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## Whole of Government Message No. 0305 - 4 March 2011

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### General Notices

#### 1. 2011 ACTPS ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT BARGAINING – COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMMON TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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### 2011 ACTPS ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT BARGAINING – COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMMON TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Government Negotiating Team met today with union and non-union bargaining representatives to commence formal negotiations for the next set of ACTPS enterprise agreements.

Staff may recall that they were advised in late January/early February of the commencement of negotiations as well as their bargaining rights under the Fair Work Act 2009.

Since that time the recommended structural changes arising from the Hawke Review have influenced the Government's approach to the number and scope of likely enterprise agreements and their duration.

In accordance with the Government's intention to establish a single ACTPS entity, it is now intended to negotiate: separate agreements based on a Directorate model; separate occupation-specific agreements as already in place plus a new one for Health Professional staff in ACT Health; and separate agreements for other agency/employment groups (such as CIT clerical staff, Auditor-General's Office, Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Legislative Assembly Members' Staff and Legal Aid Office).

The detailed arrangements and possible movement of particular administrative units under the new Directorate structure will be the subject of further Government consideration and advice to staff. However, it is felt that negotiating the Common Terms and Conditions which will apply to the majority of ACTPS enterprise agreements should proceed now.

In past negotiations the Government has endeavoured to establish agreements in the interests of the ACTPS workforce and the ACT community. To this end, the 2010 enterprise agreements saw the confirmation of Government commitments to:

- grandparental leave - up to 52 weeks unpaid;
- maternity leave - increased from 14 to 18 weeks paid;
- primary care giver leave - increased from 14 to 18 weeks paid;
- volunteering leave - 3 days paid for voluntary community service and 4 days paid for voluntary emergency leave;
- bonding leave - increased from 5 to 10 days paid; and
- enhanced scope to access dispute resolution provisions

and included other changes to:

- bereavement leave - increased from 3 to 5 days paid per occasion;
- the adjustment of allowances by the percentage increases in pay;
- the removal of youth wage classifications;

- increases in vacation childcare program payments;
- the use of Time Off in Lieu for absences below 1 day; and
- the inclusion of Family and Community Day in the public holidays clause.

Most importantly, the 2010 negotiations saw the Government advance a reform agenda for enterprise agreement negotiations based upon the need to reconcile the various elements of the legislative employment framework.

The Government will continue with its reform agenda for the 2011 bargaining round and is genuinely looking for the involvement of unions and other employee representatives in the development of a modernised employment framework.

Significantly, the proposed reforms are not intended to alter or reduce entitlements or threaten employee rights.

Rather, the reforms are supportive of achieving a sustainable high performance culture within the ACTPS for the benefit of staff and the ACT community; and with employee rights properly provided for within legislation and regulation and entitlements located in enterprise agreements.

The Government is also proposing a two year duration for agreements with a common expiry date of 30 June 2013.

While this is shorter than many might have hoped, it will allow for the alignment of the next round of enterprise agreement negotiations with the outcomes of a comprehensive review of the Public Sector Management Act 1994, further work towards a single industrial agreement for the Service as recommended by Dr Hawke, and other possible changes to classification arrangements.

The Government, in balancing the ongoing fiscal challenges for the ACT Public Service and the need to provide a reasonable and equitable wage outcome for its employees, is proposing a 2.5% increase per annum consistent with existing budget parameters.

The Government is also fully committed to implementing bargaining arrangements that will see the 2011 bargaining timeframe greatly shortened when compared against the experience of the last bargaining round.

Whole of Government messages will be regularly provided to staff to keep you fully informed of developments as negotiations progress.

Detailed information on the 2011 ACTPS enterprise agreement bargaining process and related developments will be available at the following website - <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/governance/agreement> .

***Authorised by Andrew Cappie-Wood, Chief Executive, Chief Minister's Department***

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