

2008/09 Priorities for Action

1. New Management & Leadership Training Programs

- Pilot two of the three new Management & Leadership programs, to enable all employees to promote continuous improvement and support an innovative and collaborative culture, by 31 Dec 09.
- Stagger the launch of these three programs between 1 Feb 09 and 30 June 09.

2. Progress Development of Professional Streams

- Implement a communications strategy for staff for the purpose of Professional streams and the way forward over the next 12 months, commencing 1 July 08.
- Ensure all Professional streams are at a comparable level of maturity, by 31 Dec 08.

3. Support Long Term Professional Development Goals

- Include guidance on the identification and agreement of long term professional development within the two new Management & Leadership programs, by 30 Sept 08.
- Revise guidance tools for PFADS to include the identification, value and range of 'stretch' professional development goals, by end Feb 09.

4. Introduce a Career Counsellor Program

- Employ a career counsellor, to be available for one-on-one advice on careers within DSD, by 31 Dec 08.
- Develop and launch a formal career counsellor program, by 28 Feb 08.

5. Align Employee—Employer Expectations

- Identify Defence wide benefits and document these, to be made available on the internal and external website, by 30 Sep 08.
- Develop and release a DSD information pack for Selection Advisory Committees, to facilitate the communication of consistent and accurate information to external applicants, by 30 Oct 08.
- Develop and launch a DSD branding concept, by 31 Dec 08.

6. Promote Flexible Working Arrangements

- Scope employee interest in flexible working arrangements, including job-sharing through employee consultation, by 31 Nov 08.
- Promote flexible working arrangements under the current DECA and successful case studies to senior management at the EL2 forum, by 30 Sept 08.

7. Introduce New Starter Work Plans

- Develop a policy manual with supporting template, to make work plans compulsory for all new starters, internal and external, by 31 Oct 08.
- Ongoing Section Head responsibility to sight work plans prior to commencement and to undertake a 6 week follow-up, on-going from 1 Nov 08.

8. Assess Introduction of an Alumni Program

- Introduce a mechanism within the Exit process to identify separating employees who would be interested in staying in touch with the organisation, by 31 August 08.
- Assuming a sufficient level of interest, develop a formal program for implementation by 30 June 09.

What is Retention?

Retention is about creating a workplace that engages staff at all levels and links the employee to the Directorate through shared values and goals.

Skill shortages are being felt right across the Public Service and recent studies suggest the most important thing employees want from a job are opportunities for advancement, followed by quality training and a clear career path.

Retention is about providing a work environment that fosters continuous development of staff, diversity of career options and long term commitment to the Directorate.

For the organisation, an employer who invests in its people will produce stronger business results. These include improved morale within the workplace, increased loyalty and commitment from staff and the capacity to continue to meet government priorities in a tight labour market.

Separation Trends

At DSD, like any organisation, we are experiencing critical shortages in skills and the effects of a tight labour market. As unemployment hits a record low it is becoming imperative that corporate leaders adapt to ensure the organisation is positioned into the future.

Extensive research has been conducted on the health of our organisation, including a detailed analysis of staff exits over the 2004-2008 period. This provides insight on our separation trends and the ability to identify 'hot spots'.

The Retention Management Plan includes strategies which are directed towards these trends to ensure we retain and continue to engage our highly valued people with the critical skills required to meet operational demands.

Retention Drivers

Research on push and pull factors, including a detailed analysis of staff survey and exit survey results over the 2004-2008 period, provides insight on why staff stay with DSD, and also why they leave.

Retention Drivers: Learning new skills; Access to latest technology; Making a difference; Challenging, Meaningful work; Good working conditions; Competitive pay; The people—interesting, talented and committed.

*Defence Signals
Directorate*

**Retaining
our talent**

*Initiatives for our People
and our Organisation*



2008-2009

Aims

While there are many aspects of our work that will always make DSD a unique and attractive long term employer, results from a variety of data sources suggest there are opportunities to improve our workplace practices and provide increased support for diverse and flexible careers within the Directorate.

Through the implementation of the strategic initiatives outlined within this Retention Management Plan (the Plan), DSD aims to:

- Continue to attract, retain, develop and motivate our workforce both now and in the future.
- Support a flexible and collaborative work environment that meets the needs and expectations of both employees and the Directorate.
- Enhance the Directorate's reputation as an employer of choice to technologists, analysts and business professionals.

Development & Governance

The direction and contents of the Plan were guided primarily by the work of a group of 14 volunteer employees from across DSD, who formed the Retention Management Reference Group. This group undertook activities such as hypothesis-testing of separation drivers, the identification and scoping of retention initiatives and prioritising of required actions to create a Plan which aims to address the needs of staff and our organisation. During the development stage, our workforce was also given an opportunity to comment on retention within DSD and to put forward initiatives for consideration by the group.

The Retention Management Plan is a plan by the people for the people. The implementation of the strategic initiatives outlined within this Plan, will be guided by the Reference Group who will continue to be actively involved. As strategies are implemented, further engagement of employee representatives will ensure monitoring and evaluation of the plan, and that it continues to meet the needs of our employees.

Both the outcome focused strategies and priorities for action will be reviewed annually.

Measuring Success

The long-term success of this plan will be assessed on the achievement of the following:

- ⇒ An increase in retention rate.
- ⇒ A trend in separations in proportion to the total capability and diversity of our workforce.
- ⇒ Branch level separation rates within an agreed DSD range.
- ⇒ A reduction in total recruitment volume, equating to savings of both time and money for the organisation.
- ⇒ An increase in staff engagement and confidence in building a robust career within DSD.

Retention Management Plan Initiatives for our People and our Organisation

1 Skilled, Capable and Accountable People Managers; *Design and implement leadership development programs across all classifications.*

At DSD our people are our greatest asset. It is critical that across the organisation, our employees are trained and developed as leaders to support each other and meet current and future challenges within the Directorate.

Benefit: Staff will be better equipped to be middle managers (from the middle managers program) and more junior staff will know what to expect from their supervisors and managers (from the introduction to management/supervision program).

2 A Comprehensive Professional Streams Framework; *Ensure progression of professional streams and the effective communication of their purpose in both career and organisation development.*

At DSD we value professional development of our employees through a structured and defined stream specific capability framework.

Benefit: 1) Employees will have access to tools which will assist them to identify their professional development needs. 2) The organisation will be better equipped to source and/or develop required training, as well as to undertake workforce analysis and planning based on capabilities.

3 Employee-Identified Career Paths within the Organisation; *Employ a career counsellor to support employees to identify and achieve their professional goals within DSD.*

Making good career choices is important for our employees. We believe in enabling our people to recognise opportunities and develop realistic career goals.

Benefit: 1) Employees will understand the range of career options within DSD, Defence and the Australian Intelligence community 2) Employees will be supported in planning their own career.

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4 Achievement and Delivery of shared Employer— Employee expectations; *Shape staff expectations throughout the recruitment process, improve induction programs and develop work plans for staff.*

We believe it is important to provide our people with a workplace that encompasses greater development, support networks and opportunities in line with employee expectations.

Benefit: 1) Applications for positions within DSD will increase. Recruits will feel like they have gone into a job they are prepared for and will want to stay. Organisation will be better able to manage the expectations of its employees. 2) New starters will have a clearer understanding of where DSD fits into the larger Intelligence and Defence community. 3) New starters will be better and more quickly integrated into their workplaces, have a clear understanding of their role and where their team fits in to the broader section, branch and Directorate.

5 A Workplace that Supports Flexibility; *Advertise and support flexible working provisions under the Defence Certified Agreement (DECA), improve job design, educate staff and management on their options.*

At DSD, we understand the demands of the modern world and strive to adapt to the needs of our employees, whilst providing them the tools to strike a balance between job and personal commitments.

Benefit: 1) Staff will better understand their options regarding flexible working conditions and job design. 2) Usage of flexible working arrangements will increase through better management, understanding and support. 3) Attract a wider pool of applicants 4) Assist employees to better manage work and their outside lives.

6 A Culture of Employee Return; *Develop an Alumni program to keep in touch with separated employees.*

We value and nurture our great team and strong sense of community through an investment in professional networking and long term relationships.

Benefit: 1) A culture of employee return will be encouraged. 2) The number of staff returning to DSD will increase.