



PSA submission to Te Whatu Ora

Proposal for Consultation:

Finance

Introduction

The Public Service Association

The New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (the PSA) is the largest trade union in New Zealand with over 85,000 members. We are a democratic organisation representing members in the public service, the wider state sector, local government and non-governmental organisations working in the health, social services and community sectors. We have over 25,000 members at Te Whatu Ora

The PSA believes that maintaining high functioning, valued and experienced work force provides for a quality service for stakeholders and the clients who use the service.

PSA Approach to Restructurings and Reviews

The PSA recognises that change will be necessary to achieve the 5 key system shifts of the health reforms and that change will be a feature of creating Te Whatu Ora.

As a union, the PSA is not resistant to change and has considerable experience of change proposals and their effects upon staff and service delivery. Our focus is on:

- **Employment and job security:**
 - Minimising job losses and maximising opportunities for redeployment, development and training.

- **Worker voice:**
 - Ensuring PSA members can have a say in the decisions about whether and what change is needed;
 - Ensuring PSA members can have a say in determining any formal process for implementing any change.

- **Fairness and transparency:**
 - Ensuring change processes are procedurally fair and transparent.
 - Ensuring decision making processes are transparent.

- **Ensuring any change promotes sustainable services, high performing productive workplaces and decent jobs:**
 - Mobilising members' knowledge to improve the efficiency and quality of services and jobs.
 - Once the change has been implemented, monitoring the impact on workloads and services.

A collaborative approach to change produces better outcomes and maintains productivity. How change happens and how workers are engaged in design and delivery of new structures is crucial. The importance of clear communication around change processes is a core principle for the PSA, it has also repeatedly been upheld by the courts. Goddard CJ adopted the following propositions from a 1993 Court of Appeal judgement (*Communication and Energy Workers Union v Telecom NZ Ltd* [1993] 2 ERNZ 429) as a guide to employers and employees.

If there is a proposal to make a change, and such change requires to be preceded by consultation, it must not be made until after consultation with those required to be consulted. **They must know what is proposed before they can be expected to give their views'** (see Port Louis Corporation).

This does not involve a right to demand assurances but there must be sufficiently precise information given to enable the person to be consulted to state a view together with a reasonable opportunity to do so. This may include an opportunity to state views in writing or orally.

The requirement for consultation is never to be treated perfunctorily or as a mere formality. The person or body to be consulted must be given a reasonably ample and sufficient opportunity to express views or to point to problems or difficulties (see Port Louis Corporation).

Consultation must be allowed sufficient time.

This submission

The submission reflects feedback from workers at Te Whatu Ora: delegates, members and non-members. Two surveys were carried out, one entirely qualitative and one qualitative and quantitative.

The focus of this submission is the process of restructuring as a whole. We do not have additional comments about the Finance proposal at this time. However, as we outline below, that lack of comment may be a result of lack of good information.

Our members support the health reforms

Our members have always been very supportive of the goals of the health reforms and embraced the benefits a unified health system could bring. Our submissions to the Pae Ora Healthy Futures Bill were enthusiastic and our members welcomed the formation of Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora.

As long as it's tika and pono and enables us to expand into areas that have never been accessible to our kaimahi before, change is something I'm all for if it means improving our services.

Our members still see the value of the changes that were promised. Our members were most positive when they were speaking about the possibilities of reforms and the changes that they wanted to see:

I hope that systems/areas from the old DHBs be streamlined so that we are all working from the same systems

Hopefully a focus will be on more equitable care, and less duplication of roles.

Hopefully it will help with transfer of staff through the hospitals and repeated information / training for them, repetitive training done once.

This submission will outline the very negative experiences our members have had with the restructuring process. We emphasise that this negativity comes as a result of the experiences people who supported the goals of the reforms have had within Te Whatu Ora and of these reforms. The mismatch between support for the goals of the reforms and negative experiences of the process shows the imperative of Te Whatu Ora taking this feedback seriously and amending their practices.

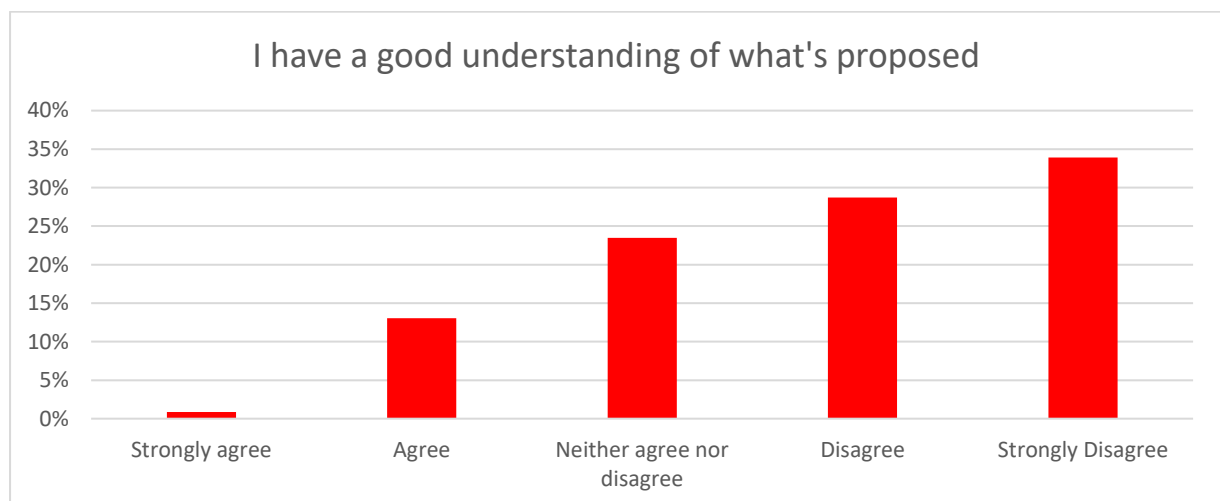
The Consultation Process

Our members don't have the information they need

The information is too vague to make an informed comment.

I don't know what's going on and I'm afraid I'll lose my job.

The most overwhelming response from our members was that they did not understand the change proposal and did not know what impact it would have on their work. The two comments quoted above were repeated over and over again, as members were very clear that neither the information, nor the way it was presented were clear. Just 16 per cent of those who responded to our survey said that they felt they had a good understanding of the proposal.



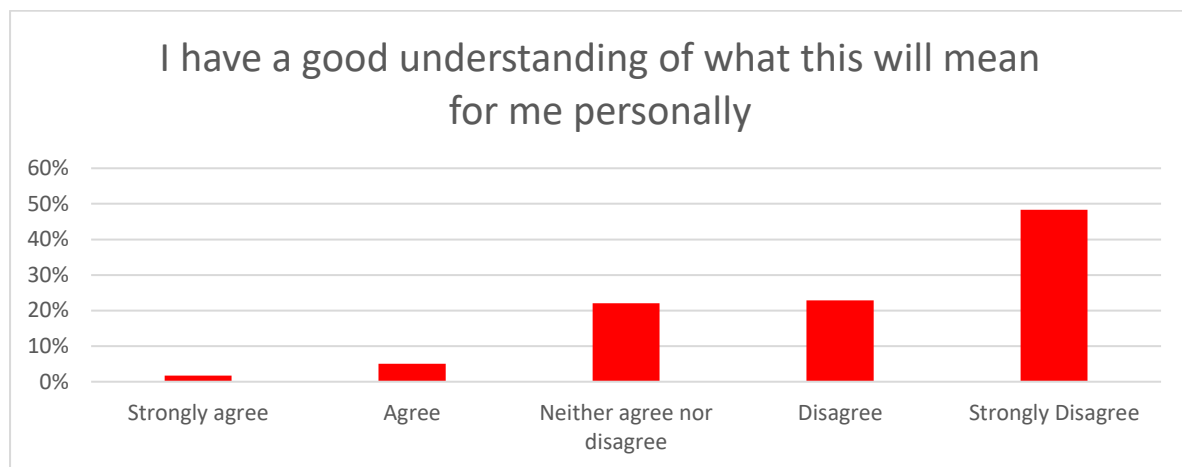
Our members were very clear that the proposals had not been effectively communicated to them. They mentioned specifically mentioned the language of the document and the approach of all staff hui as obstacles.

I feel like my manager hasn't had enough information at any point during this process to support me well. She's been very in the dark, which I don't think is her fault. - - There has been a massive quantity of information to take in, which has a lot of jargon in it. This has meant it has taken considerable time and effort to understand the proposal.

Members mentioned that the approach of all staff hui further suggested that management did not understand the current state.

They have held hui to discuss changes but I have been unable to attend or watch any of these during work hours. We cannot watch the recordings either because we don't have a computer operating system that can play them and also have no sound on work computers (and also no time to watch them). They need to distribute a written summary of the changes and what the implications are for each department , and allow adequate time for feedback

Our members have not been communicated to well about what had been proposed. Communication about what it had meant for them. Just 7% of members agreed that they understood what it meant for them personally.



Members described questions not being answered and lack of clarity in communication.

The more consultation I have, the more confused I am about where my role and that of my counterparts across the region will fit

We have no idea what is going on in our department in regards to proposed line change as no one got back to us after we gave feedback. We are left in limbo.

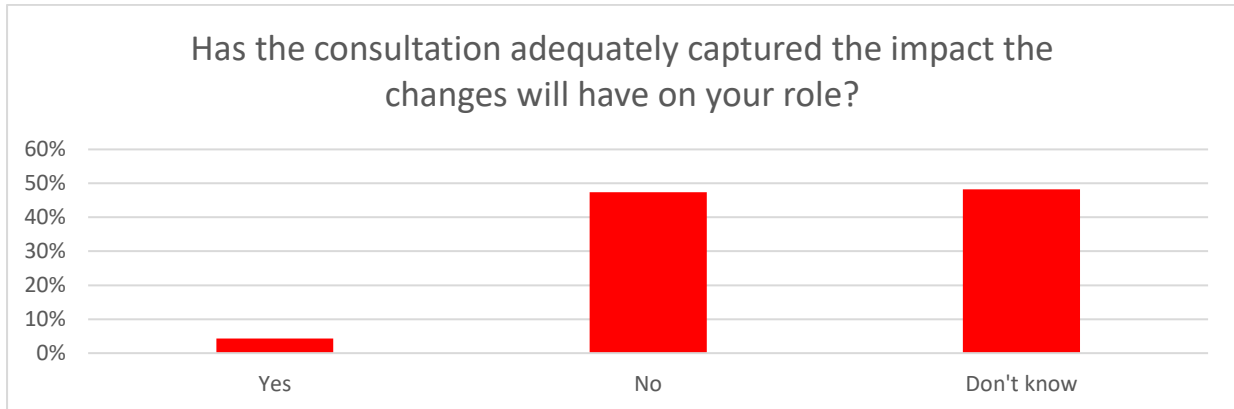
Te Whatu Ora's approach to consultation

The confusion members described is not coincidental, but a result of a series of decisions that Te Whatu Ora has made about its approach to restructuring. This round of consultation and restructuring are to the top 5 tiers of leadership only. Our members pointed out again and again that work had not been done to consider and communicate the implications for the rest of the organisation.

They've worked from a top down approach and haven't considered the bottom up.

It seems the restructure is effecting upper and middle management at the moment. There's no discussion about the impact this will have at a grass roots level.

The decision to restructure from the top down is defensible (although some members strongly criticised it), but the decision to present those decisions without full consideration of the rest of the organisation is not. As one member put it: “We have been asked to give feedback on something that we can't see ourselves in.”



Lack of information of current state

Members repeatedly made clear that the proposals did not show a good understanding of their work or the current state. They emphasised that without a good understanding of the current state it was impossible to understand how to undertake reform.

The proposed restructure is being done to us rather than with us. We have been restructured by people who do not understand the capacity and capability required to deliver on the mahi. There should have been more conversations with teams and senior leaders within teams to understand what is needed. This still needs to happen.

It is the worst I have seen in the last 20 years, and I've seen dozens. Head Office have no idea of my role, and when I contribute to papers that are apparently to help them understand they seem to be incapable of understanding. Real time decisions are being made without understanding the system.

There should be a face to face visit to understand what some roles are about. Centrally created structure is too idealistic, there are many jobs in the background that will not be done under the new structure, there will be nobody to do them.

The lack of knowledge about the current state significantly damaged the process of consultation. Consultation documents went out with errors and members were unable to discover if they were affected and how.

I spent an exceptionally long time not receiving any communications and being told that 'no communications meant my job wouldn't change' - until I saw that I had no place in the future state. The reason provided to me was that I started 7/2/23 - but it's a trivial activity to get a list of new starters and communicate with them directly to let them know their communications would be delayed.

This has been overlooked and I can not see a role that will pick up that responsibility.

No time to look at how this effect me, as my role isn't actually correctly mapped correctly in here.

It is impossible to design a new system or consult on changes without a full picture of the existing state of the organisation.

Impact on members

Our members outlined that this lack of consideration for them and the work that they do in the consultation documents had an impact on them. Te Whatu Ora is communicating about its values in terms of who it considers as part of change and how it communicates that change, and our members are receiving the message loud and clear.

It was disrespectful not to engage with the managers and their teams about the work they do prior to designing the new structure. So much of what we do is not represented in the new structure. Is this their way of saying that what we do doesn't matter and is therefore not worth continuing? That's what it feels like anyway!

The leadership group's lack of empathy in addressing the restructuring process is troubling, and at times, difficult to comprehend. It is particularly concerning when a leader dismisses the situation, despite the evident and meaningful impact on our team. –

Additional issues with restructuring

In addition, to the big picture issues with the process already discussed, our members raised a number of other issues with the process of restructuring.

Workers identified in the change proposal as Positions and Team proposed to move to different Business Units and referred to Hospital and Specialist Services, yet these same position titles reporting to Finance are included in the Procurement and Supply with

1. Reporting line change and Job Title change/New title/Category Manager/Senior Procurement Specialist/New manager: to be determined by EOI process.
2. Reporting line change and Job Title change/New position/title: Distribution Team Leader BOP/New manager title: Bay of Plenty, Lakes & Tairāwhiti District Distribution Manager

Approach to allocating staff to new roles

Our members expressed concern with the approach to allocating staff to new roles was damaged by the lack of information about the current state outlined above.

They should have sought clarity around what actual duties people with job titles did as it is no use then coming back with this so called further consultation ...to possibly still employ the people with a different job title. The angst and stress that this process is causing is huge and shows a very real lack of care and

integrity. - The fact that people cannot apply for 'new' roles until they have been disestablished is inappropriate shocking

The process was not designed with workers needs in mind – nor to minimise job losses and maximise job security.

My concern is that those in the later waves of consultations might miss out on new job opportunities in the earlier waves. - - I have non-clinical skills that are not tied to a particular function so if I am disestablished, I could have applied for roles in the earlier waves of consultations. - - I understand that it would be difficult to change the whole organisation in a single wave but I'm not sure they are acting in good faith with those in the later waves

Equity

Our members raised equity issues with the process, which demonstrated that the process had not engaged with workers whole selves.

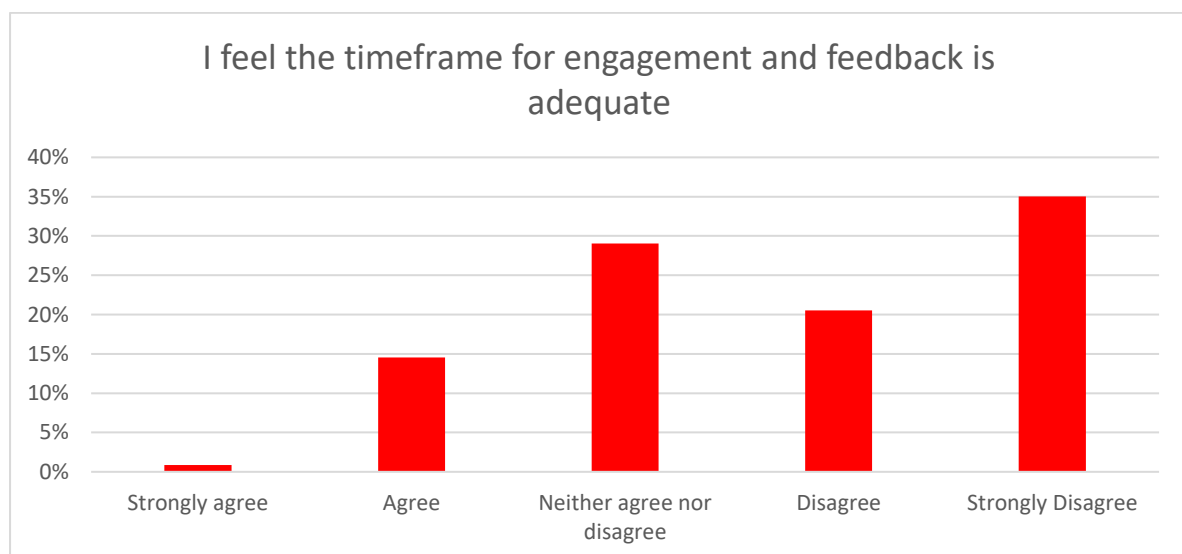
Cultural competency and safety - -Re the process, cultural competency has been completely overlooked. There should have been kaumatua at each feedback meeting to look after cultural protocols including karakia.

Employees with accessibility needs and/or being neurodivergent would be heavily impacted by this kind of change but it does not seem to be enough level of specific considerations and supports.

Timeframe

Our members were very clear that the timeframe for the consultation was inadequate.

Time frame for consultation included school holidays and public holidays and many people taking leave at different times made it hard to meet and discuss changes and prepare responses collectively.



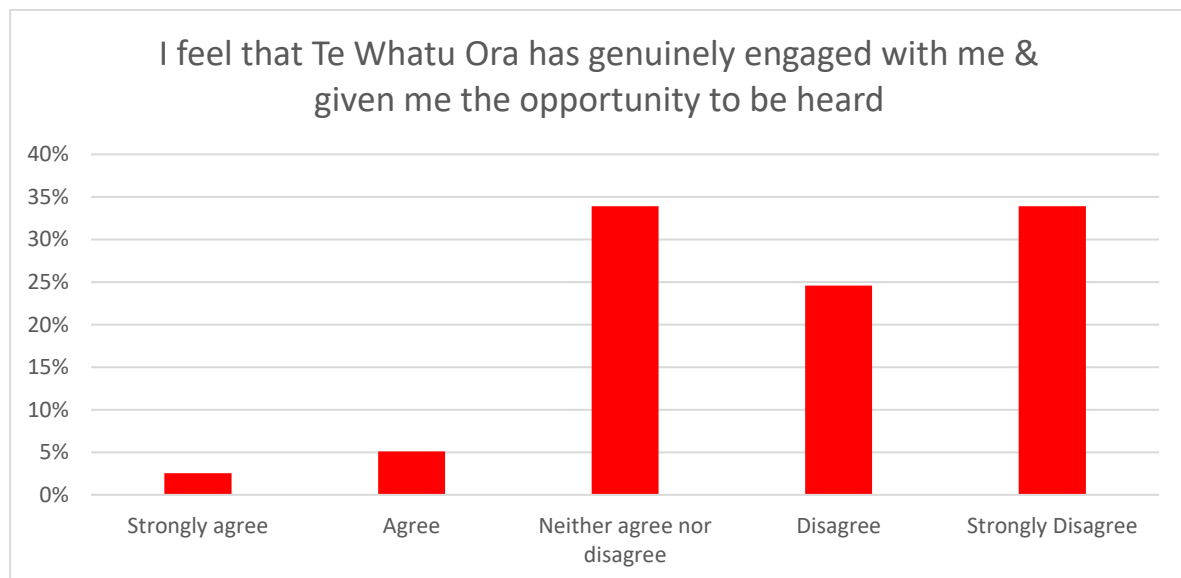
Format for feedback

Members expressed concern about the limited options for expressing feedback and in particular the limited option for collective feedback.

There should be options to put in written feedback, recorded verbal feedback, one to one meetings, meetings as a small team, meetings at different levels (eg senior leadership, advisor level, programme management level etc). We need to have the opportunity to feedback verbally either one-to-one, and as smaller team as well as with larger teams. There should also be an opportunity to provide detailed reports to the consultation team.

Members also expressed concerns about the on-line consultation tool. No ability to upload documents/diagrams. The fact that they had to set up a login made people very sceptical that it was anonymous. Members articulated a fear that individuals who spoke out would be targeted:

People are frightened to provide comment or ask questions in case they are targeted and disestablished.



Impact on Workers

A restructuring process that is badly run comes at a cost. Our members outlined the impact that the process had had on them, their teams and their work.

The recent restructuring has had a profound impact on our teams' effectiveness, significantly undermining the resilience and cohesion we developed as a team in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic etc.

This process has left me feeling very undervalued and makes me wonder if I really want to work for an organisation that treats their staff in such a manner

Te Whatu Ora can ill afford to pay the cost of losing workers and less resilient teams.

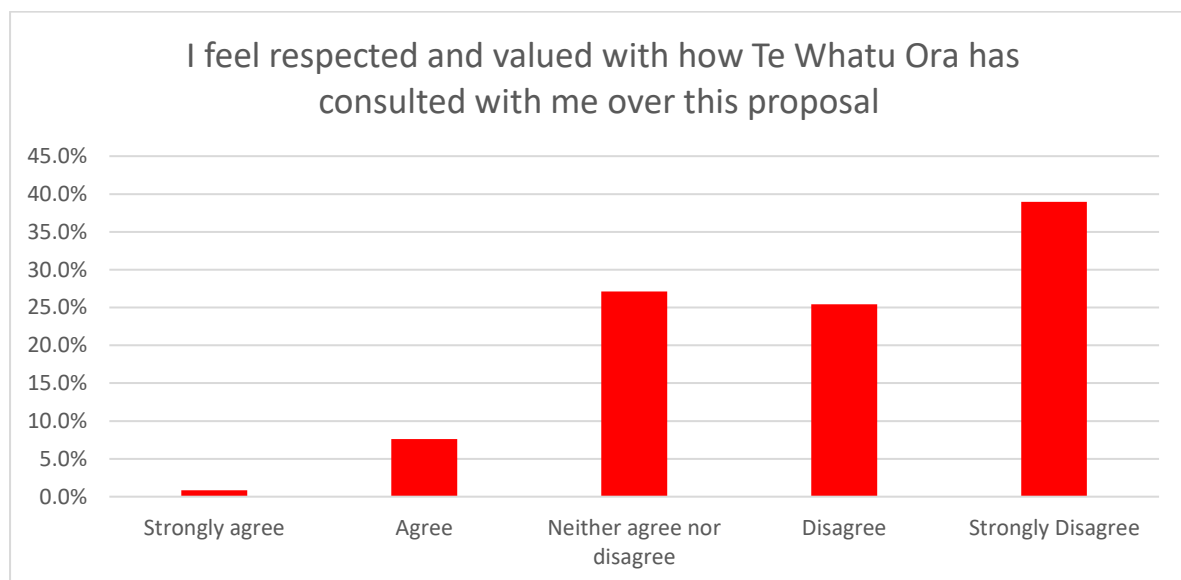
As well as an institutional cost, this approach to restructuring has had a personal cost. Our members articulated again and again the impact that the change process had had on them and their colleagues:

They way I found out I was impacted was second hand by a colleague in another region who received their email 12 hours ahead of mine. I feel totally disrespected and traumatised.

Increased levels of anxiety and uncertainty ripple through all staff. Does not feel like a transparent process.

This process has left me feeling very undervalued and makes me wonder if I really want to work for an organisation that treats their staff in such a manner

Do you understand that by lifting and shifting people with no clear understanding of their roles you are creating huge stress and distress. It is not good enough to keep saying sorry



What would a better process look like?

Te Whatu Ora does not need to reinvent the wheel, or be innovative in its approach to change processes (although it would be appropriate for Te Whatu Ora to be an exemplar when it comes to meaningful actions to promote workers wellbeing through a change process). Te Whatu Ora needs to follow well established principles to engage with workers in a meaningful way.

One of the more optimistic comments from our members outlines the choice Te Whatu Ora has now:

I think it's necessary to restructure in order to create better collaboration and efficiencies. Change is uncomfortable but is a reality of life. Te Whatu Ora understandably cannot provide detail about where lower tiers will sit until they sort out the upper levels, so a lot of us don't really quite know where we will

stand in the long run. I think Te Whatu Ora have been honest and transparent. Time will tell whether they genuinely listen to feedback from staff.

Recommendations

This change process

Te Whatu Ora can restore trust with workers by genuinely listening to feedback from staff about the damage the process has done and take the following actions:

- Consider, engage with and publicly respond to the issues raised with the current process
- Redesign the approach for the appointment to roles, in consultation of unions, in a way that minimises job losses and maximises job security.
- Acknowledge that these changes have been made without good information and feedback from workers about the impact and accept and respond to further feedback, in whatever form.

Future waves

I am about to be restructured as I am in the next wave and it is increasingly stressful.

There are more waves of change proposals in this process, and many more change proposals in order to realise the 5 key system shifts that Te Whatu Ora was formed to achieve. These change proposals are of such a magnitude they would benefit from having a SHEF Change Management Framework (CMF) sub-committee.

- Prioritise and resource obtaining good information about the current state, before releasing any more
- Prioritise and resource considerations of how proposals will impact on those in non-leadership before release
- Ensure all communication provides full information about the impact of changes on staff in a format that is accessible
- Accept feedback in a range of forms. Prioritise ensuring people can give face to face feedback and collective feedback.
- Amend the process to address the equity issues raised
- Provide adequate time for serious consideration and response