

CONCLUSION

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Photographer Josh Estey.

‘The creation of a more cohesive and collaborative APS will require cultural change. Practical measures to foster a single APS are of course important, but underlying these measures must be a genuine commitment by government and employees of all levels in the APS to the change process.’

Community and Public Sector Union, submission 177, p.4.

This Blueprint outlines an ambitious reform agenda for placing the APS ahead of the game. It provides a useful guide to future challenges on the basis of the current state of the APS. Collectively the nine reforms and associated recommendations, set out in Appendix 4, provide a comprehensive strategy for sustainable change.

First and foremost the Blueprint aims to improve outcomes for citizens, through more integrated services, better policy advice, maximising value for taxpayer’s money and a closer alignment of government activity to the community’s preferences. A package of measures is recommended to achieve these goals, through changes to systems, structures and practices.

The Blueprint also recognises that, at its core, the APS is a network of people. The reforms seek to boost and support the APS workforce and to embed new forms of behaviour into the APS culture. Workforce capability is addressed through reforms directed at areas of longstanding concern, such as performance management and workforce planning, as well as areas that must evolve to meet new challenges, such as learning and development and recruitment.

Changing the culture of the APS is a more complex proposition. The Blueprint identifies APS leadership practices as a necessary catalyst for change. For employees to embrace the reforms, leaders must demonstrate new behaviours. The proposed establishment of a Secretaries Board and APS 200 leadership group will encourage senior leaders to own and carry forward the reforms.

The Blueprint also proposes a number of accountability measures, including the introduction of cross-portfolio outcomes, new performance assessment for Secretaries, regular agency capability reviews, human capital benchmarking and a focus on data collection. Such measures are necessary for the reform agenda to succeed.

There are elements of central planning in the reforms, but this should not be read as a centralist agenda. The intention is to improve central frameworks, particularly around people management, in order to improve decision-making in agencies. Collective responsibility is also encouraged, both for policy outcomes and the management of the APS, through the strengthened accountability of Secretaries.

Given the lack of evidence on the performance of the APS and public services worldwide, a number of recommendations identify improved data collection to help build an evidence base. The proposed reforms seek to transform the APS into a *self-improving* organisation – an organisation that is strategic and forward looking with an intrinsic culture of evaluation and innovation.

Ultimately the success of the reforms rests with APS employees. This Blueprint seeks to ensure the excellence of their work, for the lasting benefit of Australian Government administration and the Australian people.

Glossary

AGIMO	Australian Government Information Management Office
ANU	Australian National University
ANZSOG	Australia and New Zealand School of Government
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
APS	Australian Public Service
CAC Act	<i>Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997</i>
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CIU	Cabinet Implementation Unit
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
DHS	Department of Human Services
DIISR	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
EL	Executive Level
Finance	Department of Finance and Deregulation
FMA Act	<i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</i>
Governance Guide	<i>Governance Arrangements for Australian Government Bodies</i>
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Portfolio	A Department and its agencies for which the Portfolio Secretary has overarching responsibility
PS Act	<i>Public Service Act 1999</i>
SBR	Standard Business Reporting
SES	Senior Executive Service

Appendix 1 – Internal Reference Group Members

Ms Carmel McGregor (from December 2009)	Deputy Commissioner	Australian Public Service Commission
Mr John Cairns (until December 2009)	Acting Deputy Public Service Commissioner	Australian Public Service Commission
Ms Jan Mason	Deputy Secretary	Corporate and Parliamentary Services, Department of Finance and Deregulation
Ms Glenys Beauchamp	Deputy Secretary	Governance Group, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ms Sue Chapman	Acting Deputy Secretary	Technology and Corporate, Department of Human Services
Dr Subho Banerjee	Executive Director	Strategy and Delivery Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Mr Dominic English	First Assistant Secretary	Economic Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ms Philippa Lynch	First Assistant Secretary	Government Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Appendix 2 – Recruitment Myths

MYTH	FACT
Defining the recruitment need	
An agency must have a specific vacancy to recruit.	Agencies can recruit to a specific role or more generally to a level.
Attracting applicants	
Advertising options are limited to the Gazette and mainstream press.	Agencies must advertise on the 'APS Jobs' website. Agencies have the flexibility to determine other effective and appropriate forms of advertising (keeping in mind the principle of a 'reasonable opportunity to apply'), including the web.
Agencies cannot personally contact people and invite them to apply.	Individuals can be targeted and encouraged to apply for a role, but they still need to compete in a merit-based selection exercise. Suitable people can also be contacted and encouraged to transfer to jobs at the same classification level, without a need for a competitive process.
Only Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people can apply for 'identified criteria' positions.	Anyone can apply, but they have to be able to meet the 'identified criteria'. The criteria include knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with Indigenous Australians. Only Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people can apply for positions designated as 'special measures provisions' under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.
Selecting a non-SES candidate	
Selection team	
A selection panel must have three members.	There is no rule governing the size of selection committees although ideally selection panels consist of two or three people.
The delegate cannot be on the selection team.	The delegate can be on the selection team and this can facilitate quicker selection decisions.
Selection methods	
Applicant/s cannot be asked to provide additional information.	Additional information can be sought to help the selection team make a decision, such as whether to proceed to an interview.
Interviews are mandatory.	There is no legislation requiring agencies to use a particular assessment method. There is no requirement to hold an interview, it is simply one of a wide range of selection methods available.
All internal applicants must be interviewed.	All applicants need to be assessed fairly, but there is no requirement to interview all candidates.
All interviewees need to be asked the same questions.	It is good practice to ask the same questions but it is not a requirement. Additional questions might help gain further information or clarify an applicant's response (e.g. their role in a particular situation).
Referee checking	
A referee report is required for every applicant.	There is no requirement to obtain referee reports. However obtaining references for candidates in strong contention for a role is highly recommended.
Only nominated referees can be contacted.	The panel is not obliged to speak to all referees nominated by the applicant. People other than nominated referees (such as previous managers) may be used with the consent of the applicant.

Appendix 3 – Implementation

Reform of Australian Government Administration Implementation Timeline

Reform	2010	2011	2012	Lead Agency
1.1 Simplify Australian Government Services for citizens		Whole of Government service delivery strategy established		DHS/Finance
1.2 Develop better ways to deliver services through the community and private sectors		New models to deliver services established		DHS/Finance
1.3 Deliver services in closer partnership with capital State and Territory and local governments		New partnerships with governments established		DEEWR/FAHCSIA
1.4 Reduce unnecessary business regulatory burden		Expanded review of regulatory burden completed		Treasury/Finance
2.1 Enable citizens to collaborate with government in policy and service design		Mechanism for citizen collaboration in place		PM&C/Finance
2.2 Conduct a citizen survey		First Citizen Survey delivered		APSC
3.1 Strengthen strategic policy		Strategic policy capability est.		PM&C
3.2 Build partnerships with academia, research institutions and the community and private sectors		Networks with relevant orgs in place		PM&C/DIISR
3.3 Improve policy implementation		Networks operational & tool kit developed		PM&C/Finance
4.1 Revise and embed the APS Values		New values		APSC
4.2 Articulate the roles and responsibilities of Secretaries		Incl. in PS Act		APSC/PM&C
4.3 Revise employment arrangements for Secretaries		Incl. in PS Act		PM&C
4.4 Strengthen leadership across the APS		APS 200 est.		APSC/PM&C
4.5 Improve talent management across the APS		Talent mgt. in place		APSC
5.1 New APSC with responsibilities to lead the APS		APSC restructure complete		APSC
6.1 Ensure employment bargaining arrangements support one APS		Framework est.		APSC
6.2 Assess the size and role of the SES		Review complete		APSC
7.1 Coordinate workforce planning			Human capital framework in place	APSC
7.2 Streamline recruitment and improve induction			APSC performing leadership role	APSC
7.3 Expand and strengthen learning and development			APSC L&D program implemented	APSC
7.4 Strengthen the performance framework				APSC
7.5 Encourage employees to expand their career experience			Benchmarking mobility	APSC
8.1 Conduct agency capability reviews			First capability reviews completed	APSC
8.2 Introduce shared outcomes across portfolios			First shared portfolio outcomes established	Finance
8.3 Reduce internal red tape to promote agility			Processes to reduce red tape and promote innovation established	Finance
9.1 Review the measures of agency efficiency			Mechanism to measure efficiency implemented	Finance/PM&C/Treasury
9.2 Strengthen the governance framework			New governance framework established and agencies reviewed	Finance
9.3 Small agencies to improve the efficiency of their corporate functions			Relevant agencies corporate functions consolidated	Finance

Key

- Government Decision Required
- Policy design
- Implementation
- Government Decision – Requires Legislation
- Implementation
- Secretaries Board to Implement
- Policy design
- Implementation

Appendix 4 – Overview of reforms

Meets the needs of citizens

1 Delivering better services for citizens

- 1.1 **Simplify Australian Government services for citizens**
 - Simplify and align Australian Government service delivery.
 - Implement simplified citizen focused service delivery with automated and simplified business processes.
- 1.2 **Develop better ways to deliver services through the community and private sectors**
 - Provide greater flexibility to respond to local circumstances in service delivery through the community and private sectors.
 - Provide simplified funding arrangements.
 - Develop integrated case coordination for citizens and their families with complex needs in particular locations.
- 1.3 **Deliver services in closer partnership with State, Territory and local governments**
 - Partner with State, Territory and local governments to achieve better outcomes for citizens.
 - Integrate delivery teams using employees from multiple Australian Government agencies in particular locations to enable more joined up delivery.
 - Share more information between all levels of government.
 - Make information accessible to citizens on services provided by all levels of government.
- 1.4 **Reduce unnecessary business regulatory burden**
 - Extend the Standard Business Reporting (SBR) functionality, (due for release in July 2010), to ease the regulatory burden imposed by government on business.
 - Minimise reporting and compliance requirements for business and remove unnecessary or poorly designed regulation.

2 Creating more open government

- 2.1 **Enable citizens to collaborate with government in policy and service design**
 - Develop and implement new approaches to collaboration and consultation with citizens on policy and service delivery issues.
 - Make public sector data available to the wider public in a manner consistent with privacy principles.
- 2.2 **Conduct a citizen survey**
 - Conduct a survey of citizens' views on their satisfaction with government programs, services and regulation to inform government business.
 - These surveys desirably would be expanded to include all levels of government.

Provides strong leadership and strategic direction

3 Enhancing policy capability

- 3.1 **Strengthen strategic policy**
 - Every Department to strengthen strategic policy and delivery capability.
 - Establish a Strategic Policy Network and create a policy tool kit to assist the development of strategic policy capability across the APS.
 - Establish cross-agency strategic policy project teams.
- 3.2 **Build partnerships with academia, research institutions and the community and private sectors**
 - Reinvigorate and establish new relationships with academia and research institutions.
 - Strengthen links with private sector experts.
- 3.3 **Improve policy implementation**
 - Provide clear guidance and standards to agencies on policy implementation, particularly in the areas of regulation, program and project management.
 - Increase every Department's capacity to oversee implementation activities.
 - Establish an APS-wide forum to share best practice in regulations.

4 Reinvigorating strategic leadership

- 4.1 **Revise and embed the APS Values**
 - Revise the APS Values to a smaller set of core values that are meaningful, memorable and effective in driving change.
 - Embed the revised values into the work of the APS through senior leadership and learning and development and performance management frameworks.
- 4.2 **Articulate the roles and responsibilities of Secretaries**
 - Amend the Public Service Act 1999 to recognise the roles and responsibilities of Secretaries and the Public Service Commissioner.
 - Strengthen the performance framework to assess individual and collective performance against the above roles and responsibilities.
- 4.3 **Revise employment arrangements for Secretaries**
 - Revise the processes for appointing and terminating Secretaries
 - Reinforce the terms of appointment for Secretaries to provide for a five year term.
- 4.4 **Strengthen leadership across the APS**
 - Establish a new APS leadership group, the Secretaries Board.
 - Create a senior leadership forum, the APS 200. Require leaders at all levels to act as role models and drive reforms in their agencies.
- 4.5 **Improve talent management across the APS**
 - Introduce APS-wide talent management programs.
 - Establish a Leadership Development Centre.

5 Introducing a new APSC to drive change and provide strategic planning

- 5.1 **New APSC with responsibilities to lead the APS**
 - Reposition the APSC to deliver on broad reform goals and charge it with responsibility for leading and implementing proposed recommendations agreed by Government.
 - Transfer responsibility for Australian Government policies for agreement-making, classification structures, APS remuneration arrangements, work level standards and workplace relations advice from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to the APSC.
 - Revise the Public Service Act 1999 to reflect reforms to the APSC.

Contains a highly capable workforce

6 Clarifying and aligning employment conditions

6.1 Ensure employment bargaining arrangements support one APS

- Strengthen the Australian Government Employment Bargaining Framework to ensure that it supports one APS.
- Identify areas where a further streamlining of existing APS bargaining arrangements would better support one APS.
- Examine the extent to which existing APS classification arrangements and work level standards continue to meet the needs of APS agencies and employees.
- Provide APS employees with appropriate career paths.

6.2 Assess the size and role of the SES

- Complete a review of the size, capability and work level standards for each level of the Senior Executive Service (SES), before any new net growth in the SES occurs.

7 Strengthening the workforce

7.1 Coordinate workforce planning

- Establish an APS-wide workforce planning framework.
- Develop a Human Capital Priority Plan that initially prioritises the reforms proposed in this Blueprint and over time will identify emerging systemic workforce issues.

7.2 Streamline recruitment and improve induction

- Develop best practice standards for recruitment that uphold the merit principle.
- Establish regular labour and demographic analyses in relation to APS employment.
- Coordinate initial graduate and trainee recruitment application processes.
- Utilise new recruitment processes, where appropriate, for SES Band 3 officers.
- Implement specific mechanisms to increase APS diversity.

7.3 Expand and strengthen learning and development

- Identify core service-wide development needs.
- Endorse a principle of annual professional development for all APS employees.
- Deliver core learning and development programs that are centrally procured.
- Evaluate a range of courses and negotiate the best rates for the APS.

7.4 Strengthen the performance framework

- Introduce a performance framework that fosters a high performance culture.
- Provide performance management training for all SES employees and managers.
- Develop common APS-wide guidelines for dealing with underperformance.

7.5 Encourage employees to expand their career experience

- Develop mobility mechanisms that encourage more APS employees to obtain diverse career experiences.
- Reinvigorate the mechanism for advertising of temporary non ongoing positions (for example, expressions of interest).
- Work with State, Territory and local governments to identify and address the barriers to jurisdictional mobility, including the recognition of State, Territory and local government public service entitlements and vice versa.

Operates efficiently and at a consistently high standard

8 Ensuring agency agility, capability and effectiveness

8.1 Conduct agency capability reviews

- Conduct periodic external reviews of agencies' institutional capabilities, covering strategy, leadership, workforce capability, delivery and organisational effectiveness.

8.2 Introduce shared outcomes across portfolios

- Introduce shared cross portfolio outcomes in priority areas where more than one portfolio is responsible for achieving government outcomes.

8.3 Reduce internal red tape to promote agility

- Streamline administrative and legislative compliance in areas such as Financial Management and Corporate / Human Resources.
- Develop mechanisms that ensure red tape is minimised.

9 Improving agency efficiency

9.1 Review the measures of agency efficiency

- Review the current mechanisms used to drive agency efficiency.

9.2 Strengthen the governance framework

- Simplify governance structures for new and existing entities by consolidating the categories of entities that can be created.
- Amend the Governance Arrangements for Australian Government Bodies (Governance Guide) to ensure:
 - Clear governance arrangements for inter-jurisdictional entities;
 - APS employees are clear about their responsibilities when appointed to company boards; and
 - All new and existing agencies are fit-for-purpose.

9.3 Small agencies to improve the efficiency of their corporate functions

- All portfolio agencies should review the most efficient way to conduct their corporate functions.
- New small agencies should obtain their corporate services from a parent agency or shared service provider.

- Requires Government decision
- Secretaries Board to implement