

OUTPUT GROUP 4 –
STRATEGIC POLICY

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OUTPUT 4.1 – STRATEGIC POLICY

Output	Performance Information
Strategic advice and analysis in relation to domestic and international issues.	Satisfaction of the Prime Minister with advice, briefing and support in relation to strategic policy.
Supporting the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in delivering key priorities such as the Council of Australian Governments reform agenda and the initiatives identified at the Australia 2020 Summit.	
<i>Monitoring and implementation of key government decisions.⁷</i>	<i>Satisfaction of the Prime Minister, ministers, Portfolio Secretaries, the Cabinet Secretary and the departmental executive with the monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of key government decisions. The expectation is that some 100 policy initiatives will be monitored at any given time throughout the year.</i>

ROLE OF THE DIVISION

The Strategy and Delivery Division was set up to meet the challenge that the Prime Minister set out for the department and the Australian Public Service in April 2008:

“For the Australian Public Service to deliver on government’s long-term reform agenda, we will need to invest in a greater strategic policy capability.

“By this I mean a greater capacity to see emerging challenges and opportunities – and to see them not just from the perspective of government, but also from the perspective of all parts of the community.

“Strategic policy development is especially important at the level of the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which should play a whole-of-government, forward-looking role in policy development, as well as carefully thinking through implementation issues, and taking corrective action when things are not working.”⁸

The aim of the Strategy and Delivery Division is to identify long-term strategic issues and directions, and undertake projects on complex and cross-public policy challenges involving evidence-based analysis, research, consultation and external environment scanning. We also play a role in the analysis of the delivery of government policy objectives and the improvement of implementation and service delivery.

⁷ Under the 2008–09 PM&C Portfolio Budget Statement, the Cabinet Implementation Unit (CIU) is formally part of Output Group 5 ‘Support services for government operations’ responsible for this output item. CIU was moved to Strategic Policy (Output Group 4) on 1 July 2008 following an organisational restructure and, for the purposes of this annual report, CIU’s performance reporting will be reported against Output Group 4 – Strategic Policy.

⁸ Prime Minister the Hon Kevin Rudd, Address to Heads of Agencies and Members of Senior Executive Service, Great Hall, Parliament House. 30 April 2008.

We provide 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. Our policy focus is primarily across the domestic policy arena, including industry policy, environment and climate change, education, community services and health.

The Division started work on 1 July 2008, using additional funding provided to the department for this purpose.

The Cabinet Implementation Unit moved to the Strategic Policy and Implementation Group at the start of 2008–09 to enhance our capacity to provide advice and support to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on major strategic issues and their implications for government priority setting and policy development.

A key focus for the unit during the year was supporting the Prime Minister and the Cabinet ministers in managing the government's key policy priorities and reporting on their development, implementation and delivery. The unit also coordinated the preparation of the government's First Year Progress Report and Mid-Term Progress Report.

The unit received positive feedback during the year that its work assisted the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Feedback from other departments and agencies was also positive.

SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

The Human Resources Recruitment Team won Australia Day Achievement Awards for their outstanding contribution to the development and delivery of the strategic policy division's recruitment processes.

Photo: from left to right: Jo Cantle; Louise Mulcahy; Tracy Byron; Renee Smith and Jacque Walton. Not present is Leanne Gildea.



OUR PERFORMANCE

In 2008–09, in our initial year of operation, we had four major goals:

- to build a robust and flexible operating model
- to recruit and induct a high-performing team
- to produce the Australia 2020 Summit response, and
- to carry out a number of high-level strategic policy projects.

We have developed a project-based operating model, designed to focus intensive analytic effort onto specific strategic and delivery problems. We apply a hypothesis-driven and evidence-based approach to policy analysis and research, with extensive consultation with external experts and stakeholders, and significant refinement and iteration of project outputs.

Our strategy and delivery projects cut across traditional policy boundaries and are commissioned in a fast-moving environment. To manage resources in this flexible environment, our staff members are deployed in teams that are formed on a project-specific basis.

As well as a base complement of ongoing staff resources, we also use secondees from other divisions in PM&C and other departments across the Australian Public Service, as well as industry secondees from outside bodies, such as professional services firms.

Our division ramped up from a foundation staff of eight in July 2008 to a staff of 34 by 30 June 2009. Staff members have a diverse range of backgrounds, including departments and agencies in the Australian Public Service, various state public services, consulting and professional services and other industry backgrounds.

One of our early tasks was to coordinate the government's response to the Australia 2020 Summit, which was held at Parliament House in Canberra on 19 and 20 April 2008. The summit generated more than 900 ideas, and we helped to develop an overall response on behalf of the government, culminating in the release of the report *Responding to the Australia 2020 Summit*.

Feedback received from key stakeholders has been that products delivered were well received and of high quality, reflecting a high level of satisfaction from the Secretary and Prime Minister. Several of the projects we undertook related to the Council of Australian Governments reform agenda, while some others were initiatives arising from the government's response to the 2020 Summit.

Cabinet Implementation Unit

We were active in supporting the Prime Minister in the management of the government's priorities throughout the year.

A key element of this work was ensuring there was a strong understanding across portfolios of the government's priorities and the way in which they were being managed and delivered.

We also provided the Prime Minister with 'traffic light' reports during the year about progress with the government's key priorities. The reports gave headline performance information on between major initiatives across government.

We also coordinated the production of the government's First Year Progress Report (released in November 2008) and its Mid-Term Progress Report (released in June 2009). This involved gathering a large amount of information from departments and agencies and consolidating it into two reports suitable for online publication.

In addition, as part of its ongoing work, we examined in some detail the broad range of policy initiatives being progressed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

We also commented on the implementation aspects of a wide range of Cabinet documents and memoranda. The objective was to ensure that Cabinet documents fully informed ministers of the implementation and delivery challenges associated with specific policy initiatives.

Another area of activity during 2008–09 was assisting with the implementation of the review of the government's use of information and communications technology (the Gershon Review).

Beyond these activities, the unit continued to be active in running an outreach program which involved making approximately 40 presentations during the year. This included regular briefings for APS and SES staff members on the implementation and delivery of the government's priorities. The Head of the Unit was also involved in the delivery of SES training on program management through the Australian Public Service Commission. We also continued to support the department's exchange program with central agencies in the government of the Republic of Indonesia, including hosting a small team of Indonesian officials for two weeks in August 2008.

PEOPLE PROFILE MARTIN HOFFMAN



I came to PM&C from a diverse career in the private sector. I have been CEO of a small start-up technology company listed on the ASX in June 2007, CEO of the web content company NineMSN, Publisher of Fairfax Business Magazines, General Manager of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, and held management roles earlier at Optus and in investment banking and consulting.

I grew up in Sydney and have spent most of my working life there too.

I joined PM&C in March 2009 as Executive Co-ordinator in the Strategic Policy and Implementation Group. The attraction to PM&C was the opportunity to work with great people on issues that really matter and make a difference to Australia and its people.

In my current role I have responsibility for the Cabinet Implementation Unit which monitors and reports each month on the major reforms and programs of the government. As an Executive Co-ordinator, I also work on a range of major projects usually involving implementation issues together with colleagues from other departments.

Highlights and challenges over the past year have included learning how to work in a whole new environment, building new relationships, developing new skills, deciphering a new thicket of acronyms! A particular highlight has been working with colleagues from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) to get the household insulation

program as part of the stimulus package up and working by July 1. In little more than three months, the team went from a standing start to having a working system capable of registering thousands of insulation installation providers and processing tens of thousands of individual claims every month with high levels of control and accountability. And currently, I am spending a lot of time on the National Broadband Network project which is a tremendous opportunity after much of what I have done previously.

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