

Colleagues

You will recall my recent message informing you of the Government's increased Efficiency Dividend from 1.5% to 4% in 2012-13.

A careful assessment of our projected budget for next year shows we now need to position ourselves by both reducing workload and workforce numbers in the second half of this year.

Expressions of interest for Voluntary Redundancies are now sought from permanent staff at all levels across the organisation with details available on the VR intranet site. I encourage interested staff to view the information and have an initial discussion with their manager.

In order to maximise the benefit and help pay for the VRs, we need to move quickly and therefore I seek expressions of interest from staff by 27 January 2012 with staff departures by end-March at the latest for those who receive and accept formal VR offers.

This is a completely voluntary process. Guiding Principles and other information can be found on the VR intranet site to ensure a transparent, and consistent process. There is no guarantee that employees who nominate will be offered a VR as we must retain a highly capable workforce with the capacity to deliver the Government's ongoing health and ageing agenda. For every VR given a departmental position must be removed and not backfilled temporarily or permanently in future. We have consulted the National Staff Participation Forum (NSPF) and CPSU and will continue to do so.

The Employee Assistance Program provides confidential counselling to all our staff with a Manager's Assist program also available for supervisors who may benefit from extra support.

Reducing workload

As I said in my last message, the department must now look at the WAY we deliver some core programs so we can focus effort on delivering our legislative and regulatory responsibilities and the government's priorities including health reform.

Andrew Stuart is convening a new review of workload reduction opportunities with a strong focus on ensuring they are implemented effectively in the coming year. Your Division Head, State and Territory Office Manager or equivalent will engage with staff to consider options in each work area over the coming months. A review of our external committee structures and support will form part of this effort. We will also review some further whole of Department opportunities such as the way we manage correspondence.

Both the VR and workload reduction programs will be handled sensitively to ensure that the remaining workload and our workforce are well balanced across the department. This will mean there will be opportunity for some mobility across the department as we identify areas of workforce need and seek to use our people in line with their capabilities.

I am proud of the ongoing demonstrated commitment of all our people to continue to serve the Australian community through delivering our health and aged care programs.

Regards

Jane Halton
Secretary