Regional NSW

NSW GOVERNMENT

Policy

Workforce regionalisation

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Policy Statement

In June 2020 the Deputy Premier announced the decentralisation of up to four hundred public service positions from Sydney to Coffs Harbour, Queanbeyan, Dubbo and Armidale, with up to 100 staff located in each city.

Scope

This policy applies to all positions as they are created or vacated within the Department of Regional NSW, except those that can only be performed from a specific site, region or district.

Recruitment

1. Positions must be filled in the four regional centres if they are:
   - newly created ongoing positions or new temporary positions for more than 12 months or
   - existing ongoing positions or temporary positions for more than 12 months based in Sydney CBD, Parramatta CBD or Newington, and
   - able to be performed from outside Sydney CBD, Parramatta CBD or Newington.

2. Positions must be recruited as follows:

Armidale	Primary Industries
Coffs Harbour	Public Works Advisory
Dubbo	Corporate, Resources Regulator and Mining, Exploration and Geoscience
Queanbeyan	SDP, OSEC, Regional Development
	LLS can be located within any one of the four locations.

3. Every effort should be made to recruit temporary positions for more than 12 months to the locations above. If these efforts are unsuccessful then these positions can be location agnostic with a preference for any one of the four regional locations.

4. Existing DRNSW permanent or long-term temporary staff (greater than 12 months tenure) can apply for new permanent positions advertised across the 4 regional hubs. If such a person is clearly the best candidate for the position based on merit they can be appointed to the position and stay in their current location but will be expected to travel regularly to the regional base where their team is located. Where candidates are of equal suitability, preference will go to the candidate who is willing to base themselves at the regional hub.

5. Successful candidates must live within a reasonable distance (rule of thumb is within one hour's drive) from the location. Flexible work agreements cannot be used to allow candidates to live further away.

6. Existing positions in Newcastle, Wollongong and any regional location can be filled in those locations if they become vacant.

7. Positions must be filled 'as is', and repurposing/varying existing roles will be treated as the creation of a new role for the purposes of this policy.

8. New temporary roles within Sydney CBD, Parramatta CBD or Newington cannot be extended beyond 12 months. Existing temporary roles can be extended for a maximum of 12 months.

9. The process for recruiting roles following unsuccessful attempts in the relevant location is outlined in the appendix.

Voluntary relocations

1. Staff employed by the department before 30 August 2020 and who have an ongoing position based in Sydney CBD, Parramatta CBD or Newington, can voluntarily relocate their position to one of the four locations.

2. The department will provide financial support to staff to relocate to within a reasonable distance from their new role location (rule of thumb is within one hour's drive). Further information on support for staff to voluntarily relocate is available on the DRNSW intranet.

3. With the agreement of the Secretary and based on the needs of the business, voluntary relocations can apply to moves between regional locations.

Roles and responsibilities

- *Senior executives:* Promote and support this policy and associated rules to your managers. Exercise your delegations with reference to this policy
- *Hiring managers:* Advertise, search and fill roles in accordance with this policy. Escalate concerns or disagreements over the practical application of this policy to your line senior executives.
- *Recruitment:* Action advertisements and search activities and action employment offers, extensions and assignments with reference to this policy. Escalate concerns or disagreements to the Chief People Officer and Deputy Secretary Corporate.

Delegations

- Employment delegations must be exercised with reference to this policy.

Superseded documents

This policy replaces:
- The previous regionalisation recruitment approach approved by the ELC on 28 August 2020.

Appendix

1. *What happens if I can't find suitable candidates at the priority location for my Group?*

   a. If you've publicly advertised and searched for at least 21 days and not found any capable candidates, you can extend your search:

      i) to the three other priority locations. Genuine effort must be made to find suitable candidates in the priority location before advertising elsewhere.

      ii) in special circumstances to the most relevant regional geographic area if the role is connected to that area and it makes business sense to do so. Deputy Secretary approval for this is required based on a written submission.

   b. If you've publicly advertised and searched for at least a further fourteen days across all four priority locations and not found any capable candidates, you can extend your search to locations across Regional NSW.

   c. If you've publicly advertised and searched for at least seven days across Regional NSW and not found any capable candidates, you can extend your search to the Sydney metropolitan area, noting that you will only be able to offer a temporary contract up to 12 months.

2. *What if I have candidates already in talent pools, but not in the priority locations?*

   d. You must advertise and search to fill the role in the priority location/s before you can activate your candidate from a talent pool.

3. *Can I extend my temporary staff in Sydney, or make them ongoing?*

   e. You can extend your existing temporary employees in the Sydney metropolitan area in their current role for a period up to 12 months

   f. You cannot convert temporary employees to ongoing employment in their current role in the Sydney metropolitan area.

4. *Can staff live in Sydney but work in one of the four priority locations?*

   g. No. You must not use working from home agreements to facilitate employees living (and largely working from home) in the Sydney metropolitan area while occupying roles located in the priority locations.

5. *I have vacant roles in Sydney I urgently need to backfill. Can I do that?*

   h. You can backfill existing vacant roles in the Sydney metropolitan area while recruitment in a priority location is undertaken, or while a substantive incumbent is absent on long-term leave or seconded out.

6. *What support is available to Sydney staff who want to move to the priority locations?*

   i. Financial support is available for eligible staff who voluntarily relocate their roles to one of the four priority locations. Further information about this support is available on the intranet or by emailing _____

7. *Equity, equality and accessibility*

   j. Where application of this policy would limit or reduce a candidate or employee's equity, equality or access to opportunity, the Secretary may approve an exception to be made. This includes but is not limited to identified roles for Aboriginal staff, accessibility to workplaces and/or travel facilities, or unique or significant cultural or community considerations.

8. *Resolving disagreements*

   k. Disagreements over the practical application of this policy will be resolved by written submission to the relevant Deputy Secretary/Director General/CEO who will discuss with the Secretary.

Definitions

- *Sydney Metropolitan area*: includes all of the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area, bounded by Mt Victoria station to the west, the Newcastle Local Government Area to the north and the Wollongong local government area to the south. Note that the area of the Central Coast between Gosford station and the Newcastle local government area is regarded as being outside the Sydney Metropolitan area

- *Regional NSW*: any area in NSW outside the Sydney Metropolitan are as defined above
- *Roles that can be done anywhere*: knowledge-based roles that can be done anywhere as long as the worker has access to a laptop, the internet, relevant software applications and a phone. For example, a Policy Officer, Program Manager or Corporate Business Partner whose work and interactions with stakeholders can be conducted using online collaboration and telecommunications tools.
- *Roles bound to a specific site/s, a region, or a district*: roles whose core purpose and function makes it essential that the worker be regularly physically present at a specific site/s, a particular region or a district in order to access, manage, maintain, build, patrol, review or inspect specific places or physical things, or access assets at those places, or complete essential in-person interactions with stakeholders at those places. For example, a Regulatory Officer who patrols or oversees a specific district or region, or a Farm Supervisor who manages and maintains infrastructure and trials at a specific site, or a Research Scientist or Technical Officer whose research assets and/or trials are tied to specific sites or districts.
- *Contracted place of work*: the street address listed on an employee's employment contract (letter of offer).