

I am currently in the employ of the APS and having been since January 1967. I am employed at the EL2 level. Over the years I have seen many changes, some good some bad. The areas I wish to make a submission on are about the people in the APS and the management of those people.

- Do you think this chapter(1) accurately captures the role of the Australian Public Service?

The role of the APS is very well put and should be part of the brief to all new and aspiring employees.

- What are the most important challenges facing the public sector over the next ten years?

1. The working conditions and pay in the APS, for most part, are very good so the motivation of the individuals will take more than handing out extra cash and this means that the treatment and management of the individual will be paramount.

One of the more important challenges will be the management of the APS to deliver its outcomes "really" efficiently. This may be obtained by having management that leads and not follows those who are managed. Very little leadership and direction is provided by management as the current method of management is one of "Upward management" where those on the lower rungs tell management what is happening and this information is suitably filtered and passed upwards.

The Next challenge for the APS will be in the aging of the APS work force - hard decisions need to be taken:

2. Much has been said on the subject of succession planning but that is all - talk. The APS needs to consider seriously whether or not to retain its older workers or allow them an honourable exit via suitable termination packages. We hear much rhetoric on the usefulness and experience of older workers but that is all - rhetoric. We are told how valuable the experience is but it is never used (or required). The APS needs take a serious look at succession planning at all levels not just at SES levels.

- How can agency performance management processes be amended to maximise the focus on the attainment of outcomes?

Currently the performance management process (PFADS) is a "joke". The process is not about getting the best out of people but to be used as a stick with which to beat them. Management of underperformance and "complex staff issues" appear prominently. These issues should not arise in the work place in which there is good management of the individual.

Solution: Obtain managers who are knowledgeable in the areas they manage and have the maturity and psyche to manage individuals. Bad management is common because the inexperienced seem to obtain positions of management well before the time due further, management (in a vast number of cases) is seen as an "ego trip" where the ego of the managers is more important than delivering an outcome. I don't know how to change this but this ego-centric style of management leads to poor morale, lower productivity and the exit of the more knowledgeable staff.

- How do you think a stronger culture of innovation can be fostered?

The APS (Defence included) is a highly risk averse organisation. Performance schemes are concerned with successes so one only "signs up" to do what is obviously attainable otherwise management will look for ways of "marking one down" cases of particular note

are where a person is given a job beyond their capability so that management can mark them down - no other reason.

Solution:

Change the performance management system to get the best out of the workforce and not a tool to beat the workforce.

Yours sincerely,