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## Submission to the APS Review

### Introduction

I am excited by the scale and focus of the APSReform agenda. It addresses issues about government I've been wrestling with for some years now. That its heart addresses the Public Service as a whole and brings into play concepts such as making it a great place to work make it more inspiring and more likely to bring success. Success, some early, some deeper into the project, is essential to build an unchallengeable retention of these new ways of working, no matter how they might be challenged by those favouring the status quo. It is costly and a disappointment that in these times a change of government can bring the reversal of some good but ideologically unliked programmes. Success builds a wall against such challenges.

### Overview

This submission references commercial experience in the FMCG and Building Industries and the work of many authors, most notably Mariana Mazzucato, the academic who has emerged as a global champion for the ambitions enshrined in the APSReform program.

The program is described as being in four parts:

- First: An APS that embodies integrity in everything it does
- Second: An APS that puts people and business at the centre of policy and services.
- Third: An APS that is a model employer.
- And fourth: An APS that has the capability to do its job well.

This submission is focussed on the third of these although some of the issues raised can also be related to other parts of the program

For clarity, a summary of the recommendations embedded in the body of the submission is included at the document end.

### Creating a Great Place to Work

Being a model employer underpins the broader goal of being a Great Place to Work. A place here people find it easy to jump out of bed in the morning to get into their day; day after day. Being a great place to work will realise many of the changes sought by this program. Being a Great Place to Work will create the success required to embed the specific initiatives of the program. In commercial enterprise it has been shown (analysis of the UK Top 100 companies to work for) that being in the top 10% of Great Places to work puts companies in the top quartile of financial performance. If we substitute financial performance with Great Public Service outcomes we see the prize available from success with this initiative.

## Telling the story

It is disappointing that the story of this initiative hasn't made it to the news. I would love to have known about it earlier, and in a similar vein I would love to hear about it progressively as change is implemented and embedded. Since the times of Aristotle we have known the power of the story and of story telling. In fact the reliance of story in our first nations is a far far longer experience. They have been masters at using story telling. The leaders of this work must practice this art, thereby bringing all stakeholders on the journey, especially people currently in the APS and those we are keen to attract.

The program and the draft legislation speaks of developing an expression of Purpose; our fundamental *Why?*. The answer to this question is a cornerstone of the story and is addressed in mor detail in the following.

The story starts in the last decade when announcements often led nowhere, with an over reliance on external consulting at the expense of reliance on the PS and moves on to a story of government adopting proven practices, government taking direct ownership of delivering its agenda.

The story should include the impact this will have for our political bubble. A strong PS means less reliance on career politicians for continuity in Government. More fresh faces in parliament reflects an opportunity to be at or ahead of the impact of generational change we have seen in recent elections.

The public needs to hear this story, of its genesis and its progress and its successes. There has been a lack of engaging and informative communication with reach to households. In her speech to the IPAA in October 2022 the minister clearly laid out the benefits that would be experienced in the community. They must be part of the story.

Successful work needs doing to ensure that story is repeated over and over again, in the same words no matter which part of government is the source.

The heart of the story can be well captured in a Vision into Action template which is also attached. [REDACTED]

## The politics

For this to succeed we need long arcs of time, not something that bounces around in times defined by elections and the election cycle. To achieve success must be seen and have some aspect delivered over longer time frames. The government needs to talk and walk a long game.

This has undoubted political risk and requires courage to drive the change in the face of politics and its particular ways of working. As Marianne Williamson says so eloquently in her poem *Our Deepest Fear*, It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We need to be bold if we are to harvest all the benefits these changes enable.

The government is a leader, the PS should be empowered to show its leadership. We would benefit from being able to hear from PS leaders in more connectable environments than just senate committees.

The authors on Leadership Posner and Kouzes have tracked the characteristics that followers expect of their leaders over many cycles and in a number of countries. The same top four always emerge, with a big gap to fifth. These characteristics are Honest, Forward looking, inspiring, and confident. These qualities are evident in the ministers speech and the work of her team and provide well for the political push back that might come if long time frames are an open and honest part of the plan.

## **On Vision, Mission, Purpose, and values**

These terms are so frequently used as to have become used in place of each other in many circumstances. For clarity in my feedback I include the definitions I have used for each.

### **Vision defined**

Inspires possibility in a simple and concise, often pithy expression of what we will be like at the end, often expressed in what we hear people saying, what we see being done, and what we feel in the new world we have created. Has a 3 to 5 year expectation which with excellence might be reached in less.

### **Mission defined**

(with recognition to Mariana Mazzucato) A time bound concise factual statement of what is to be done, what problem is to be solved. It will identify the stakeholders to be directly involved for their areas of expertise and for the capture of other benefits beyond the main mission.

### **Purpose defined**

The fundamental Why. It energises, strengthens resilience, enables creativity and innovation, ignites passion, enables authentic connection by responding to the ennobling qualities of the work we do. It is what attracts us to an enterprise, an occupation. It is deep seated, has a moral quality, and is more lodged in our hearts than our heads.

### **Values defined**

Values are what is important to us in the way we live and behave. These are the beliefs that drive organisational culture. It is plural – for an enterprise or and individual it is important to understand and share a range of things that are important. The exposure draft doesn't refer to a vision. I believe this is a shortcoming and can easily be addressed along with the development of the purpose statement recommended by Thodey.

### **Value being Proposed**

The draft bill and exposure draft speak of establishing a single value, Stewardship. Stewardship is lacks drive and ownership and is unlikely to inspire top flight graduates to imagine themselves working in the APS. What is needed is a suite of 5 to 8 values which will support achievement of the vision. Also concerning is the suggestion that this value be prescribed from the designers of the reform rather than developed by facilitating its development by a diverse cohort of the people who work in the APS and are briefed on the ambition of the change.

### **Additional Inclusions Vision and Mission**

The program will benefit from having a Vision statement and a clear and comprehensive expression of its mission.

## **In-house consulting Model**

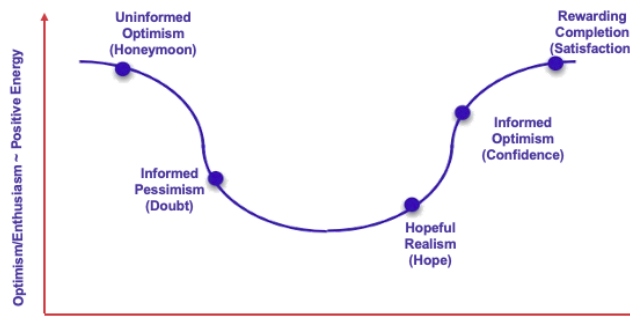
I heartily support this element of the initiative. Much has been written about the over use of consulting and its impact on the work taken away from public servants. The consulting process has also intentionally omitted skills transfer from its work which excluded the PS from future work. The establishment of an in-house consulting entity is a strong and impactful response.

In budget paper no 2 P189 it is described as reporting to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. I believe it would be better placed in the department of the Minister for the Public Service. Being within the scope of the Minister for the Public Service allows the consulting group to be clearly seen as part of the management of the PS as a whole rather than something that exists at the discretion of PM and cabinet. Being with and within the department allows it to contribute directly to the performance of the PS as a whole and for resourcing requirements to be managed across a broader scope. Performance measures can be used to promote a sense of team across the reformed APS.

## Change Management

Change Management of the program should be run by existing staff, and not just those at the top and / or those identified as high potential. This function plays a huge role in how the team feels and therefore how engaged it is at any time.

Change such as this affects how we feel. Some things we love are left behind, some exciting new things lie ahead. A modification of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' grief cycle addresses this in a format that shows where the team and its members are at, how they are feeling.



It should be noted that people move backward and forward through these emotional states. Knowing where they are and managing to that understanding is a strong driver of the success needed for sustained change.

## Language in the existing documents

Some of the language and labelling requires attention. In some cases there are simple solutions, in others there are wider ramifications to be considered. Boldness is required to take out antiquated language that leads the audience to disengage. This disengagement is likely to be most strongly felt by the younger generations.

Some recommended changes are:

When describing who the APS serves the phrase Australian Government, the Parliament, and the Australian public (sic) is used throughout. The importance of the public is diminished in this. It will be better sequenced as serving the Australian Public, the Government, and the Parliament

Secretaries Board: whilst I understand this to be driven by the position titles of those making up the board it needs change. If I used this description with a millennial through to a gen Y their eyes would glaze over. It speaks of the 1800s. I'm sure a new label can be built around the function and purpose of the board.

Secretaries: – position title is an anachronism. Not something to aspire to unless you have been a long time member in the APS of the past. Not attractive to talented graduates other than those already ambitious for a role in the PS.

Serving: this word is used frequently as in serving government. Like stewardship it describes a subservient role. I would expect more of the APS this program is building. Perhaps the word enabling in place of serving would better attract people to the work of the APS.

The word co-design sticks out in the exposure draft. It speaks of collaboration. This participative approach should be referred to more frequently. We have a strong example of what it looks like in the Jobs and Skills summit. It's a characteristic of this government and is highly relative to the ways of working being created for an upskilled, more relevant and more attractive PS.

**Close**

## Vision into Action

A Vision into Action for the supporting my response to *APSReform*  
Mike Kaaks

### We love working here in the Public Service

<b>(Objective)</b> To deliver enduring transformational change in the PS by 2025 that underpins a refreshed Public Service with competency and ambition to ensure the public and its institutions are best served long into th future				
<b>Pillar</b>	<b>Acting with Integrity</b>	<b>People and Business at the centre</b>	<b>A model Employer</b>	<b>Capacity to do well</b>
<b>Goal</b>	A SMART objective for each of these 4 pillars)			
<b>Deliverables</b>	The key deliverables of each pillar			
<b>Measures</b>	Performance measures that show progress and impact			
<b>Enablers</b>	Legislative Change Restructure		Adopt (Mazzucato) principle of bold missions each relying on contribution from multiple sectors A visible public service – citizens get to know them not just politicians	
<b>Culture</b>	Values		Missions and Purpose (Yet to be written by the teams)	

template

