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30 November 2009

Mr Moran  
Chair  
Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
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CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Mr Moran

### Reform of Australian Government Administration

The City of Playford shares the vision that Australia can have the 'world's best public administration'. While there are many things we currently do well, there is always room for improvement.

The discussion paper "Reform of Australian Government Administration, Building the world's best public service", acknowledges the importance of a cross-agency approach to policy formulation and implementation, as well as the importance of other sectors and levels of government.

Playford would suggest this is the critical area of reform for government and will determine who is 'world's best' in the twenty-first century.

Cross jurisdictional policy development and service delivery is the only way to achieve a citizen centred approach - given the increasing complexity of public policy, globalisation, demographic pressures and ever increasing expectations. To succeed the community must be involved in government policy development and service delivery.

The Australian Public Service cannot achieve this alone. The 'world's best' will be the Service which most effectively works across agencies and jurisdictions.

To achieve this, we need to do things differently.

The discussion paper acknowledges the single agency budget framework is at odds with cross-agency (yet alone cross-sector) solutions. Yet to be 'world's best' this needs to be overcome.

Playford strongly supports 'strategic policy hubs' as a first step. Playford would recommend a strategic policy hub should specifically address the question of how to ensure ongoing cross-sector collaboration.

The nature of this issue is such it cannot be resolved by the APS alone, the structural barriers are such it demands a cross-sectoral response. The increasing proportion of services delivered by local government and the non-government sector demand their involvement in any solution. This is the only way to achieve a citizen-centred approach.

It is at a regional/local level that the opportunities for collaboration become most apparent. It is at this level that the social, economic and environmental impact of government policy on individual members of the community becomes most apparent. The 'local' nature of local government, places the sector in a crucial position to ensure a community-centred approach to policy formulation and service delivery.

A strategic policy hub will enable a sharing of the knowledge/skills and experience of different sectors to solve complex policy issues.

However there is also a need to provide additional learning and development options for officers of all levels of government. To be 'world's best' this must incorporate experience in different sectors. To obtain different outcomes, we need to develop different career paths.

Knowledge of the drivers, workings and role of other levels of government is a core competency for a public service which seeks to be world's best. World's best public servants will have first hand knowledge of the different levels of government and the non-government sector. The Australian Public Sector needs to ensure this knowledge is recognised as critical, and structures are in place to guarantee its development.

Work placements and job swaps are an ideal way to achieve this. A strategic policy hub could look specifically at strategies to make this endemic in the Australian Public Service and other levels of government.

The City of Playford is willing to be an active partner in developing and implementing such an approach. Playford is ideally positioned to be part of a strategic policy hub and would like the opportunity to discuss further how this could be structured.

In summary the City of Playford supports the directions of the discussion paper, in particular the shift to a more citizen centred approach. Playford is of the view the critical issue facing the Australian Public Sector is achieving cross-jurisdictional collaboration. This issue requires a cross-jurisdictional solution, which could be facilitated by a strategic policy hub. Developing officers with skills and knowledge in other jurisdictions will be critical to any solution.

Yours faithfully



**Matthew Pears**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**