



MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN PROGRESSIVES CRITICAL OF CHANGES TO APS

Australian Progressives policy director, Nicolle Burt has slammed the Morrison Government's announcement of significant changes to the Australian Public Service, calling it a swipe at the public sector and 'Canberra bashing!'

"These announcements by the Prime Minister about machinery of government changes arising from the Thodey Report are just another swipe at the public sector about perceived inefficiencies within the APS. It's also another example of Canberra bashing" said Ms Burt. "Coalition governments have never been at ease with an impartial and professional public service. The consolidation of 18 agencies in to 14 does nothing to break bureaucratic congestion, improve decision making or ultimately, deliver better services" she continued.

The Morrison Government has announced the changes, to come into effect on 1 February 2020 and include Arts and Communications being added to a newly formed Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. Environment functions are moved to a new Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, with emissions reduction added to Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.

"These ongoing changes are a huge cost to the taxpayer and are designed to slash the already diminished expertise of the APS" Burt said. "It's all about reducing the actual numbers in the APS resulting in many agencies lose their in-house expertise and requiring the services of more expensive external contractors and consultants. These skills are required to fill knowledge and capability gaps in order to deliver against Government mandated programs" Ms Burt added.

More than 65% of the total Australian public service are located outside of Canberra. APS employment in Canberra, as a percentage of the workforce, has decreased from 32 per cent in 2011 to 28 per cent in 2016. "These new changes will result in more costs to taxpayers through redundancies, administrative changes and job losses. The APS is a key driver delivering necessary services to all Australians and is not driven by shareholder expectations or profit imperatives but through delivering for their fellow citizens in areas such as veterans affairs, aged care and education" Ms Burt continued.

The Australian Progressives are strongly urging the Morrison Government to reconsider the changes. "Canberra is not a bubble as the Prime Minister claims. It is the seat of our national government, created by our nation for our nation. The only bubble in Canberra is the one on Parliament Hill which is replete with 149 FIFO workers in the House and 74 in the Senate," Burt concluded.

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About Australian Progressives:

We believe in the advancement of an empathetic society - one in which all citizens of Australia can reach their full potential and find fulfilment in their lives within a thriving democracy. We will be a government with the guts to advance society through laws, services and infrastructure, for the benefit of all people. We believe government and communities should work together to develop creative and passionate individuals who can improve the world around them, embracing education, technology, science, culture and global leadership.

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