

Unclassified

## SUBMISSION

To: The Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Joyce', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Keith Joyce  
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## **The Best of all Possible Futures?**

As Dr Peter Saul once wrote, the future is not some place we are going to but are creating. The roads to this future will not be found, but made. Policies will make these roads.

The increasing complexity of policy challenges in our rapidly changing and challenging world, pose unique challenges for policy makers.

## **A Passion for Policy?**

Lynelle Briggs spoke about 'a passion for policy' in the ANZSOG/ANU Public Lecture Series 29 June, 2005.

*Some people would say that there is no place for passion in policy because a good public servant must remain impartial if they are to be responsive to the Government of the day. I take issue with this. I believe there is any number of good reasons why public servants should be passionate about policy development.*

*.....I think it is of fundamental importance that public sector policy advisors have a passion in their bellies- a passionate interest in what the research is telling them; a passion for new ideas; a passion for pushing things along and providing Ministers a perspective on 'what's the right thing to do' at any particular point of time. It's this kind of 'sparkle and fire' that drives reform and what really makes a difference.*

*The reality of day to day government activity is quite different – it is conservative and reactionary – meaning change at the margin or change in response to public pressure.*

*For the most part this is fine, but in my view, longer term reform agendas generally emerge only after some really passionate and persuasive arguments are persistently driven by quality public servants (and politicians) who really care.*

*These are the sorts of public servants I want – the ones who will run the extra mile; who have the courage of their convictions; who really care about their country and its directions; and who actively engage in the business of government. They are prepared to take the risk of serving challenging agendas up to their Ministers.*

## **Unintended Policy Outcomes**

Ms Briggs states that two Chinese characters for policy literally mean the *needle of direction* (p.1). This implies preciseness in policy focus and outcome.

However in reality, many poorly conceived, researched, and implemented policies did not result in preciseness, but in a blunderbuss of unintended outcomes. In many of those cases lower level policy officers had foreseen and communicated the risks of the different policy options. It seems that structural and functional intra-agency and Ministerial communications disconnects contributed to the unintended outcomes.

## High quality, forward looking and creative policy advice

*It has to be possible to dream and speak the unthinkable for the only thing we do know is that we shall not know what tomorrow's world will be like.*

(Sir John Harvey-Jones, Chairperson of ICI)

A Swiss watchmaker developed the digital watch but his management did not recognise its potential – or the brilliance of the invention. It had no springs or bearings or gears so how could it be considered a watch? They did not patent their own invention and their market share went from mid 80% to lower than 10%.

How many innovative ideas from 'Swiss watchmakers' in agencies are not taken into consideration? How can we encourage and focus passionate and innovative officers in the APS?

### From Management to Leadership

Management probably comes from the French word *manège*. It means to harness up horses. The output of the team is directed by your output only.

Leadership is to point in the direction of achievement, involve others and make a decision. The output of the team is the synergy of all participants. *Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible* (General Colin Powell).

#### From Management to Leadership

	<b>Commander</b>	<b>Hero</b>	<b>Coach</b>	<b>Enabler</b>
<b>Your Style</b>	Do <b>to</b> Others	Do <b>for</b> Others	Do <b>with</b> Others	Do <b>through</b> Others
	Master	All knowing Provider	Expert & Teacher	Facilitator & Mentor
	↓	↓	↓	↓
<b>Induced Behaviour</b>	Slaves	Passive Recipients	Learning Participants	Self-learning Self-starters
	<b>Resistance</b>	<b>Unimaginative</b>	<b>Motivated</b>	<b>Pro-active</b>

Towards **Empowerment** (Adapted from the work of Prof. Myron Tribus)



Consider the above diagram. 'Swiss watchmaker' passion and innovation will only occur when management transforms into leadership. The leader will be the coach-enabler. However, many of the APS that I come into contact with rate their senior officers as managers and not leaders.

### **Change Management** (or should it be Change Leadership?)

Niccolo Machiavelli wrote of the challenges of change in the *Prince*.

*There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things.*

*For the reformer has enemies in all those who would profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from their adversaries and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it.*

Challenges in and the fluidity of our strategic environment require new approaches and solutions.

The results of the APSC's *State of the Service Report, 2008* surprised me. I assume the Survey is *valid* and *reliable*. I see hundreds of public servants in my work and the impression given to me is generally not the same. Some public servants reported that they answer survey questions in the way they believe management want, because they are not convinced of the anonymity of the process. However this is anecdotal and not statistically significant.

### **Behavioural Change**

*Learning is not when you are aware of the information but when you modify your behaviour* (a psychological behaviourist's definition).

Courses and seminars etc. will not lead to the required behavioural or cultural change. There is much evidence based research demonstrating this point.

Aristotle wrote: *We are what we repeatedly do – excellence then, is not an act but a habit.*

How do we develop the habit of excellence in the APS?

Some agencies have sent their staff to client focus sessions, only to find that the gains they hoped for in client focus excellence never eventuated.

A strategic plan to achieve what is necessary could include the following continuums:

- Client focus
- Leadership & Management
- People Involvement
- Continuous Process Improvement

- Management by facts (evidence based analysis)
- All activities linked to Outcomes framework
- Personal commitment to the above

### **All activities need to be driven**

Whatever recommendations are made regarding a Strategic Policy for APS Reform, it must be driven and supported by the most senior levels of governments and agencies.

While the APSC is best placed to be the lead 'agency' for the Policy it will need appropriate resources and dedicated, passionate and innovative individuals. Possibly an overarching Reform Council could be formed and should be driven by Ministers, APSC and other agencies' personnel.

### **Final comments**

The APS saying, *work smarter not harder*, is not always realised. Systemic examination of agencies has revealed duplication and non-value adding work. Also systemic examination of the APS as a whole (has and) will reveal that same duplication and non-value adding work. Activity without Outcome is waste!

What you are proposing is not change at the edges but a new and innovate way to harness the energy, creativity and dedication of the APS. Hopefully this will be a new 'road to the future' and not a modified, existing road. I eagerly look forward to its construction.

Marcel Proust said:

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.* I wish you all 'new eyes'.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.