



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

# **All about PM&C: What we do and how we do it**



## Secretary's Introduction



**As a central agency, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) occupies a privileged position. The Department advises and supports the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet on a range of issues at the forefront of public policy and government administration. Often these are complex and involve change and rapid developments in many areas.**

Within this environment, responsiveness to the elected government is not only a matter of providing timely advice, ensuring implementation of key programs and policies, or drawing together input from across portfolios. While these are very highly valued by the Prime Minister, there is also a clear expectation that the Australian Public Service (APS) will increasingly focus its efforts on providing a greater level of strategic advice, which looks forward to effectively deal with the issues which may affect the nation in the coming years.

To help us better perform this role and deliver on the government's priorities, a structure which bolsters our strategic policy capability has been put in place.

The Department comprises four major groups: the Domestic Policy Group; the National Security and International Policy Group; the Governance Group and the Strategic Policy and Implementation Group. Our structure and working arrangements reflect close consultation with our staff and our many key stakeholders, draw upon best practice both within Australia and abroad, and take into account the need for our advice to address the long term challenges and opportunities facing Australia.

I am confident that we have the right people, structure and resources in place, to enable us to lead the way in providing professional, high quality and innovative public policy advice to government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Terry Moran'.

Terry Moran AO

## Our Functions

**The Department's primary role is to provide advice to, and support for, the Prime Minister in his capacity as head of the Government and the Cabinet. The major tasks for the Department include developing timely, well-argued, robust and forward looking policy advice, coordination of policy through the Cabinet process, and supporting the implementation of key government programs.**

**Policy advice and administrative support to the Prime Minister:** We provide advice to the Prime Minister on major domestic and international policy, including all matters considered by Cabinet. In providing this advice, there is a particular emphasis on policy coordination across government. In this area we seek to ensure that the Prime Minister has the best possible advice, which draws appropriately on expertise from across the whole of government.

**Strategic policy and implementation advice:** We use forward looking research and analysis projects to advise the Prime Minister and the Government on emerging issues and strategic policy challenges, with a focus on the Government's major domestic and international priorities. We also monitor implementation of key government initiatives, policies and programs.

**Assistance to Cabinet, its committees and the Federal Executive Council:** We ensure that the Prime Minister and Cabinet are given accurate, clear and timely advice that takes into account the views of all portfolios. We provide secretariat support for meetings of Cabinet and the Federal Executive Council and we manage processes that facilitate the decision-making role of Cabinet.

**Coordination of government administration:** We provide services to the Prime Minister and to the Australian Government to enable the business of government to be managed in an efficient, effective and coordinated manner. Our Department is the primary source of advice on machinery of government matters and interaction between the

parliament and the public service, including coordination of the government's legislation program and providing significant support to the reform of the Australian Public Service.

**Intergovernmental relations:** We seek to facilitate cooperation between the Australian Government and other governments in Australia. We coordinate arrangements for meetings of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and advise the Prime Minister on the implications of proposals for Commonwealth-State relations. We also provide policy advice on Commonwealth-State issues and mutual recognition arrangements, help develop policy relating to intergovernmental engagement and monitor implementation of intergovernmental initiatives.

**Government ceremonial and hospitality:** We provide high-level support for major events, such as visits by heads of state, ceremonies and State occasions, and coordinate the logistical arrangements for the Prime Minister's overseas visits.

**Honours and national symbols:** We are responsible for policy advice, operational support and awareness-raising in relation to the Australian honours system and on national symbols.

**Support services:** We provide a range of support services to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, the ministerial team and the Government. These services include assisting the Leader of the House and the Manager of Government Business in the Senate to schedule government business in parliament. We provide a range of support services to the offices of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Secretary and the ministerial team. We support the operations of the Prime Minister's official residences and provide staffing and administrative services to former Governors-General, as well as advice and support on arrangements for the Governor-General Designate. In addition, we provide the information technology, human resource and financial management support, record keeping and the physical working environment to support our staff and taskforces.

## Our Structure

**The Department is organised into four broad groups which each contribute to providing advice and support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet.**

### **Domestic Policy Group**

The Domestic Policy Group works to ensure coherence in the development of economic, productivity and social policies.

#### **Industry, Infrastructure and Environment Division**

This division is responsible for advising on industry, infrastructure and environmental policies across seven portfolios and coordinating whole of government approaches to policy development in these areas. Policy areas include climate change, water, environmental assessment, communications and broadcasting, industry and innovation, competition policy and regulation reform, energy and resources, transport, rural and regional services, transport, and agriculture, and natural resource management.

#### **Economic Division**

This division is responsible for advising on domestic and international economic conditions, budget outlays, taxation policy, superannuation, Commonwealth-state financial relations, monetary policy, financial markets, corporations law, wages policy and industrial relations matters.

#### **Social Policy Division**

This division is responsible for advising on health, and ageing policy, programs and financing; sport and youth policy; employment, education and skills development; and whole of government advice on Indigenous affairs policy.

#### **Families, Immigration and Social Support Division**

This division is responsible for advising on new policies designed to assist families and communities, including early childhood development and child care, workforce participation, families, women's issues, community services, social security, housing, disability, carers, seniors, veterans, immigration, citizenship and disaster

recovery. Through the Social Inclusion Unit, the division also develops national strategies to address poverty and social exclusion, and provides secretariat support to the Australian Social Inclusion Board.

#### **COAG Unit**

The COAG (Council of Australian Government) Unit is responsible for coordinating COAG meetings and meetings of its supporting Senior Officials group. The Unit also provides policy advice on Commonwealth-State issues including the COAG Reform Agenda and activities of Ministerial Councils, the COAG Reform Council, the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision and mutual recognition arrangements. It takes a strategic role to ensure the work on COAG reforms is delivered in a timely manner. The Unit also provides support to a range of inter-departmental COAG-related activities at the Commonwealth Government level.

### **Strategic Policy and Implementation Group**

The Strategic Policy and Implementation Group has a focus on ensuring that forward looking policy is prioritised in the face of the day-to-day demands of government, as well as overseeing the implementation and ongoing delivery of key programs, policies and initiatives.

#### **Strategy and Delivery Division**

The Strategy and Delivery Division identifies long-term strategic issues and directions and undertakes projects on complex and cross-public policy challenges involving evidence-based analysis, research, consultation and external environment scanning. It also plays a role in the analysis of the delivery of government policy objectives and the improvement of implementation and service delivery.

The Division provides high-quality strategic policy and implementation advice to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees by working closely with other areas in the Department, the broader public service and the wider policy community. The Division's policy focus is primarily across the domestic policy arena, including industry policy,

## Our Structure (continued)

### **Strategy and Delivery Division (cont'd)**

environment and climate change, education, community services and health.

### **Cabinet Implementation Unit**

The Cabinet Implementation Unit provides advice and support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet on the management and delivery of the Government's strategic priorities. This includes providing the Prime Minister and Cabinet with regular progress reports and assessments, and working across government to ensure that key government decisions are implemented on time, on budget and to expectations.

## **National Security and International Policy Group**

The National Security and International Policy Group provides advice on Australia's foreign policy, trade and treaty matters, defence, intelligence, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, law enforcement, border security and emergency management matters; coordinates security-related science and technology research matters; and plays a leadership role in the development of improved information management and integrated, whole-of-government national security policy.

### **National Security Adviser**

Mr. Duncan Lewis AO DSC CSC was appointed National Security Adviser (NSA) by the Prime Minister on 4 December 2008.

The NSA provides direct advice to the Prime Minister on policy matters relating to the nation's security, including international policy issues. In carrying out his duties, the NSA engages with the heads of Commonwealth departments and agencies, relevant Commonwealth ministers, heads of State and Territory departments and agencies, as well as key representatives from business, industry, academia and international partners.

### **Deputy National Security Adviser**

The Deputy NSA supports the work of the NSA across the breadth of his national security and international policy development, advice and coordination responsibilities.

### **National Security Chief Information Officer (NSCIO)**

The NSCIO was appointed to realise the vision of a secure, coordinated and effective national security community. The work of the NSCIO includes harmonising the broad policy, governance and legislative arrangements currently in place to improve interoperability and collaboration, and to provide oversight of the national security information management environment.

### **Homeland and Border Security Division (HBS)**

HBS provides advice, coordination and leadership on integrated, whole-of-government policy matters, priorities and strategy in the areas of strategic national security policy, critical infrastructure protection, e-security, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, law enforcement, border security and emergency management issues.

### **Defence, Intelligence and Research Coordination (DIRC) Division**

DIRC provides advice, coordination and leadership on integrated, whole-of-government policy matters, priorities and strategy in the areas of defence, intelligence coordination and cooperation matters, and national security, science and innovation policy and programs.

### **International Division**

International division provides advice, coordination and leadership on Australia's foreign policy, trade, aid and treaty matters and priorities, including bilateral relations, relationships with regional and international organisations, free trade negotiations and whole-of-government priorities for the overseas aid program. It also incorporates the International Strategy Unit, which focuses on developing innovative and forward-looking advice on policy challenges in the medium to long term across the foreign and international security domains.

## Our Structure (continued)



### **Governance Group**

The Governance Group oversees the Department's support functions, and also takes a leadership role in providing advice on public governance and reform across the APS,

The Governance Group also provides support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet through its leadership of and contribution to whole-of-government activities such as that undertaken by the Office of the Co-ordinator General and various taskforces like that established for Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2011.

#### **Corporate Services Division**

This division manages Human Resources, ICT and Corporate Governance functions for the Department, which includes management of information technology, telecommunications, risk management, internal audit, reporting, compliance, senate estimates coordination, personnel services and policies, health and safety, records management, library, resource and capital management, procurement and contract process

management, finance, staff recruitment, learning and development, and departmental security.

#### **Cabinet Division**

This division provides the Secretariat for Cabinet, Cabinet committees and the Federal Executive Council, oversees programming of Cabinet business, and manages access to and custody of Cabinet documents. The division also manages a regular program of Community Cabinet meetings.

#### **Government Division**

Government division provides advice on legislation programming, parliamentary affairs, ministerial arrangements, machinery of government, public service issues, legal and constitutional matters, litigation, administrative review, royal commissions and other inquiries, archives, electoral matters, privacy, territories, access to government information (including Freedom of Information), matters relating to the arts, national collecting institutions and cultural heritage, matters relating to Australian and foreign honours and the use of national symbols.

## Our Structure (continued)



### **Ministerial Support Unit**

The Ministerial Support Unit manages a range of support functions for ministerial offices in the Prime Minister's portfolio. The Unit coordinates all aspects of ministerial correspondence, briefing and support services for ministerial offices and supports the operations of the Prime Minister's official residences. The Unit also provides government ceremonial and hospitality support, including coordination of logistical arrangements for the Prime Minister's overseas visits.

### **The Office of the Coordinator-General (OCG)**

OCG coordinates the implementation of the Government's Economic Stimulus Plan. Implementation involves oversight of almost \$30 billion worth of programs managed by five Commonwealth agencies that deliver 50,000 projects through three layers of government.

### **Taskforces**

From time to time, the Department convenes and oversees the work of taskforces, often as a way of addressing complex or urgent developments in policy or service delivery that cut across many parts of government, or as a mechanism for managing significant one off projects or events such as that established for CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) 2011.

Taskforces are a way for the Department to facilitate collaboration, and may draw upon the expertise of seconded staff from other public service agencies, external consultants, or groups of external advisers or experts. Our taskforces also draw upon the skills of our own staff, whether they take a role in providing policy input, secretariat support, or in managing the operational, corporate and governance activities for taskforces.

## How we work

### We strive to improve the standard of executive decision-making, by providing the Prime Minister and Cabinet with advice and support that:

- is timely, accurate, robust, and innovative
- is responsive to the directions set by Government
- presents a whole-of-government perspective
- is strategic and forward looking
- is relevant and responsive to changing circumstances
- ensures compliance with legislative obligations, and
- gives assurance that policies are being delivered in an effective and coordinated manner.

### Our people

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) attracts high calibre individuals who seek to participate in decision making at the heart of the nation. Our staff are drawn to PM&C by the opportunity to work at the centre of Government and are driven by the desire to help shape the future of Australia.

*"I enjoy working at the centre of government and focussing on the important and high profile policy issues of the day."* Staff survey 2009

*"Working at PM&C has been a very rewarding, challenging and amazing experience throughout my time here. I have learned a great deal and worked with some incredible people"*. Staff survey 2009

PM&C draws on range of talented, professional, motivated and highly skilled people from a diverse range of backgrounds and academic disciplines including economics, arts, law, political science, international relations, information technology and social science. The diversity of our people is what enables us to deliver the best advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

We understand that our people are our most valuable asset, so in turn we are committed to fostering a supportive and friendly working environment with a range of attractive conditions including:

- Competitive salaries and excellent conditions of service
- Excellent career advancement opportunities
- Ongoing learning and development opportunities
- Flexible and family-friendly work arrangements including an in-house school holiday program
- A comprehensive health and wellbeing program including fitness classes, flu vaccinations and health seminars, and
- Flexible salary packaging arrangements.

### Professional development opportunities

PM&C is full of possibilities when it comes to building your career. We offer our people the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally, with chances to work across a range of policy areas, overseas or throughout the APS generally. There are opportunities to represent the Department on both the domestic and international fronts, in a variety of forums dealing with a range of policy and reform issues.

We encourage our staff to work with their managers and identify areas for learning and development through our inclusive performance management system. We encourage our staff to actively pursue development opportunities through a range of specialised activities including training, on-the-job experiences, seminars and leadership programs.

### Our values

As Australian public servants, our people are committed to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and good governance. Our staff are committed to providing high quality apolitical advice and support to the elected government consistent with the APS values and the APS Code of Conduct.

## How we work (continued)

### Our values (cont'd)

PM&C is characterised by an environment which encourages and supports all staff to:

- be accountable for their actions
- act with integrity, trust, honesty and respect
- commit to excellence
- apply imagination and innovation to their work
- value a diversity of views, skills, backgrounds and perspectives
- maintain confidentiality
- learn and improve
- cooperate
- ensure the efficient, effective and ethical management of people and resources, and
- promote a safe and enjoyable working environment.

### Our leaders

At all levels within the Department, we value leaders who:

- have a record of achievement
- understand and clearly communicate the Government's requirements and priorities
- get the best from people and help them to reach their potential
- place a priority on problem solving, and develop options for action
- are responsive, strategic and proactive in identifying emerging issues
- focus on results, and
- build support and reach agreement through a collegiate and inclusive approach.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2010

This work is copyright. The *Copyright Act 1968* permits fair dealing for study, research, news reporting, criticism or review. Selected passages may be reproduced for such purposes provided acknowledgment of the source is included. Major extracts or the entire document may not be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Commonwealth

Copyright Administration, Attorney-General's Department, 3-5 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or lodged at <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>.

978-1-921385-28-5 All about PM&C – *What We Do and How We Do It* (online RTF)

978-1-921385-29-2 All about PM&C – *What We Do and How We Do It* (online PDF)

Published by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

One National Circuit  
BARTON ACT 2600

[www.pmc.gov.au](http://www.pmc.gov.au)