



Australia weather

BoM paid communication consultants almost \$70,000 to rebrand it 'the Bureau'

Staff were treated like 'naughty school children' if they slipped up and referred to Bureau of Meteorology by its common acronym

[Follow our Australia news live blog for the latest updates](#)

Get our [morning](#) and [afternoon](#) news emails, [free app](#) or [daily news podcast](#)

Josh Butler *and* Tory Shepherd

Tue 18 Oct 2022 01:17 EDT

The Bureau of Meteorology paid an external [communications consultancy almost \\$70,000 to rebrand it](#) “the Bureau” with staff claiming they were treated like “naughty schoolchildren” if they slipped up and referred to it as “the BoM”.

Environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, said on Tuesday she did not “quite understand” why [the Bureau commenced a rebrand](#) to update its name and logo, saying she was not focused on those factors during the severe flooding across much of the eastern seaboard.

She is understood to have asked for advice about the cost of the move.

The Bureau on Tuesday sent a media release asking outlets nationwide to update their internal style guides and refer to the agency as “the Bureau”, rather than the widely used acronym “BoM”. Emails from the Bureau also carry a new updated logo, with an outline of Australia overlaid with lines from a synoptic chart.

The name change - which has been broadly ridiculed, and criticised for its rollout as many Australians face devastating floods - was, in part, driven by Jack Walden, according to insiders. Walden appears to have won the contract for the consultancy company, and been hired by the Bureau shortly afterwards.

In September 2021, the Bureau awarded a \$69,300 contract to the C Word Communications Agency for “branding of product naming services and “brand implementation”.

C Word’s “chief communicator” until December 2021 was Jack Walden.

Sign up for our free [morning newsletter](#) and [afternoon email](#) to get your daily news roundup

According to his LinkedIn profile, Walden started as senior manager, communications delivery at the Bureau in November 2021. The crossover in his employment dates has not been explained.

Guardian Australia understands the rebrand was broadly unpopular among existing staff, but that the Bureau insisted that not only it be implemented, but that staff only use the new terms.

One insider said they were made to use the new term, and another said they were treated “like naughty schoolchildren” if they slipped up and referred to the BoM instead.

Plibersek told Guardian Australia that “during this time of severe weather and flood disaster, I’m not focused on the name of the agency”.

“I am focused on making sure the Bureau of Meteorology is providing the most accurate and timely information to communities affected by floods,” she said.

“The rebrand commenced under the previous government for reasons I don’t quite understand.”

Sign up to **Guardian Australia's Morning Mail**

 **Free daily newsletter**

Our Australian morning briefing email breaks down the key national and international stories of the day and why they matter

Enter your email address

Sign up

Privacy Notice: Newsletters may contain info about charities, online ads, and content funded by outside parties. For more information see our [Privacy Policy](#). We use Google reCaptcha to protect our website and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

The Bureau seemed to indicate that severe weather events were in some way linked to the rebrand.

“With an ever increasing number of severe weather events, it is more crucial than ever that the Bureau of Meteorology’s insights, wisdom, data and information are shared, understood and acted upon,” it said in a statement.

“To support this need, the Bureau of Meteorology asks that media outlets update editorial style to ensure references to the organisation are by its full name, the Bureau of Meteorology or the Bureau for short, and not BOM or the Weather Bureau. This aligns with the Meteorology Act 1955 ... please update your style guides accordingly.”

The announcement on Tuesday included the intention to update the Bureau’s Twitter account names, which prompted a flood of Twitter users to get there first, snapping up names such as @TheBureau_NSW and @TheBureau_Qld.

Attention Bureau of Meteorology

I'll give your Twitter handle back if you meet 3 simple demands. I want:

- 1) a weather balloon (will settle for a regular balloon)
 - 2) a signed photo of Sunrise weatherman Sam Mac
 - 3) the power to manipulate the weather (like Halle Berry in x-men) <https://t.co/x5EysTUxLh>
- Bureau of MEMEorology (parody) (@TheBureau_NSW) [October 18, 2022](#)

weather looks okay

– Queensland Weather (@TheBureau_Qld) [October 18, 2022](#)

Guardian Australia has contacted the Bureau and Walden for comment.

\$0
contributions

\$1,000,000
our goal

Lend us a hand in 2023

We have a small favour to ask. Tens of millions have placed their trust in the Guardian’s fearless journalism since we started publishing 200 years ago, turning to us in moments of crisis, uncertainty, solidarity and hope. More than 1.5 million supporters, from 180 countries, now power us financially - keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent. **We’re raising \$1m to support our reporting in 2023. We hope you’ll consider a year-end gift.**

Unlike many others, the Guardian has no shareholders and no billionaire owner. Just the determination and passion to deliver high-impact global reporting, always free from commercial or political influence. Reporting like this is vital for democracy, for fairness and to demand better from the powerful.

And we provide all this for free, for everyone to read. We do this because we believe in information equality. Greater numbers of people can keep track of the events shaping our world, understand their impact on people and communities, and become inspired to take meaningful action. Millions can benefit from open access to quality, truthful news, regardless of their ability to pay for it.

Help us reach our \$1m goal for 2023. Make a year-end gift to the Guardian from as little as \$1 - it only takes a minute. If you can, please consider supporting us with a regular amount each month. Thank you.

Single	Monthly	Annual
\$7 per month	\$13 per month	Other

Continue →

Remind me in January

VISA



Most viewed
