



## PEOPLE OVER PROFIT

### - Panel Six - Public Administration: Public Policy for Sale?

Quality public services and democratic government require independent, ethical policy advice, excellent public administrators and fierce regulatory oversight. Experience and evidence shows that public servants must be free from political interference and that the public service must have a strong culture of independence and commitment to service.

But this is changing. Decades of austerity designed to starve the public sector of sufficient resources, combined with propaganda about the superior efficiency of the private sector, have eroded some of the core pillars of public administration. Increasingly, policy development is outsourced to big consultancy firms which have a financial interest in the outcomes and whose employees revolve between senior public service, government and business. The hollowing out of public administration invites corruption, policy capture by business, and service capture by contractors. Privatisation and outsourcing result in the loss of core skills and democratic oversight. Falling wages and insufficient training and precarious employment exacerbate these trends.

We must demand tenured employment to protect from political interference, vested interest, policy capture and corruption. Staff must be well trained to provide excellent advice and service, with adequate remuneration to attract and retain good staff and avoid the incentives for corruption. We need a diverse workforce that reflects the values and aspirations of the community it serves.

Sufficient resources, strong anti-corruption policies, whistleblower protection and enforced legal protections are needed to ensure that public servants can exercise their right to organise and bargain collectively. Public servants must be able to exercise their employment rights.