

**Submission
No 3**

INQUIRY INTO DIGITAL RESTART FUND BILL 2019

Organisation: Public Service Commission

Date Received: 8 January 2020



The Director
Portfolio Committee No.6
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Director,

Submission regarding the Inquiry into the provisions of the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019

Please accept this letter as a submission on behalf of the Public Service Commission (PSC) to the Inquiry into the provisions of the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019 (Bill) (Inquiry).

The Public Service Commissioner is an independent statutory officer appointed under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* (GSE Act). The Commissioner's functions include:

- identifying reform opportunities for the government sector workforce, and advising the Government on policy innovations and strategy in those areas of reform, and
- leading the strategic development and management of the government sector workforce in relation to a variety of matters.

The Commissioner is supported in performing these functions by the PSC.

One of the NSW Government's Premier's Priorities is to deliver a "World Class Public Service". The goal is to "implement best-practice productivity and digital capability in the NSW public sector and drive public sector diversity by 2025". The PSC has been tasked with leading this reform.

The Bill establishes the Digital Restart Fund (Fund) for the purpose of providing funding for digital and information and communications technology (ICT) initiatives across the government sector. It is the PSC's view that the Bill will support the state of NSW to build the digital infrastructure and skills necessary for the NSW Public Service to become "World Class" and to significantly enhance the experience of members of the public in their interactions with government.

Based on the purpose of the Fund as set out in clause 6 of the Bill, the PSC understands that the Fund will be directed at helping agencies to work collaboratively in providing services to the citizens of NSW and that the Fund will be used to assist in the delivery of programs which touch multiple areas of service delivery. As NSW transitions towards digital service delivery, automation, artificial intelligence and the next generation of jobs, a co-ordinated approach across clusters is crucial to ensure success. The PSC considers that a centralised approach to digital transformation will enable NSW Government agencies to respond easily to change, both in terms of technology and government policy.

The PSC also endorses the focus of the Fund on optimising the technologies, applications, systems and processes used by government agencies, and on the education and training of government agency employees in relation to digital and information and communications technology. The Bill creates opportunities to develop pathways for ICT and digital specialists to join the NSW Government sector workforce and supports education and training initiatives to build the digital capability of existing staff.

The PSC is aware that governance arrangements have been put in place to ensure prudent oversight of this initiative, including through central agency working groups.

The PSC is already assisting in uplifting digital capabilities across the sector, and considers that this Bill will contribute to that work. The PSC supports the core program areas defined in the Bill and would welcome submissions for funding which contribute to the delivery of the Premier's Priorities, making NSW a "World Class Public Service" for its citizens.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kate Harrington
A/Assistant Commissioner

7/1/20