



Australian Government

Bureau of Meteorology

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

**SUBMISSION TO THE ADVISORY GROUP ON
REFORM OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
ADMINISTRATION**

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INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) is Australia's national weather, climate and water agency. It is a highly regarded Australian institution that has been assisting Australians deal with the harsh realities as well as the delights of their natural environment for more than 100 years.

The Bureau's operations span Australia and its surrounds as far as the Antarctic, and cover land, sea and air. Through regular forecasts, warnings and advice the Bureau provides one of the most fundamental and widely used services of government.

The Bureau of Meteorology contributes to national social, economic, cultural and environmental goals by providing essential services 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Bureau staff are constantly observing, analysing and predicting Australia's weather and climate, its water resources and the behaviour of its oceans. We build the nation's climate record and water inventory, and stand ready to help protect the nation's people and property when cyclone, storm, tsunami, fire or flood threaten. Our services are world class, based on science and innovation.

The Bureau is an Executive Agency within the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts portfolio reporting to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts on most matters, and to the Minister for Climate Change and Water on matters relating to water information.

Around 1500 people are employed by the Bureau. The workforce is geographically dispersed with some 60 offices across Australia, its offshore islands and Antarctica. Many staff work in isolated locations to ensure we capture the information we need to provide accurate forecasts and warnings. Unlike many government agencies our administrative and operational headquarters are in Melbourne.

The Bureau's workforce includes large numbers of professional, scientific and specialist staff. In comparison with other Australian Public Service agencies we have a high proportion of staff from non-English speaking backgrounds, a low ratio of females to males, and low levels of turnover and absenteeism. Like many other agencies we have few indigenous employees.

The Bureau has good relationships across all levels of government. At the national level the Bureau supports operations in defence, aviation, marine transport and emergency management as well as providing essential input into policy development on climate change, water and exceptional circumstances. We work closely with governments in every state and territory to prepare for severe weather events and work in tandem with colleagues across many agencies when disasters threaten and strike.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SECTOR TODAY (CH1)

1. Do you think Chapter 1 accurately captures the role of the Australian Public Service?
2. What are the implications of the statistical snapshot, and of employee views and attitudes in Chapter 1 for the future of the APS?

Role

The Bureau agrees that Chapter 1 broadly captures the role of Government sector today, noting however that there is some potential for conflict if the roles suggested do not align. This would need management on a case-by-case basis. Our experience suggests that service agencies may tend to be more people-focused while policy agencies are more government-focused. There is also a view that over the past twenty years there has been a shift from the public towards a government focus.

Implications of the current situation

Concerns relating to the statistical snapshot are as follows:

- The aging workforce and higher overall classification may not be conducive to bringing new ideas and new people into the APS.
- Having 75% of SES level staff in the ACT carries the risk that high-level policy will be out of touch with the broad array of issues and attitudes across the nation.
- Classification creep is an issue that warrants some attention as it adds to increasing staff costs.

The aging of the APS does seem roughly in line with the aging of the population as a whole, and perhaps in part reflects a societal trend toward longer working lives. This of course does not imply that the APS should not pay attention to its diversity and ensure that it is attracting and employing a broad range of staff. This will require increased efforts in the area of recruitment, particularly of younger people, management training and succession planning. Mechanisms for phased retirement could also be considered to mitigate skill losses. The challenge will be in achieving a transition from an older to younger workforce while retaining knowledge and wisdom, and balancing the needs/aspirations of the various generations.

A general concern is that the data about the quality of management from the APS survey need to be explored much more deeply in regard to comparisons with other sectors, to bring out the issues behind the data to support identification of improvements that can be made.

It would have been helpful to have additional data to more fully illuminate APS employees' connection with their specific agency as compared with their role as a public servant. Employees' understanding of these roles relies heavily

on relevant messages from leadership of the agency and the broader public service.

Decreasing percentages of indigenous Australians and those with disabilities since 1999 highlight a need for more targeted recruitment toward these groups. The Australian Government should be seen as leading in this regard.

A fresh look at strategies to provide leadership and management opportunities that take account of part time working hours, in support of employees with family responsibilities, are also indicated.

On the positive side, the high level of APS employees motivated and willing to provide extra work is notable. This mirrors the Bureau's experience with respect to the high level of commitment and willingness to contribute of staff across all parts of the organisation.

CHALLENGES IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT (CH2)

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

4. What are the key implications for how the public sector will need to operate?

Important Challenges (Q3)

The most important challenges relate to the increased pace of decision making required (both enabled and exacerbated by technology) while simultaneously dealing with highly complex issues in a rapidly changing environment. From a Bureau perspective, the greatest challenges are:

- An increasingly demanding public (Australians), requiring more sophisticated, personalised, detailed and localised services across an increasing range of delivery channels.
- Maintaining the ability to provide reliable and authoritative information that is trusted and respected (e.g. current debates around climate change show how easy it is for public debate in the media to create uncertainty and confusion, and blur facts with hearsay).
- The changing and complex environment of government, demanding joint agency policy development and solutions.
- The need for Whole-of-Government responses to issues like climate change, water resources, energy, health, biodiversity conservation, agricultural productivity and sustainable population growth.

Implications for the public sector (Q4)

In response to these challenges, the APS will need to get even better at what it does and be more responsive to change at all levels. The sector will need to use technology and IT systems more effectively, including through increased coordination among complementary agencies.

In response to greater public expectations, the APS needs to better anticipate the needs of the community so that government policy and services are not

lagging behind the demands and requirements of the public. As such, an appropriate balance needs to be maintained between those parts of the APS that need to be highly responsive to the policy/issues of the day, and those that are securing the long-term information fabric upon which good evidence-based decision making and policy formulation depend.

AN ASPIRATION FOR AUSTRALIA'S PUBLIC SERVICE (CH3)

5. What do you think is an appropriate aspiration for the Australian Public Service?
6. Do the five key characteristics outlined in Chapter 3 adequately encapsulate what you would expect from a high performing public service?

An appropriate aspiration (Q5)

As a service-based agency that interacts with millions of Australians on a daily basis, the Bureau strongly supports the aspiration of the focus on Australia and Australians.

The concept of being unified in pursuing excellence is also considered a worthy aspiration although there is a degree of concern about the parallel emphasis on "world's best". It is not clear how useful this would be as an aspiration, how it could be measured and whether in fact it might distract from "putting Australia and Australians first". Aspiring towards excellence and being "world's best" both relate to a level of service, so one of these concepts is potentially redundant.

A more explicit reference to the impact yielded by APS effort would be preferable to ensure the focus is quite clearly not just on efficiency but more importantly on effectiveness as well, for example, "putting achievement for Australia and Australians as the focus of everything we do".

The aspiration may also be in conflict with concepts such as cost-recovery (in some of its applications) and commercialisation. Any aspiration should be honest for all areas of Government, otherwise it will be weak and forgettable.

Characteristics of a high performing public service (Q6)

On balance, the Bureau concurs with the five characteristics proposed in the discussion paper, although a greater focus on transparency and collaboration would be welcome. The characteristics adopted by the UK National Audit Office are arguably clearer, more memorable and more to the point.

A VALUES DRIVEN CULTURE THAT RETAINS PUBLIC TRUST (CH4)

7. Should the APS Values be streamlined? What values do you consider should be included in a revised set of APS values?
8. How do we ensure that APS leaders fulfil their responsibilities to promote and uphold the values?
9. Do you think the APS engages appropriately and actively with government on an apolitical basis?

10. Are further reforms needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the APS when dealing with ministerial offices?

Streamlining the values (Q7)

The Bureau's view is that the APS Values have provided a robust foundation for the public sector in dealing with government, the Australian public and with each other. There is however scope for shortening and fine tuning the values along the lines suggested in the paper. A greater emphasis on outward engagement would be welcome.

The values identified as the highest priority by the Bureau relate to transparency, being apolitical, responsiveness, inclusiveness and collaboration.

Promoting and upholding the values (Q8)

Bureau suggestions for assisting leaders to promote and uphold the values fall into three main categories:

- ensuring selection criteria give due weight to demonstrated performance in this area;
- making leaders accountable and measuring their performance against expected outcomes, possibly through performance agreements; and
- ensuring the values are an important element in management and leadership training.

Apolitical engagement (Q9)

Better procedures for providing critical comment or dissenting advice to Government would be helpful.

Dealings with ministerial offices (Q10)

A greater clarification of roles and responsibilities, and of accountabilities would be helpful, and mechanisms for feedback on briefings and advice would be very welcome.

HIGH QUALITY, FORWARD LOOKING AND CREATIVE POLICY ADVICE (CH5)

11. How can internal and external collaboration be strengthened to improve policy development and implementation?

12. What should be done to continuously improve the capability of the APS workforce in policy formulation and implementation?

13. What can be done to bring the workforce development approach of the APS up to the level of the best organisations globally?

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

15. What approaches to engaging with risk are most appropriate for the APS to provide high quality, forward looking and creative policy advice?

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

Collaboration (Q11)

Collaboration is one area where the Bureau has had success. In fact, without working with colleagues in governments at all levels within Australia, with international governments and with other individuals and groups, the Bureau could not meet its responsibilities to the Australian community.

That is not to say that the Bureau's performance is ideal or that there is not more for the Bureau to do in the area of collaboration. Among Australian government agencies, the Bureau has generally had greater success in collaborating with other service agencies (such as the CSIRO) rather than policy areas. A current goal of the organisation is to increase its interaction with the central agencies and to contribute its expertise and information to policy formulation more broadly and deeply across the whole of government where relevant. This has involved meeting with numerous other departments and agencies and listening to their needs for information and advice about climate, climate change, water, severe weather, oceans and more.

An example of a successful collaboration with other APS agencies has been the development of the Australian Tsunami Warning System. Following the devastating tsunami on 26 December 2004, the Government committed more than \$60 million over four years to develop a comprehensive tsunami warning system. The development of the system involved the Bureau, Geoscience Australia (GA) and Emergency Management Australia (EMA) with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) given responsibility for coordinating the cross-portfolio package. The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) was also involved. As well as establishing the warning system, which was completed within the timeframe set, both the Bureau and GA have an ongoing role in together operating the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre and working with EMA to ensure warnings are provided to the Australian community. The success of this collaboration involving a number of agencies, Ministers and portfolios, and a change of government, is thought to have been due to:

- the clear imperative (the necessity of a tsunami warning system for the safety and security of Australia) which created a spirit of cooperation and compromise;
- the self-evident conclusion that no agency had the ability to achieve the outcome single-handedly;
- the allocation of clear, separate roles to each agency;
- strong governance arrangements, particularly the role of the Inter-departmental Steering Committee (IDSC) chaired by DFAT and the initial oversight provided by the Cabinet Implementation Unit.

The Bureau also has a long history in collaboration with other levels of government. Collaboration with state and territory emergency services is a good example. The Bureau's disaster mitigation activities assist the community in preparing for and reducing the impacts of bushfires, tropical

cyclones, tsunamis and severe storms. However, each state and territory has its own arrangements for emergency management and response. Although nationally coordinated, each of the Bureau's regional offices works with the relevant state government agencies (environment, fire, police, state emergency services, marine etc) to provide a coordinated approach to preparing for, responding to and mitigating weather and oceans related natural disasters. These collaborative relationships appear to work because:

- the Bureau has maintained state and territory operations in support of state responsibilities for emergency response;
- a high level of trust has been built up as the Bureau engages various agencies and works with its partners throughout the year, not just in emergency situations;
- each agency understands and respects the others' role;
- the Bureau has been responsive to the needs of its state partners; and
- the Bureau is readily accessible to its partners, with services being provided 24/7 with a high level of skill, and a wide perception that the Bureau will provide whatever help it can to assist its partners, particularly in critical situations.

To strengthen collaboration across the APS there is a need to encourage and support more cross-agency secondments and linkages. In general, communication across agencies remain at a low level. Trust between agencies must be engendered as this has been eroded over time.

Improving capabilities in policy formulation and implementation (Q12)

The idea of policy hubs in the discussion paper is of interest to the Bureau although it would affect the current accountability and responsibility measures which focus on individual departments and agencies. A variant might be "think tanks" created one step removed from departments and agencies (possibly even within the private sector) into which APS people could move from time to time. ANZSOG is in a sense one manifestation of such an instrument. Together these would extend the capability of the APS.

It is also necessary to ensure that people have training and access to the full range of qualities needed to make policy decisions, including information collection and assessment, access to sound scientific research outcomes and improved written and oral communication skills.

The challenges of globalisation probably require inter-government extensions, national and internationally.

Innovation (Q14)

Creativity and innovation have always been a hallmark of people in the Bureau, yet it is an ongoing challenge to ensure that these qualities are not lost in the process of responding to day-to-day challenges or stymied by over formalising the procedures to identify and capture new ideas.

So important is the process of harnessing innovation that one of the strategic risks of the to the Bureau is the inability to harness our innovation capability to realise enterprise value due to:

- new market opportunities being ignored or not rigorously pursued;
- strong reliance on externally developed technology or advances;
- absence of a mechanism to capture and realise innovative ideas;
- current culture providing little support for innovation;
- reward structure not promoting innovative thinking; and
- strategic alliances not being exploited.

A number of activities are being undertaken to mitigate this risk, including:

- the development of an internal innovation policy focused on harnessing the creative and innovative spirit of all Bureau staff;
- the development of processes for the orderly progression and uptake of new ideas into Bureau of Meteorology systems, services and policy; and
- establishment of an Innovation Committee to shepherd new ideas through the various development phases and approvals.

On an APS wide basis, there needs to be:

- a more tangible rewards and recognition program in support of innovative achievements;
- development or maintenance of strategic research capabilities to support policy development and service enhancements;
- encouragement of reasonable and calculated risk taking;
- more empowerment for middle level managers;
- greater visibility given to innovative ideas that are actually being used;
- improved emphasis on monitoring and capturing (as appropriate) developments outside the APS; and
- consideration given to R&D and innovation targets for individual agencies.

Engaging with risk (Q15)

Risk management approaches have been adopted in the APS, but many turn into a protection mechanism, rather than supporting the taking of risks in a measured manner. In many cases the vulnerabilities are on the political side so it is difficult for departments and agencies to control all aspects of risk management.

Orderly risk taking is difficult when lives and properties are at risk.

HIGH QUALITY, EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF CITIZENS (CH6)

17. How do we embed a citizen centred philosophy in all aspects of program and service design and delivery?

18. How can we better bring together service design, delivery and policy formulation processes—within individual programs and across all of government?

19. What options could be pursued to ensure citizens, especially those with higher needs, can access government information and services that they need?

20. How can we ensure performance management frameworks focus on the attainment of outcomes for citizens?

Embedding a citizen centered philosophy (Q17)

Because of the extent of contact with the public and the nature of the services provided, the safety and security of Australians is at the core of Bureau operations. This focus ensures that services evolve and are continually improved in accordance with user needs and advances in science and technology.

A primary component of Bureau efforts to achieve people-centric service design and delivery lies in the numerous opportunities the Bureau provides for users, big and small, to have their say on existing and future services. At one end of the scale, the Bureau has a broad range of ongoing consultative mechanisms involving government authorities and major commercial and community user groups. At the other end, the feedback and ideas of individual users provided to staff in person or via the web are readily accepted. The Bureau continues to increase the involvement of users in evaluating new products and services however there is still room for improvement in this regard.

A related factor in maintaining a people-centred approach is that the Bureau seeks to actively respond to the needs of its users and their feedback. For example, the radar viewer on the Bureau's website was redesigned in response to user feedback to provide merged data from more than one radar. Similarly, the Bureau's dedicated agricultural weather services site 'Water and the Land' was redesigned to allow improved access to those products in greatest demand as indicated by website hits.

While the Bureau has had positive experiences in bringing services to people, these are counterbalanced by efficiency imperatives that favour increased use of technology (often seen as impersonal) and rationalisation and centralisation (which can send a "one solution for many" message). There is also a need to be careful that while services need to be provided for and to individuals, it is still the role of government to represent the interests of the community as a whole. For example, a severe weather warning would be useless if it was provided to the bureaucracy and not to the people, but equally a service that hops and jumps in response to individual interests

rather than the public interest will have problems. Australia and Australians always have to go together in this context.

In the Bureau's experience, the *Customer Focus* courses DAS (the former Department of Administrative Services) commissioned in the early 90s were surprisingly effective in developing an atmosphere of thoughtful engagement with the public *and each other*. This experience indicates that APS training in this area could be worthwhile.

Bringing together service design, delivery and policy formulation (Q18)

These can only be improved through greater communication and cross departmental teams working on end-to-end solutions to national challenges. There remains a significant gap between the information agencies and the policy-making agencies in the APS that needs to be bridged.

Access for those with higher needs (Q19)

Given the safety aspects of many of the Bureau's services, getting the message out to all those most affected is imperative. To ensure the greatest access, most of the Bureau's weather services are made available to the Australian community through the mass media (radio, television, newspapers) as well as via the internet, recorded telephone systems, marine high frequency (HF) and very high frequency (VHF) radio, facsimile and Inmarsat (marine) satellite broadcasts. Specific outreach activities are provided where appropriate such as the pre-cyclone season awareness workshops that are delivered to vulnerable communities. Partnerships with other government and private sector providers are also crucial to providing end-to-end services, and for the provision of value-added services to specific markets.

Although one of many access mechanisms, IT of course is a central pathway for the provision of services. The Bureau's website, www.bom.gov.au, consistently rates as the number one government website used by Australians. Of all websites visited by Australians it regularly ranks within the top ten, emphasising the demand for and quality of the observations, forecasts and related information it provides. The Bureau averages about a billion hits a month, year round, growing at 20% per year, and more than twice that during some severe weather events (2.5 billion hits per month at the height of last summer). It is hard to imagine how these services could be delivered any other way as users have become so accustomed to the convenience and choice of online delivery.

While there are equity issues in providing online services, the issues are different from those in existence 10 years ago and probably less pronounced. Modern IT and communications systems which support any-where, any-time access can no doubt be used more extensively and must certainly form a central part of the future APS service delivery strategy.

The Bureau is also supportive of the "government one-shop" concept.

Attaining outcomes for citizens (Q20)

Performance management frameworks must align KPIs to the service delivery requirements of the Australian public.

The Bureau has an array of indicators to measure the attainment of outcomes for Australians. Indicators relate to:

- perceived levels of service (e.g. public perceptions of Bureau services are measured by bi-annual telephone surveys in the summer and winter seasons);
- proximity to services (eg: 85% of Australia is within 100 km of a rainfall observing station);
- timeliness of services (e.g. 100% of Australian Tsunami Bulletins issued from the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre (JATWC) are available to the emergency services and the public within 40 minutes of a significant event in the Pacific or Indian Ocean); and
- availability of services (e.g. 95% of meteorological and space weather observations scheduled to be placed on the internet are available).

FLEXIBILITY AND AGILITY (CH7)

21. What is the optimal rate of mobility between APS agencies and other parts of the labour market? What could the APS do to encourage and support greater mobility?

22. What practical mechanisms could be used to foster a more unified public service culture?

23. How could recruitment practices be enhanced within Australian Government entities? What are the strengths of current recruitment processes?

24. What are your top three ideas to encourage the pursuit of continuous improvement across the public service?

Labour Mobility (Q21)

While it is difficult to be specific, certainly a greater rate of mobility, both short and long term, is highly desirable. It is considered that mobility in and out of the APS probably should be lower than for the private sector, but not much. There also needs to be more mobility between policy and service delivery agencies to promote greater interaction and cross-fertilisation of ideas and initiatives between these two streams of government.

Mobility could be improved through a more highly organised job rotation scheme, particularly involving other APS agencies, removing barriers in relation to the portability of staff entitlements and greater promotion of the career enhancement benefits of job mobility. It is certainly true that mobility outside Canberra is more restricted; State-Commonwealth mobility might be targeted to offset this.

Where there is movement of people into and out of the private sector, the public sector must ensure that the skills that have been learnt are transferred within the APS.

Unified public service culture (Q22)

The Bureau's experience does not support the interpretation that the APS surveys have revealed a great level of disunity. In-agency reporting and accountability inevitably lead to a greater association with the agency; this does not constitute disloyalty to the wider APS or evidence of an unwillingness to unite. This comes from working to common standards and principles.

A more unified public service culture however would be aided by the re-adoption of a common set of employment conditions as a basis framework with some room for managing the nuances of individual agencies where required. A common employment framework would be best achieved by a return to a single Enterprise Agreement approach for the whole of the APS with the added advantage that this is a much more efficient way to handle industrial/conditions of service matters.

There should be less of a competitive nature in relation to access to resources and greater rewards for collaborative initiatives. Activities that lead to improved relationships and the building of trust would also be of benefit and should be rewarded.

One area where Bureau staff are experiencing a strong sense of collegiate interaction on an APS- wide basis is through state-based Australian Government Leadership Networks (in all states and territories except NT). The Australian Government Leadership Network Queensland (AGLN-Q), for example, meets monthly with a set agenda as well as informal conversation about what is happening and what is planned within the respective departments and agencies. This is not quite the same as engaging on the Canberra stage but it does go a significant way to keeping people informed on important APS matters and serves a worthwhile collaborative purpose.

Enhanced recruitment practices (Q23)

The strengths of the current recruitment processes include the use of very clear and specific job documentation, the fact that vacancies are generally open to all Australians on a merit selection basis and the sound recruitment/selection knowledge possessed by many managers.

Suggestions for improving recruitment practices include further consideration of removing promotion appeals at all levels, further streamlining report writing requirements by the use of templates and wider use of e-recruitment processes. Tightening up of wording and better use of terminology would be a worthwhile improvement, for example, "non-ongoing assignment of duties opportunity" would be better stated as "temporary vacancy".

The APS has (rightly) set high standards for recruitment, so much so that it is hard to take a risk. The result is that the outstanding individual who requires an answer today is often lost. Speeding up recruitment processes where

possible would improve the competitive position of the APS with respect to the private sector.

Encouraging Continuous Improvement (Q24)

Suggestions for encouraging continuous improvement fall into three main groups as follows:

- Improving the focus (having a clear vision, fostering inspiration, improving ownership through better delegation and performance management, instilling a continuous improvement mantra, creating a different attitude to risk).
- Improving engagement (Increasing external engagement, better cross-fertilisation including with the private sector, better connection with clients, increased understanding of changing client needs).
- Strengthening and maintaining a strong skilled workforce (Improving succession planning and workforce management, enhancing leadership development and training at all levels, having better selection processes with a focus on innovation, implementing needs focused mentoring, increasing shared graduate programs, providing talent management especially among the 30-40 age group, providing greater recognition and support for staff) .

EFFICIENCY IN ALL ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (Ch8)

26. How can Australian Government service delivery agencies improve their own efficiency?

27. What mechanisms should be used to systematically improve efficiency across the public service as a whole?

28. What skills and capabilities are required to drive efficiency throughout public sector organisations?

Improving efficiency in Service Delivery Agencies (Q26)

Efficiency needs to come from an appropriate mix of centralised and decentralised services that optimise the strengths of staff and automation systems with resources applied appropriately.

By establishing the need for services through close engagement with clients and stakeholders, services can be prioritised and lower value services discontinued. This needs to be a continuous process in an environment where there is a willingness to change things when warranted.

Mechanisms for improved efficiency across the APS (Q27)

As a starting point, the Bureau's view is that the efficiency dividend (ED) needs supporting policy if it is truly to improve efficiency. The lack of an explicit counterpart to the policy in terms of productivity gains provides a general disincentive to innovate and improve. The ED policy is pragmatic and achieves savings, but it lacks strategy and is never tested for its effectiveness in actually improving either policy development or service delivery. There

needs to be a much better understanding of how the ED is being realised across the APS, whether it is achieving real efficiency in administration and whether services are being negatively impacted. Rewards for efficiency may be a more effective approach in driving innovation and creativity.

IT has provided vast efficiency savings over a number of years and will continue to do so in the future. Government-wide conferences for IT staff could be a useful way of spreading knowledge and encouraging cross-department and cross agency collaboration and savings. Following an increase in the private sector, effective work-from-home strategies could be used more widely where circumstances permit.

Bureau managers also felt that cross-APS processes have a legitimate role in improving efficiency. Travel and property reforms are examples where efficiencies can be realised and Gershon seems to have realised “savings” that were not otherwise apparent. Consideration of more “one-stop shop” approaches to service delivery might also provide greater efficiencies, however, this must not prohibit agencies the flexibility they require to meet their objectives.

Skills and capabilities for efficiency (Q28)

It is important that the skills and capabilities relate more to improving productivity rather than simply cutting costs.

From a Bureau perspective, key skills and capabilities sought include:

- true strategic thinking skills and abilities;
- visionary, responsive and innovative leadership;
- leadership with the ability to optimise in parallel the strengths of people and technology; and
- staff who are responsive to client needs and technologically competent.