The State Revenue Office and the Ballarat relocation project

In May 2001, the Victorian State government announced its decision to relocate 40 percent of the State Revenue Office's (SRO) functions to the Ballarat Technology Park near Ballarat – a regional centre located approximately 110 km north-west of Melbourne. Two hundred of the SRO's 450 employees were affected by the proposal, which met with a high level of resistance from staff. Despite union protest and only 33 staff members choosing to relocate, the new Ballarat facility was successfully up and running in March 2002 as scheduled. One month after the launch, SRO Commissioner David Pollard left the organisation and was replaced by Executive Director of IT Paul Broderick.

He was faced with two different offices with two very different climates, described by one observer as: "Sour, unhappy, disenchanted Melbourne and bright-eyed, bushy-tailed Ballarat." Broderick had to reconcile the two offices as well as deal with ongoing union action over involuntary redundancies.

The State Revenue Office

The State Revenue Office (SRO) is responsible for administering Victoria's tax legislation and has been the major tax collection agency of the State Government since 1992. Operating as an independent service agency under an agreement between the Victorian Treasurer and the Department of Treasury and Finance, at the time of the

relocation announcement all SRO staff were based in a central Melbourne office. During the 2000-2001 financial year, the SRO was expected to collect over $6 billion in revenue; taxes collected included duties, land tax, payroll tax and debits tax. The SRO also administered a number of schemes, including the First Home Owners' Grant, on behalf of the Federal Government.

As of 2001, the agency consisted of six divisions: IT, Customer Relations, Compliance and Policy, Finance and Administration, Legal Services, and Human Resources (*Exhibit 1*). Making up these divisions were a further 16 branches, including Payroll Tax, Land Tax and Investigations. Work at the SRO ranged from entry-level processing jobs to more senior compliance and management positions. Some branches had direct contact with taxpayers which included answering queries and adjusting assessments. One of the busiest branches was Land Tax which issued more than 125,000 assessments during the 1999-2000 cycle.[1] The branch also dealt with a large number of objections during that period and issued $8.13 million in refunds.[2]

David Pollard was the Commissioner of State Revenue, a position he had held since 1997. Committed to making the SRO a leading-edge organisation, he oversaw a number of initiatives including the pursuit of ISO[3] certification which was achieved by 2000. The agency was one of only a few public sector organisations in the state to have been granted certification at the time. Under his stewardship, the SRO was in the process of developing a new core computer system called e-Sys which would further streamline SRO operations. The SRO had also recently launched a new website and was working to allow customers to perform a broader range of transactions online.

Growing Victoria Together

Although the past few years had been prosperous ones for Victoria, the dividends of this growth period had not been evenly distributed across the state. Regional areas still experienced higher levels of unemployment compared to metropolitan areas, and country Victorians were at a comparative disadvantage when it came to accessing essential infrastructure such as transport, health care services and broadband access. Former Premier Jeff Kennett's shock election defeat in 1999 was partly attributed to a voter backlash in rural and regional areas, where he was perceived as having failed to adequately address their concerns.

In March 2000, new Premier Steve Bracks convened the Growing Victoria Together Summit to discuss his Labor Government's priorities for Victoria. Out of this summit came a policy platform which was to set the Government's economic and social agenda for the next decade. While addressing issues across the social and economic spectrum, one of the challenges identified was ''strengthening rural, regional and urban

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[1] In Victoria, land tax was payable on the unimproved value of all land worth $85,000 or more, except in certain circumstances including where the property was an owner's primary residence.
[2] State Revenue Office Victoria, *Annual Review 2001,* p. 9.
[3] International Standards Organisation.

communities."[4] To this end, the Government sought to improve job opportunities in rural and regional areas, and better link regional centres with Melbourne. To demonstrate its commitment to these aims, the Government explored decentralising some of its functions. Discussions were later conducted with a number of public sector organisations regarding the potential for full or partial relocation outside Melbourne.

The Ballarat announcement

In April 2001, David Pollard gathered SRO staff together for an important announcement. Present were Paul Broderick, then Executive Director of the IT division; Brendan Harrison, who had been working with him on the e-Sys project; Robyn White, then heading up Land Tax, and Stephen Dalli, also from the Land Tax branch. Said Broderick:

> "I remember that day very, very well. It was at the time when there was Legionnaires' Disease[5] going around and there'd been a scare down at the aquarium. The Commissioner gathered all the staff together in a big room and he began by saying, 'I've got to make this announcement about potential *Legionella* here but you don't need to worry.' He then handed over to the HR Manager, Betsie Young, to provide some details of the scare. You could just about feel the air being sucked out of the room. He then said: 'That's not the main reason I called you here though, the main reason I called you here was to let you know that the government has decided that we are relocating 40 percent of our jobs to Ballarat.' You can just imagine what people were thinking at the time. Firstly everyone was panicking about *Legionella,* then all of a sudden in that negative, highly-charged environment, they heard that 40 percent of jobs were going to Ballarat. Unfortunately, there was no choice, for OH&S[6] reasons we had to make the announcement at the same time. That got us off to a really bad start."

According to Brendan Harrison, staff had had no inkling that such an announcement was imminent. Stephen Dalli too recalled shock and dismay as employees, particularly older ones, pondered their futures. Many SRO staff had enjoyed a long tenure with the organisation, some more than 20 years. Dalli was instantly confronted with the big decision whether moving his family to Ballarat would be a viable option. Robyn White quickly observed surprise giving way to anger: "It was a way of life as well as a job for them," she remarked.

Following the announcement made to SRO staff about the relocation, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and others raised a number of concerns. These led to Treasurer John Brumby announcing to the media on 12 April 2001 that a study would first be commissioned to explore the feasibility of relocating 200 of the SRO's 450 jobs to Ballarat. "A relocation of just 40 percent of the SRO's activities would inject more than $100 million into regional Victoria over the next six years," Brumby said.

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[4] Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Growing Victoria Together,* November 2001, p. 5.
[5] The disease caused by the bacterium *Legionella pneumophila* which can produce a virulent pneumonia.
[6] Occupational Health and Safety

"As well as bringing long-term jobs, any move would create up to 50 positions during the construction phase. The establishment of a State Revenue Office outside of Melbourne would have a significant social and economic impact, as well as an overall benefit to Victoria."[7]

The proposed location was the Ballarat Technology Park, approximately 8 km from Ballarat's centre. The SRO's potential neighbours would include IBM and the University of Ballarat. Brumby said the feasibility study, expected to be completed within a month, would involve consulting the CPSU. For its part, the union was instantly cynical about the Ballarat feasibility study. Union Secretary Karen Batt suggested that the move was a done deal[8] and more motivated by politics than efficiency, given that Ballarat was a marginal seat.[9] The next State election was due sometime in 2002. At a union meeting in early May, SRO workers voted to: "withdraw their goodwill and cooperation towards the public service, refuse to work through lunch hours and to stop working unpaid overtime. Employees also agreed to a half-day of industrial action on May 21, the busiest day in the office's month."[10] A half-day walk-out of 300 SRO employees was also scheduled for May 15; the union estimating that 700-800 public inquiries would go unanswered.[11]

Indeed, the majority of SRO employees were vehemently opposed to the proposal. Even staff not personally affected by the prospect of relocation went out in support of colleagues who were. But, as Robyn White recalled, the outward hostility masked a much more complex situation. Despite all the union activity and disruptions, in some respects it was business as usual. As she remarked:

> "To their credit, all staff maintained the core business of the SRO and I think that was a measure of their commitment as people to the tasks they were doing. Even though they were very angry with management and even though they tried to minimise their work, they nevertheless did it because they were focused on the customer."

For White, the situation was not entirely clear-cut: "I think turmoil is a good way of [describing it] because it suggests some sort of confusion and inconsistency."

Beyond the SRO and CPSU, the reaction was different. Indeed, the news was welcomed in many quarters. As far as the Ballarat Council, the University of Ballarat, the local Chamber of Commerce and Ballarat media were concerned, the proposal represented a very positive step. Unemployment in the town was between 8 and 9 percent, compared to the 6.7 percent state average at the time.[12] While Melbourne-based media focussed on the controversy, the Ballarat proposal did receive some favourable coverage. A *Sunday Herald Sun* editorial entitled "Justice for the Bush" commended the Government::

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[7] Office of the Treasurer, *Media Release: Feasibility Study for State Revenue Office Move to Ballarat,* 12 April 2001.

[8] Williams, J., 'Vic - Angry revenue office employees resisting relocation', AAP, 3 May 2001.

[9] Wilson, D., 'PS transfer political, says union', *Sunday Herald Sun*, 6 May 2001.

[10] ibid.

[11] 'Vic - Revenue staff to walk out as Brumby delivers budget.' AAP, 15 May 2001.

[12] Barlow, G., 'Arts, retail take pride of place', *Herald and Weekly Times*, 2 May 2001.

"Tangible evidence is at last emerging that the State Government will deliver on its promise to take country Victorians seriously…That pledges have been made on the replacement of derelict bridges and improvements to roads is also encouraging, as is the plan to move parts of the State Revenue Office from Melbourne to Ballarat…While opponents will accuse [Bracks] of trying to cement in place the new support he won at the last election, he is entitled to respond that he is investing in infrastructure that has been neglected for decades. He is also redressing an imbalance that saw country Victorians bear too great a share of the public sector cutbacks during the 1990s…the possible shift of bureaucratic functions to Ballarat signals that country people are no longer invisible Victorians."[13]

Moving on

Having received the results of the feasibility study carried out by external consultants, the Government announced its decision on 24 May: the partial relocation of the SRO to Ballarat would go ahead. The study recommended the move, concluding that "the positions identified could be moved with minimal disruption to service" and that "the move to Ballarat would require an initial injection of funds but would generate recurrent savings."[14] Not dissuaded, the CPSU continued their efforts to block the relocation. For SRO management however, it was full steam ahead. The new site was scheduled to be open and operational by March 2002, a mere nine months away. It was envisaged that approximately half the 200 staff would be in place by March, with the final transfer of functions and staff complete by October 2002. The functions to be placed in Ballarat were:

- the Land Tax Branch;
- the Payroll Tax and Returns Assessing Branch;
- the First Home Owners' Grant Administration Unit;
- some IT functions; and
- some SRO Corporate functions, including part of Finance and Administration and part of Human Resources.

Robyn White was charged with overseeing the Ballarat project. Although the University of Ballarat was responsible for building the actual facility, she had to ensure work stayed on track and met SRO requirements. She also had to coordinate a great number of other activities to ensure everything would be in place on time. It was a big challenge but one she felt ready for:

"A lot of people would say to me: 'How can you juggle all these tasks at once?' I would reply, 'I learnt to cook for 60 at 16.' What I'm saying is that the project actually required a lot of flexibility. You must get the 'dinner on the table' at a certain time otherwise people will be very unhappy. On the one hand you've got the end in sight, but on the other hand you've got a number of things going on at once to get to that point. I also used the analogy of 'opening night'. This was 'The SRO Moves to Ballarat Show'. March 6 was the official opening and we worked back from that – what would we need to make it happen?"

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[13] 'Editorial: Justice for the Bush', *Sunday Herald Sun*, 13 May 2001.
[14] Office of the Treasurer, 'Media Release: Study Recommends SRO move to Ballarat', 24 May 2001.

A project team was established and their roles and responsibilities outlined (*Exhibit 2*). A steering committee and working committee were also established and met on a weekly basis. The steering committee consisted of Robyn White, David Pollard, Paul Broderick and Rob Dickens (Executive Director of Customer Relations). The working committee consisted of most of the members of the project hierarchy. A basic project timeline was drawn up outlining the major tasks and their expected completion dates (*Exhibit 3*). Because the SRO had already achieved ISO certification, the agency's processes and procedures were already well documented, greatly facilitating such a move. One of the biggest challenges, from White's perspective, was ensuring the IT and telecommunications systems were ready. She spent the first six weeks of the project getting her plans in place, with telecommunications being one of the first aspects addressed. The Ballarat office would have a state-of-the art telecommunications system including teleconferencing facilities, and use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). But workforce issues would prove very complex, as Paul Broderick later reflected:

> "There were two significant elements to the change process; one was the physical change – the building, where to locate it, computer needs, etc etc, and then there was the human side of it. The physical side of it was quite easy to manage in some respects…that was all proceeding very well… But the human side wasn't going so well. ..It was really difficult."

Laying out the options

For affected SRO staff, Broderick recounted the possibilities management presented them with:

> "We worked out four options for staff: one was like a voluntary redundancy; the second one was a transfer to Ballarat (which was our preferred option for most staff); there was the option to transfer to another part of the public sector; and then the fourth option was involuntary redundancies. We concentrated on the first three options because we didn't want any involuntary redundancies if we could avoid it because that was going to be difficult and the union was totally opposed to that.

> "The four options were put to the staff and there was a lot of union backlash about it. The union didn't want the jobs transferred to Ballarat and mounted a campaign. We had pickets out the front, protests to government, there was a letter-writing campaign and a lot of hostility about it because the union felt like the jobs were just disappearing, and people who had worked in the organisation for many years were just being discarded.

> "One the other hand, we were trying to convey the message that involuntary redundancies were the last resort and we were doing everything we possibly could. We employed case managers so people could find other jobs, we got Ballarat Council, shopkeepers and sporting clubs down to run a big expo on Ballarat at our Melbourne office so people could see it was actually a nice place to live. We organised bus trips to Ballarat so people could go up there and spend a day with their families."

One of the first to take up the offer was Stephen Dalli. A combination of pragmatism and flexibility led him to decide to make the move. Married with primary school-aged children, he was in a position to relocate with minimal disruption to his family. Ballarat

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also represented a promotion and development of his skills. He did, however, recall some animosity towards him from other staff over his acceptance. Brendan Harrison also decided to move, now taking up the position of Branch Manager of Land Tax. He too was aware that the project was already advancing rapidly:

> "Once these things get underway, they're very hard to stop. Once they get underway you might change the shape of them but they pretty much have their own momentum. To the previous Commissioner's [David Pollard's] credit, he had that capacity for single-mindedness to just ignore the opposition. Any [calls for] comment or [announcements of] discussion were made with the utmost conviction that it was going forth."

But opposition was still strong and a position was created specifically to deal with the objections of staff and the union, so that the implementation team could concentrate on the task of advancing the Ballarat project. On reflection, White concluded that perhaps the SRO should have given greater initial consideration to the communications side:

> "The communication strategy wasn't thought through sufficiently. We were really on the back foot. We brought in a communications specialist but we didn't have one until August/September 2001 so we had about six months of floundering with communications. With the benefit of hindsight if we'd had a communications specialist in first, I think that would have helped enormously... The communications strategy should have been put in place three months in advance."

And despite the offer of relocation packages which covered moving expenses, Dalli and Harrison were two of only a few staff preparing to, or considering, moving across. Most preferred either voluntary redundancy or redeployment elsewhere in the public sector. To this end, the SRO allowed affected staff to devote 20 percent of their work time to finding alternative employment. A Career Assistance Centre was established which, in addition to providing case managers, offered financial counselling and research facilities. In many instances, other government agencies were instructed to give SRO staff seeking redeployment first consideration in the event of any vacancies.[15] Staff had until October 2001 to make their decision.

Ballarat takes shape

In the meantime, work at Ballarat was proceeding apace. Recruitment of new staff was already underway but complicated by the fact that the exact number of new recruits required was yet to be determined. However, the May 2001 feasibility study indicated that only about 30 Melbourne-based staff would choose to relocate, a number eventually realised. Although the SRO, in conjunction with local bodies, had gone to great lengths to promote Ballarat as an attractive proposition, the scheme didn't prove overly successful. In Stephen Dalli's view, it wasn't that Ballarat lacked charm, "I don't think anyone had a problem with Ballarat as such. I just think it was more that people were fixed in their ways and entrenched in Melbourne." He observed that many younger people chose to stay in Melbourne for lifestyle reasons, while older employees with teenagers in the latter

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[15] State Revenue Office Victoria, 'State Revenue Office Victoria: A stake in the ground for regional development', February 2005, p. 6.

stages of their secondary education, grandchildren, or strong community ties were also much less likely to move.

But despite the fact the SRO didn't get as many staff members relocating as they had wanted, they had achieved a critical mass – enough employees with sufficient skills to get the ball rolling. Some staff taking redundancies or redeployment also took up incentives to come to Ballarat and assist with the skills transfer process. It sent an important message to those remaining in Melbourne, according to Dalli:

> "I think the office was very fortunate that a good dozen people [from Land Tax] came out here who were able to really hold the reins. That was one of the biggest concerns: How were the Ballarat people going to learn their technical skills and ultimately maintain service delivery? That possibly was the major issue. You can get buildings up, you can implement computer systems. People in Melbourne said it wouldn't get off the ground. But when they heard we were coming out, they started to think it might happen."

Added Brendan Harrison:

> "What we didn't get in numbers we made up with getting a slightly higher level of staff member, and that makes a difference because people who are experienced at that leadership level can give an air that everything's going OK and smooth over the cracks a little bit. If we'd started with a completely new management team, that might have caused more problems. The people who were up there knew where to get answers back in Melbourne, they had also experienced disruptions in the past and they weren't daunted."

Recruitment began in five waves of 20 people each, mainly for entry-level processing jobs. The pace of recruitment efforts was stepped up in October, as union disruptions in Melbourne, and staff departing from the organisation early, produced work delays. But troubles in Melbourne were greatly ameliorated by an enthusiastic response in Ballarat. According to the SRO, the first set of positions advertised attracted approximately 500 applicants.[16] Training began in earnest with new staff set up at several temporary sites in and around Ballarat. The first training sessions began between October and November 2001, with later sessions planned for January 2002. All staff began basic level training, the intention being to train suitable applicants for more complex roles as the Ballarat facility grew and developed over the coming months.

Temporary office space was provided by the University of Ballarat, partly, explained White, to ensure the building was complete on time, as the University would need to clear the way for students in early March. While the University did its best to house the new workforce, conditions over that summer were challenging at times. Dalli, who was involved in a lot of mentoring and induction, remembered certain locations being dubbed "the dungeon" or "the hothouse" but nevertheless recalled the period fondly, "Funnily enough it was still a good time. People were very positive. We knew we had teething problems but people could see the building was in progress. The beauty of it was, because of the enthusiasm [of staff] and because they were learning anyway, it didn't

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[16] ibid., p. 9.

matter that the computers were a little slow." According to Harrison, even some of the nay-sayers were won over,

> "For every person in Melbourne who was happy for it to fall on its face, there were three or four people in Ballarat who were absolutely committed to making it work. The majority of people who came up, reluctantly or otherwise, couldn't help but become enthusiastic about it, on the basis of the enthusiasm of the people who were up there."

White too was impressed by the commitment and passion of the staff to making the project work. Nonetheless, she was keen to ensure that their energy didn't flag, spending much of her time travelling between locations giving pep talks and keeping people focussed on the end goal. She told the new team that they were the "pioneers" and pointed towards the progress already being made at the building site. In her opinion, the fact that the building was already taking shape was invaluable, as it was tangible and symbolic of the fact that the end was in sight and that there was no going back.

Much of White's work also involved dealing with the Ballarat partners in the project. Luckily for the SRO, relations were very amicable on that front. Yet it still represented something new for the organisation. Although the SRO had worked in a lot of partnership arrangements previously, the relocation required a whole new level of involvement according to Brendan Harrison:

> "The tax office isn't normally too used to worrying too much about getting buy-in from the public. We don't need to do much to gain customers and we don't need to do much to keep customers. We don't go out of our way to make ourselves disliked by the community but we don't need to be liked or embraced by the community, so in a lot of ways it was quite different from anything we had done in the past."

Ballarat's big day

Although work in Ballarat was progressing well, it was still going to be a mammoth effort to get everything in place on time. Even Harrison who was closely involved with the project wondered if it would all happen by the official launch date. But despite enduring computer crashes, telecommunication difficulties and sometimes stifling heat, the computer system was finally workable, enabling staff to perform actual transactions, speeding the learning process. As the end of February approached, it was time to get staff into the new building.

On the weekend before the launch, the entire office, everything from computers to pot plants and photographs, was moved in over two days. Because the workforce had been split over several locations, it was the first time many staff had met each other face to face. But not only did the office have to be up and running, White recalled, it had to appear like a working office. She described the move as being like a "military operation" though not without its share of dramas; they were still tinkering with the telecommunications system until 1 am the night before.

Then on Wednesday, 6 March 2002 it was "mission accomplished". Nine months after the Treasurer had turned the sod on a greenfields site, he was back with the Premier of Victoria, the Mayor of Ballarat and 164 SRO employees, 33 of them originally from the Melbourne office.[17] The project had been completed on time and on budget and although there was a small backlog of work, it was expected to catch up quite quickly.

Two sites, two climates

By now the Ballarat project was a fully-fledged and functional office, but the SRO still faced a number of difficulties. Once the fanfare surrounding the new facility had died down, the schism between Melbourne and Ballarat became even more apparent. Approximately one month after the Ballarat launch, David Pollard left the SRO, replaced as Commissioner by Paul Broderick, who found himself in an invidious position:

> "As of 6 March everything looked really good [in Ballarat] but back in Melbourne we were left with the cleanup…The climate I inherited in Melbourne was quite negative and people felt quite injured in the process, There was a fair degree of mistrust in management, there was scepticism about me because I'd just taken over and I was involved in the relocation process myself. There was a strong union presence, many staff were involved with the union and there was a lot of union activity, and at that stage we probably had about fifty people who were facing involuntary redundancy.

> "When I took over we had to work out a strategy to deal with all this - the human side. The physical side was going fine, the place was working in Ballarat, the revenue was coming in and the staff were very happy. There was quite a contrast between what was happening in Melbourne and what was happening in Ballarat."

Since the Ballarat office was a reality, the union focus had shifted from the relocation to the fate of the workers facing involuntary redundancy. Said Broderick: "We worked through the three options as much as we could. But the real endgame for all of this was really about involuntary redundancy, whether we would end up getting to that time where we had to say to people 'Look, as much as we've tried to get you a job, we can't do that and you've got to go.'" While it was the SRO's least preferred option, the union was entirely opposed to involuntary redundancies, regardless of inducements offered. The CPSU claimed that the SRO had not adequately lived up to its commitment to find affected staff alternative employment (*Exhibit 4*). As Broderick recalled: "We ended up with a group of people who felt highly disenfranchised and who felt their only recourse was the union and would really only listen to the union in some instances. I can understand that."

As the Ballarat office continued to improve productivity and meet its performance goals, the union continued its dispute with the SRO, which involved a public appeal (*Exhibit 4*) and a protest at Parliament House in September 2002 (*Exhibit 5*). Broderick had to devise a way to deal with union issues in order to move the Melbourne office forward and reconcile two very different offices. He was also aware of another potential problem further down the track in Ballarat:

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[17] ibid.

"You have this big honeymoon period with an organisation and politicians are coming down, there are openings, and you've got this big brass band type of environment to begin with and then that dies down and people start to say, 'Gee, these are the type of jobs we've got here, am I going to be happy with this for a long time?'"

Exhibit 1: SRO 2001 organisational chart

IT	IT Outsourced Functions	Quality and Planning	Electronic Services Delivery	Technology
Paul Broderick Executive Director	**Tony Whelan** Branch Manager	**Sarit Kannanoor** Manager	**Jon Armstrong** Project Manager	**Philip Dunlop** Manager

Customer Relations	Payroll Tax	Document Assessing	Land Tax	Technical Advice	Knowledge Transfer
Rob Dickens Executive Director	**John Ouslinis** Branch Manager	**Cengiz Genc** A/g Branch Manager	**Eric Antonucci** Branch Manager	**Frank Curtain** Branch Manager	**Val Wake** Project Manager

Compliance & Policy	Policy & Legislation	Investigations	Recovery & Review
Peter Hiland Executive Director	**Grant Parsons** Branch Manager	**Brian Wearne** A/g Branch Manager	**Steven Polites** Branch Manager

Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer
David Pollard

Finance & Administration	Finance	Administration
Steven Polites A/g Executive Director	**Darren Findlow** Manager	**Greg Carter** Manager

Legal Services
Aspasia Georgiou Executive Director

Human Resources & Ballarat Technology Park Project	Industrial Relations	Human Resource Service
Robyn White Director	**Betsie Young** Manager	**Bernie Nott** Manager

Exhibit 2: Ballarat project roles and responsibilities

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                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                    │        David Pollard         │
                    │        Project Owner         │
                    │ Commissioner of State Revenue│
                    └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                                   │
                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                    │         Robyn White          │
                    │       Project Director       │
                    └──────────────┬───────────────┘
         ┌─────────────────────────┼─────────────────────────┐
 ┌──────────────────────────┐ │ ┌──────────────────────────────┐
 │ CRD Knowledge Participants│ │ │         Val Wake              │
 │                          │─┼─│ CRD Knowledge Transfer Manager│
 └──────────────────────────┘ │ └──────────────────────────────┘
 ┌──────────────────────────┐ │ ┌──────────────────────────────┐
 │       Bernie Knott       │ │ │        Betsie Young          │
 │     Human Resources      │─┼─│     Industrial Relations     │
 └──────────────────────────┘ │ └──────────────────────────────┘
 ┌──────────────────────────┐ │
 │    Wimal Kariyawasam     │ │
 │      IT Specialist       │─┘
 └──────────────────────────┘
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Terri Mandler	Greg Carter	Cameron Aughterson	Felicity Rolls
Assistance Project Director Organisational Change	Facilities and Administration Manager	Project Finance Manager	Recruitment Manager

Special roles

Project Director: The Project Director acts as the chief Project Manager and is responsible for the oversight of the Ballarat Technical Park Project, and in particular the management of the provision of new SRO facilities at BTP. The Project Director will also liaise with the Executive Director, Customer Relations and Executive Director, Finance and Administration to ensure the best possible outcomes during this business transition.

Several Project Managers report to the Project Director. For the Project Director's role and responsibilities refer to "Project Manager" in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the Project Plan Addendum. The Project Director may at her discretion delegate some of her responsibilities to her Project Managers.

Assistant Project Director – Organisational Change: The Assistant Project Director – Organisational Change is responsible for all aspects of change management for the Project. This includes the provision of strategic advice to the SRO Executive on change management issues, the development and implementation of the Communication Strategy, support for branch managers and team leaders and the design and delivery of transition programs for staff.

Recruitment Manager: The Recruitment Manager is responsible for the management of the external recruitment needs arising as a result of the relocation of certain functions to Ballarat. This includes the development of the Recruitment Strategy and the provision of reports and advice to the Project Director on all matters relating to recruitment.

Facility and Administration Manager: The Facility and Administration Manager is responsible for the provision of all the administrative aspects of the project, including the

management of building-related issues, transport to Ballarat, equipment relocation, organisation of leases etc., temporary accommodation for visiting staff and the provision of reports and advice on such issues to the Project Director.

Project Finance Manager: The Project Manager, Finance and Procurement is responsible for the management of all financial and procurement activities related to the Project. This includes management of the project budget, setting up of financial controls, management of relevant contracts, provision of financial reports and the provision of the financial advice to the Project Director.

Advisory roles

IT Specialist: The IT specialist is responsible for the management of all IT and telecommunication infrastructure aspects of the project. The IT specialist will liaise with the IT division and SRO's outsourced IT provider (CSC) to ensure that the most appropriate and cost-effective infrastructure is put in place and the new Ballarat Technology Park facility is connected to Vic.One.

Human Resources Services Manager: The Human Resources Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Human Resources Strategies of the Project are consistent with the corporate strategies. In particular the Human Resources Services Manager will be responsible for all internal recruitment for positions in Ballarat.

Industrial Relations Manager: The Industrial Relations Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Industrial Relations issues arising as a result of the Project are handled professionally to ensure a smooth transition. This includes liaison with the SRO/CPSU Consultative Committee and resolution of people issues and grievances raised throughout the process. The Industrial Relations Manager will also liaise closely with the Change Manager and the Office of Public Employment.

Customer Relation Division (CRD) Knowledge Transfer Manager: The CRD Knowledge Transfer Manager is responsible for ensuring that all CRD Training issues arising as a result of the Project are handled professionally to ensure a smooth transition. This includes the development of a Training Strategy in liaison with the Knowledge participants from CRD, and the development of a Knowledge Transfer and Skills Transfer Strategy.

Note: Finance and Administration, IT and other Corporate Services knowledge transfer matters will be managed by the Project Team and relevant Branch Managers and Executive Directors.

Exhibit 3: Ballarat project deliverables

Deliverables Summary

Deliverable	Brief Description	Project Manager & Planned Delivery Date
Develop and Implement a Communication Strategy	Throughout the duration of the Project all SRO staff will be provided with all relevant information to assist them to understand, support and actively participate in achieving project outcomes. This will also ensure informed decision making in relation to participation in the options process. Communication Strategy	Terri Mandler & Darren Joyce 1 August 2001 – 30 June 2002
Develop and Implement an Organisational Change Strategy	A comprehensive program of support will be provided to all SRO staff to ensure an effective transition process. This will include the design and development of career transition programs, development of the Career Assistance Centre and input to the design of the OPE redeployment and training programs. Organisational Change Strategy	Terri Mandler 1 August 2001 – 30 June 2002
Develop and Implement a Business Transition Strategy	This strategy is underpinned by the Knowledge and Skills Transfer Strategy and forms the basis of the Recruitment and Training Strategies. It will need to be reviewed once staff affected by the project have lodged their Option re their future with the SRO. Business Transition Strategy	Robyn White & Rob Dickens 1 August 2001 - 1 December 2001
Develop and Implement a Knowledge Management & Skills Transfer Strategy	A significant number of skilled and knowledgeable SRO staff will leave the organisation as a result of the BTP Project. Their knowledge and skills need to be captured and transferred to new staff. See details in KnowledgeAndSkillsTransfer\BTP Knowledge Management and Skills Transfer Strategy V1.0.doc	Robyn White & Rob Dickens 6 July 2001 – 30 June 2002
Develop and Implement a Recruitment Strategy for Phase One and Phase Two	198 identified positions will be relocated to Ballarat. A staged recruitment drive for Band levels 1-4 will be undertaken in Ballarat to fill the positions vacated by current SRO staff who choose not to move to Ballarat. BTP Recruitment Strategy V1.0.doc	Robyn White, Felicity Rolls & Bernie Nott 1 August 2001 - 1 October 2002

Deliverable	Brief Description	Project Manager & Planned Delivery Date
Develop and Implement a Training Strategy for Phase One and Phase Two	A staged training strategy for each of the five affected areas (LTX, PTRA, FHOG, IT and other corporate functions), including General Induction training, will be developed to enable efficient training of new staff. Training Strategy V1.1.doc	Robyn White & Val Wake 1 September 2001 – 30 October 2002
Set up temporary accommodation	Temporary accommodation is required in Ballarat for training and workspace for staff prior to the completion of the new building. Accommodation Stage One Requirements.doc	Greg Carter 1 July 2001 – 1 February 2002
Establish temporary IT and telecommunication infrastructure	A basic IT infrastructure will be required in temporary accommodation from November 2001 – March 2002. A connection to Vic.One is essential to enable Ballarat staff to use e-sys and access Landata. IT and Telecommunications Strategy V0.1doc.doc	Paul Broderick 6 July 2001 – 1 November 2001
Lease new facility at Ballarat technology Park	The SRO will be the tenant of a new building built at the BTP and owned by the University of Ballarat. The Project Director and the Facilities and Administration Manager will liaise with the University of Ballarat and the Victorian Government Property Group.	Greg Carter 15 February 2002
Fit-out new facility at Ballarat technology Park	The SRO will fit-out the new facility at the BTP with appropriately designed workstations, storage facilities, conference facilities and staff amenities areas in liaison with the Sainsbery Reed Consulting Architects.	Greg Carter 1 March 2002
Establish IT and telecommunication infrastructure at new facility at Ballarat Technology Park	A fully functional and up-to-date IT and telecommunication infrastructure, reliant on the Vic.One network will be installed in the new BTP building. See details in BTP IT and Telecommunications Strategy V1.0.doc	Paul Broderick 1 March 2002
Relocate current SRO staff to Ballarat	This will be done in accordance with Melbourne SRO business needs, Ballarat SRO training requirements and staff considerations. BUSINESS TRANSITION PLAN 1.0.doc	Robyn White 1 November 2001 – 1 October 2002

Deliverable	Brief Description	Project Manager & Planned Delivery Date
Develop and Implement a Records Management Strategy	The splitting of SRO functions between Melbourne and Ballarat will require comprehensive file and records transfer protocol using TRIM. The strategy will need to be compatible with the Corporate Records Management Program and System. See details in Records Management Strategy.doc	Robyn White & Greg Carter 1 August 2001 – 1 March 2002
Implementation of Retraining and Redeployment Program	This phase of the BTP Project will be managed by the Office of Public Employment (OPE). See details in the Information Package prepared for staff affected by the BTP Project. Organisational Change Strategy	Terri Mandler 1 January 2002 – 30 June 2002
Phase One completion	113 staff working efficiently in the new fully equipped SRO BTP office	Robyn White 1 March 2002
Phase Two completion	198 staff working efficiently in the new fully equipped SRO BTP office	Robyn White 1 October 2002

Exhibit 4: CPSU public campaign – July 2002

Community and Public Sector Union
SPSF Group   Victorian Branch

Broderick`s Sack Ultimatum

How would you feel if your employer did this to you?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOUR EMPLOYER DECIDED TO UNILATERALLY RELOCATE your job over 100 kilometres away, however in doing this assured you that everything would be OK and signed an agreement stating you had the option of "retraining and redeployment". This agreement went on to say if you weren't redeployed by the end of the program come 30 June 2002, that they would further "commit" that they would "retrain these staff and absorb them into other functions based in the SRO Melbourne office".

Most SRO members were unhappy with being put in this position but took solace in these assurances given by their employer. Equivalent assurances were given in Parliament and reflected in SRO's own documentation on the placement.

WHAT WOULD YOU THEN FEEL IF YOUR EMPLOYER CHANGED THEIR MIND and offered no formal retraining, moved away from their commitment to absorb you at Melbourne and then said we will start sacking option 4 staff this December!

LOOK NO FURTHER BECAUSE THIS IS HAPPENING AT SRO

To make matters worse, SRO now has the audacity to accuse these staff of not trying. This is despite the outsourced program starting late, generating masses of inappropriate prospective job placements, outside Agencies proscribing SRO redeployee's, and the union writing to Treasurer John Brumby in March (and had a subsequent meeting) highlighting their promised redeployment process as being in crisis.

All staff should ensure disinformation tactics do not divide the workforce as SRO falsely try to paint a picture that these staff have not been trying. With nearly four hundred combined years of service between them, management obviously once held a positive view of the value of these option 4 staff. CPSU members see the sack ultimatum as a breach of contract, a loss of trust, and a continuation of the former discredited SRO practises as members had hoped for a change in IR culture with the appointment of the new Commissioner but this hope is now clearly dashed.

YOU CAN HELP CORRECT THIS INJUSTICE
SEND A MESSAGE THAT THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOUR IS NOT ON!

- As the Ballarat placement was raised in Parliament, write to andor phone your local MP asking for intervention and an explanation. CPSU has a guide letter you can use at - www.cpsuvic.org/sro and you can find your local MP at http://tex.parliament.vic.gov.au/bin/texhtmlt?form=VicParl.aq. Alternatively, fill out the guide letter and forward it to your local Consultative Committee member who will send it off for you.

- Attend the next union update, which will occur in a couple of weeks. Other senior figures outside of SRO are now involved to secure a re-commitment to the above assurances and CPSU will give an update on those discussions.

- Participate in the campaign – motions passed thus far were in the last bulletin but can also be found at http://www.cpsuvic.org/sro

- Let Option 4 staff know of your support.

TRUST AFFECTS EVERY SRO EMPLOYEE WHETHER IN MELBOURNE OR BALLARAT
KAREN BATT
Victorian Branch Secretary
Monday, 22 July 2002

Posted On: Monday, 22 Jul 2002 by

Exhibit 5: Parliament House protest - September 2002
(source: www.cpsuvic.com)