

Media Statement

Minns Government Public Service Changes to Tackle State's Challenges

Friday, 14 April 2023

NSW Premier Chris Minns has announced a number of changes to the NSW public service as part of his government's focus on addressing the challenges facing the state.

As a centrepiece, Premier Minns said his government will reinstate The Cabinet Office to restore robust Cabinet practice and decisions informed by expert policy and legal advice, a model that underpinned the Greiner and Carr governments.

"We have a strong team of Ministers and I want them supported by excellent public service advice and high-quality Cabinet decision-making processes," Premier Minns said.

"The Cabinet Office will be made up of experts in legal, policy and governance, and support my Ministers and I to meet community expectations and deliver for the people of NSW."

The existing Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) will be dissolved as of 1 July and replaced by The Cabinet Office and a new separate Premier's Department.

The Premier's Department will continue to manage the Premier's statutory responsibilities and lead the public service.

Premier Minns has appointed Peter Duncan AM for the next three months as Acting Secretary of DPC to lead the transition and establishment of the new entities.

Mr Duncan will be responsible for the creation of two strong but separate agencies at the heart of Government: the Cabinet Office and the Premier's Department. Both of these agencies will report individually direct to the Premier.

Mr Duncan is a former longstanding NSW public servant. Among other senior roles, he has been CEO of Roads and Maritime Services, and for three years was Deputy Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, with extensive periods acting as the Director General.

Michael Coutts-Trotter will be appointed as Acting Secretary of Treasury to support delivery of the first Minns Government budget.

In other changes the Secretary of Treasury, Paul Grimes, the Secretary of Education, Georgina Harrisson and the Secretary of Transport for NSW, Rob Sharp will depart the NSW public sector.

"I want to sincerely thank these leaders for their service and dedication to the people of NSW."

From 15 April Mr Howard Collins will be Acting Secretary of Transport for NSW and Mr Murat Dizdar will be Acting Secretary of Education.

Howard Collins OBE, has over 40 years transport experience. His past roles include Chief Executive of Sydney Trains & Group Rail, as well as Chief Operating Officer of the London Underground. He is currently Transport for NSW'S Chief Operations Officer.

Murat Dizdar PSM, began his career with the NSW Department of Education as a social sciences teacher at Ashcroft High School. His current role as Deputy Secretary, School Performance oversees the provision of a quality public education for students in over 2,200 schools.

The Secretary roles will be advertised and openly recruited in due course.

Mr Minns said the changes to the public service are careful and considered and balance renewal with continuity.

Further changes to the structure of the public service are being considered for implementation from 1 July 2023, including the end of the cluster model.

“My expectation is that all government departments will have a laser focus on serving the community first and the Cabinet Office will be responsible for:

- expert and independent policy advice to the Premier and Cabinet
- advice and assistance on all matters relating to National Cabinet and intergovernmental affairs
- Cabinet systems, practice and secretariat services to support good Government decision-making
- support for the Government’s legislative and parliamentary agenda
- advice and support to the Premier on administrative arrangements orders, sector governance, and machinery of government changes
- assisting the Premier with the administration of the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct, including management of the Ministerial Register of Interests
- expert legal and probity advice to the Premier and the Ministers to promote the highest standards of actual and perceived Ministerial integrity.

The Cabinet Office and the Premier’s Department are to be funded from within existing resources, including employee-related expenses.

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