can be supported by focussing on **entry level recruitment for diversity** and growing the employees to have the desired attributes through a skilled performance management and workforce development system.

Implementing enhanced workforce management processes across the employee life cycle, including opportunities to implement improvements to how the TSS recognises, develops and manages employee performance can be supported by involving **workforce development professionals** rather than just leaving it as the responsibility of line managers only. The TSS as a whole should have a **workforce development plan** that has measurable outcomes for developing the workforce.

Attracting, developing and retaining a skilled public sector workforce with the capacity to meet emerging economic, social, environmental and technological opportunities and challenges can be supported through having a well-designed workforce development system supporting skill development through opportunities to act in other roles, through professionally supported career planning and through diverse recruitment.