



PSA Submission on the Parliamentary Agencies Delegations Legislation Bill

September 2019

PSA submission to the Governance and Administration Select Committee on the Parliamentary Agencies Delegations Legislation Bill

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About the PSA

The New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (the PSA) is the largest trade union in New Zealand with over 74,000 members. We are a democratic organisation representing people working in the public service, the wider state sector (the district health boards, crown research institutes and other crown entities), state owned enterprises, local government, tertiary education institutions and non-governmental organisations working in the health, social services and community sectors.

The PSA represents the majority of public servants and has been advocating for strong, innovative and effective public and community services since our establishment in 1913. People join the PSA to negotiate their terms of employment collectively, to have a voice within their workplace and to have an independent public voice on the quality of public and community services and how they're delivered.

The PSA has a strong and growing membership among those working for each of the Parliamentary agencies. We have sought the views of their representatives in preparing this submission.

Key issues

The PSA is generally supportive of this bill and the technical change it enables for the Parliamentary Service and the Office of the Clerk.

We have some trepidation about how this bill will be operationalised and its potential impact on our members. We want to take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of taking into account the

voices of those closest to the issues this bill aims to address – those working for the Parliamentary agencies.

Our members acknowledge the current duplication of some functions and support the aim of reducing this while improving consistency and efficiency of services. Care is needed to ensure efficiency does not mean in any way reducing services or the ability for employees to influence their workplace. An example of where this is a key consideration is in the shared human resources services model and ensuring staff know how and who to approach when required.

PSA members working in the Parliamentary agencies are passionate about their work and their workplace and hope the increased cooperation will result in improved services for the public and Parliament. Better coordination of information will support our members to do the best job possible. To achieve this, it will be important to engage with those doing the work and understand their needs.

The PSA is committed to representing our members' views and ensuring sound employment processes are followed. Efforts to more closely align functions of the Office and the Service must be carefully managed to ensure our members continue to have access to their rights to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment. This creates challenges where employees undertaking the same or similar work are employed on different collective agreements and are parties to separate negotiation processes. We will continue to engage with the agencies to find appropriate ways to address these challenges and encourage the agencies to engage with us as early as possible.

Specific comments about the drafting of the Bill

The Bill refers to employees of the Office of the Clerk as Officers, this may be consistent with previous legislation but the term now has a different meaning in common usage and has the potential to create a lack of clarity about the status of employees.

Further we would question the choice to limit the Bill to the Office and Service delegating to one another. This appears to address the immediate issue rather than allowing for needs which may change in the future where it may be relevant for the Office or the Service to be able to delegate to other agencies as enabled in the wider public service.

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