
Sustainable Resizing of the State Service

Frequently Asked Questions

as at 7 March 2025

General Questions

1. What is the purpose of the recruitment freeze?

The recruitment freeze on non-essential positions will support the Government's Fiscal Strategy and will help to ensure that Tasmania has the right-sized state service.

2. How long will the recruitment freeze be in place?

The recruitment freeze on non-essential roles is effective from 2 March 2025. No date has been set for the period of the freeze. Government and agencies will continue to review the effectiveness of this program

3. Who does the recruitment freeze apply to?

The recruitment freeze applies to non-essential roles in all Tasmanian Government agencies and authorities.

4. Will there be a whole-of-Government vacancy management program?

The Treasurer stated that Heads of Agencies, in consultation with the Head of the State Service, will review arrangements within their agency. Currently, there are no plans for a whole of government vacancy management program, as agencies are still working through the implications of this policy.

5. Do Heads of Agencies have a target number?

No targets have been set. Agencies are expected to manage staffing levels within their budget allocations. We are currently working through our approach to implementing the Government's direction on the recruitment freeze for 'non-essential' roles, ensuring our people are supported.

6. What is the Government's long-term workforce strategy beyond the recruitment freeze?

The Government is focused on a State Service that operates as effectively and efficiently as possible, meets the needs of the community and provides value for money. Agencies existing workforce strategies will continue to evolve, with a focus on workforce planning and capability, digital transformation and service delivery effectiveness and efficiency.

7. What else is being done to manage positions in the Tasmanian State Service?

In addition to the recruitment freeze, agencies will also focus on workforce renewal and reprofiling to ensure that the Tasmanian State Service is not only the right size, but also the right shape, in the right place and equipped with the right tools to deliver important services to Tasmanians.

What Does This Mean?

8. What is the definition of 'essential' and 'non-essential' roles?

Which roles are considered essential will be dependent on the operations, environment and context of each individual agency and authority, and it is challenging to provide a one-size-fits-all definition in such a diverse workforce. A broad definition of a non-essential position is a position that could stop, or a role or function that can be reduced, redesigned or transitioned to a digital service.

9. Who determines whether a role is essential or non-essential?

The Head of each agency will determine what is essential relevant to the operations, environment and context of their agency.

10. What process will be applied to determine if a vacant role is essential or non-essential?

Individual agencies will determine and communicate to unions and employees, a process for determining whether a role is essential or not based on the operations of their agency.

11. Will certain roles be exempt from the recruitment freeze? If so, how will this be determined?

Heads of Agencies will be determining whether a role is essential. In determining whether a role is essential, agencies will give due consideration to workforce sustainability and demographics, including where there are workforce risks including skills shortages.

12. What is the impact of the recruitment freeze on existing vacancies and recruitment processes that had already commenced prior to the recruitment freeze commencing?

Existing vacancies and recruitment processes, already in progress will be reviewed by agencies, including those listed on the Tasmanian Jobs Website. If a role is deemed essential, recruitment may proceed. If a role is deemed as non-essential, agencies may pause or cancel the recruitment process in line with the recruitment freeze.

13. Does the freeze apply to the use of contractors and other external labour (e.g. agency nurses)?

The use of contractors and external labour will be reviewed in line with agency requirements. Essential service needs may continue to require external labour, and agencies will continue to explore internal and external resourcing options.

14. How does the freeze impact fixed-term positions?

Existing fixed-term contracts will be honoured. Fixed-term positions will be reviewed in the same way as permanent roles, with agencies determining whether a position is essential based on service delivery needs. The recruitment freeze does not specifically target fixed-term employees; however, agencies will assess whether extensions or new fixed-term appointments proceed.

15. Does the freeze apply to casual positions?

Casual employment will be assessed based on operational requirements. Agencies may continue to engage casual staff for essential roles, but overall use of casual employment should be reviewed to ensure alignment with workforce priorities.

16. Does the freeze impact existing employment registers?

Existing employment registers will not be affected by the recruitment freeze. Employment registers are not a commitment to employ someone and are an effective tool for identifying potential candidates for roles that need to be filled quickly and/or are difficult to fill, including essential roles.

17. Does the freeze impact Higher Duties and More Responsible Duties Allowances?

Higher Duties Allowances (HDA) and More Responsible Duties Allowances (MRDA) continue to be available and are used for employees who may be backfilling for leave periods or short-term vacancies. There are no changes to these arrangements.

18. Are agencies able to reallocate existing staff or create acting arrangements to cover vacancies or long-term leave in essential roles?

Yes, agencies are able to reallocate staff or use higher duties (acting) arrangements where necessary to maintain service continuity.

19. Will there be any flexibility for roles in regional or other hard-to-fill areas?

If a role in a regional or other hard to fill area is determined to be essential, then recruitment will progress. In determining whether a role is essential, agencies will give due consideration to workforce sustainability and demographics, including where there are workforce risks including skills shortages.

20. Are there any restrictions on promotions or internal movements?

Promotions and other internal movements will be assessed with agencies determining whether a position is essential based on service delivery needs.

21. What will happen to the work of the ‘non-essential’ roles that are not filled? Will it no longer be performed?

The Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring high-quality services continue to be delivered to the community. Agencies will carefully assess workforce needs and prioritise critical services. Where a non-essential role is not filled, agencies will explore options such as process efficiencies, workforce reallocation, digital transformation, and service redesign to ensure that operational needs continue to be met without unnecessary disruption.

The safety and wellbeing of our state service employees remains a priority, and agencies will continue to monitor workloads.

Support

22. What support is available to employees?

Employees can access employee assistance programs (EAP) or seek guidance from their manager or agency HR team to manage any concerns arising from the recruitment freeze.

23. Who should employees talk to if they feel their workload has increased as a result of the recruitment freeze?

Employees should discuss workload concerns with their manager in the first instance. If additional support is needed, they can seek guidance from their agencies HR team.

Engagement

24. How will unions and employees be informed about how the recruitment freeze will be applied?

The State Service Management Office will update unions on the recruitment freeze and its progress.

Agencies will engage with unions and employees on an ongoing basis to explain decision making processes and address any concerns that are raised.

25. How can employees raise concerns about any impacts of the recruitment freeze?

Employees can raise concerns through their manager, executive team member, agency HR team, or their union. Employees are also encouraged to access employee assistance programs for support.