

TRANSCRIPT OF PODCAST

WORK WITH PURPOSE

EPISODE #79

TIME, TRUST, TURF: BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

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DAVID PEMBROKE:

Hello everyone, and welcome once again to Work with Purpose, a podcast about the Australian Public Service. My name is David Pembroke. Thanks for joining me. To begin, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to their elders past, present, and emerging, and acknowledge the ongoing contribution they make to the life of our city and this region. I'd also like to acknowledge the custodians of all the lands from where anybody listening to this podcast today is joining us from.

So today, we talk partnerships between organisations, people, communities, both in and outside the public sector, and how they can be strengthened. Partnerships are essential to achieving any sort of change. And back in 2019, the Australian Public Service Review recognised the need for strong partnerships to deliver better services for Australian people.

Now fast-forward to 2022, and the Minister for the Public Service, Senator Katy Gallagher, announced during IPAA's national conference that the Australian government, quote, "will work with the leaders of the Australian Public Service on a vision for partnership between the public service, people, communities, businesses, the not-for-profit sector, universities, states, territories, and others".

So partnerships and how to strengthen them is very much on the agenda. As APS reform gathers pace, we ask, what does it take to build an effective partnership both inside and outside the public sector?

Professor Janine O'Flynn is the director at the Australian National University's Crawford School of Public Policy. She's an expert in public administration and management, having advised governments around the world on issues ranging from the design of effective performance management systems, through to collaborative approaches, to policy design, and implementation. She's a fellow of the US National Academy of Public Administration and the Institute of Public Administration of Australia, and she sits on several advisory boards including the IPAA ACT Council. Welcome, Janine, to you.

JANINE O'FLYNN:

Thank you so much.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

David Pullen is the Assistant Secretary, Cabinet Resilience and Crisis Management Division at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. He was also previously Acting First Assistant Secretary of the COVID-19 Transition Task Force at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. In 2020, in his role as senior advisor in the Treasurer's office, he advised the Treasurer and Prime Minister on the design and implementation of major

economic stimulus measures and supports. Welcome, David, to you.

DAVID PULLEN:

Thank you. Great to be here.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

So partnerships, they are a key component of the APS Review second priority and APS that puts people in business at the Centre of Policy and Services. Look, I think we can agree that it'd be ideal if all partnerships were able to do that, but I want to hear from you, what does the ideal partnership look like? And David, I'll start with you.

DAVID PULLEN:

Sure, thank you. Well, I think each partnership will be different, but I think there's a few key ingredients. And I think I'd summarise those under the banners of will and skill. When I think about will, I think about you've got to have a common purpose. And that's never going to be fully aligned, but there needs to be some commonality in there that's sort of driving you together. And also under will, I think you need trust and respect. I think if each party's kind of willing to invest in the relationship, willing to be open and vulnerable and listen and see control, then you're more likely to lead to a better outcome. So that's kind of the will component.

On the skill component, there I think about capability. So the great thing about really good partnerships is where you're bringing together diverse capability. So you might be partnering with someone that allows you to do things that you couldn't do yourself either because you couldn't do them as quickly, you couldn't do them as well, or you just couldn't do them at all. And they might be... things that they might bring might be ideas and perspectives, or it might be networks or technical capability. And then I think the last thing around skill is systems. So you kind of need really good systems to make it work. So that goes to things like governance, that goes to other things like your reporting communication channels. So those kind of will and skill components are incredibly important.

And so one of the things that I worked on was the Sydney Energy Forum with the Business Council of Australia and the International Energy Agency. And that was a great example of where there was a really shared purpose about having developing clean energy supply chains. What was really fantastic about that was the Business Council was able to bring its really excellent networks across the Australian business community. And the International Energy Agency was similarly able to bring its networks from across the international community, as well as its deep technical expertise and understanding of the energy environment. So with that kind of shared purpose, but also the combined skill of their networks and

understanding, we're able to put on a fantastic event. And so that's what I mean by will and skill.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

Well, that's a interesting and very comprehensive framework. So, Janine, for you, what does an ideal partnership look like for you?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

I think David's done a really great job. In fact, I might steal his will and skill. It's a great way to think about the various components that go into great partnerships. I think you mentioned things that I would've said around vulnerability and trust, and common purpose is a really critical ingredient. The other one I just mentioned perhaps is time, and it takes time to build trust. So, trust isn't something we start with. It's something obviously that we build over time and that allows us to work in different ways.

The other thing I think that's really important that I'd like to point out at this stage is that there's lots of different ways to work together. And some of those are going to be in deep partnership mode, which was just really very well sort of described by David around this high trust, vulnerable relationships that you're leveraging off the other party's expertise or capacities to do something that you can't do yourself. And that's a particular way of working together. But there's a whole continuum of ways that we want to work together.

And so, the emphasis on partnerships at this point in time is really we're getting a lot of attention on this idea of partnerships as we have around collaboration and other ways of working together. But I think it's just important to say from the outset that that's one model that works in some circumstances. It's not the way that we're going to do everything in the public service, some things we want to do by ourselves and some things we have to or want to do with others.

So, I often think that another great little... I love the will and skill, but I'm going to say time and trust and turf is also another way to think about that, three Ts. So, it's about investment of time, it's about thinking about building trust, and it's about seeding turf. Or in the most sort of collaborative mode of partnership, it's about the idea of shared turf. That you don't have yours and you let me onto it, but in fact that we share this turf together in pursuit of some common purpose.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

So, Janine, your research focuses on public sector management. And both of you have raised this notion of finding a common purpose at the centre and at the essence of a strong and effective partnership. But building a common purpose, what are the barriers to finding that common purpose?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

Well, I mean, part of it can be around what is it that each of these organisations are incentivi... If we're talking about organisations working together, one of the challenges we often find in partnerships is different incentive structures or different types of operating environments. So, one of the challenges certainly I've seen in my research is when public and private organisations join together in partnership mode and they'll be driven by different sorts of motivational or incentive structures.

So obviously, in the public sector you're responding to political cues or the sort of ambitions of ministers, and that's quite different than operating in the private sector where you'll be delivering to a board or to shareholders. You'll have a different set of expectations where you can line up those incentive structures towards some common purpose, I think we get great outcomes. And where they pull in opposite directions you can see, I think over time, some of the failures of attempts at partnership. Those incentive structures matter a lot, and how we align them towards a common purpose is really important.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And what about trust?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

Super important. I mean, trust is something that, in a sense, is a lubricant of all relationships. And if we think about people to people sort of relationships, that's where trust is built. So, I often think about partnerships as being built on relational capital and we can talk about that as trust. But we build it slowly over time. In the theory of thinking about trust, we often talk about gift giving. And I don't mean we are wrapping up presence and giving them to each other, but we exchange things that are of value to each other and that allows us to build trust over time.

And when we breach each other's trust or we allow yourself to be vulnerable to another party and that's exploited, we see a breakdown in trust, whether that's between a public and private organisation, in a PPP, or whether it's between community and the public service in trying to do things in different ways. So, trust is absolutely fundamental to how we do partnerships, how you build them, and how you sustain them over time.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And David, earlier you mentioned vulnerability, which I think is a really challenging word, I think, and a really descriptive word. And being vulnerable, particularly when there's so much at stake, and being open and being confident that you can be your open and transparent self. How do you reflect about being vulnerable inside some of those partnership development engagements?

DAVID PULLEN:

I think it's really important. I think when you're vulnerable, you're actually seeding control because you're acknowledging that it's a joint exercise. But actually, by being vulnerable, you're actually decreasing the risk and you sort of actually more likely to lead to a better result. I think by being vulnerable, you're also pretty open about what you don't know and what you're maybe not good at, and you're also open as things change. So, you're kind of sharing a lot of information, but you're taking a risk, right? Because often a lot of that's done on a confidential basis. And as Janine said, you kind of run the risk that that's exploited. But-

DAVID PEMBROKE:

Do you have tips? Do you have any tips for people to how they can confidently be vulnerable?

DAVID PULLEN:

I think you want to be kind of quite cautious about who you're going to partnership with, right? For example, with the Sydney Energy Forum, we partnered with the Business Council of Australia and the International Energy Agency where they have long-term relationships with the Australian government. They're trusted, reputable organisations. And on COVID-19, we part also partnered with the Doherty Institute, which has really, really strong credibility. So there was existing trust, and I think that goes to Janine's point that you build trust over time. Whereas, some new partners, I mean you can be even vulnerable, but it probably takes a bit longer.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

Sure. So common purpose, trust, vulnerability, but also in an earlier answer, both of you all alluded to this notion of alignment. So once we've got that in place, we sort of have to start to be aligned. How do you go about allocating roles and responsibilities to be sure that people are clear about what it is that they're supposed to do?

DAVID PULLEN:

I think the starting point is just being aware of each other's capabilities and what each party brings to the table. And then it's a discussion with the partners, sort of agreeing on your skillset and so forth, and then allocating those roles and responsibilities. Sometimes it's pretty straightforward, other times it's less so. I mean, some of that can be put together in a terms of reference or something else to sort of get that agreement. And often through the journey of the partnership, the partnership also evolves, and things change and communication's really important.

But with the Doherty Institute treasuring health, I mean, the Doherty Institute had the epidemiological forecasting expertise treasury brought to the table. Its economic modelling analysis and economic expertise and health brought a health policy perspective. And PM&C was able to bring it all together with its coordinating capability and working closely with the states and territories and national cabinets. So, there was kind of a natural partnership in

terms of everyone brought those different capabilities, and then it was just making sure that was formalised and understood through writing it down.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And then how do you manage the sort of respectful boundaries between each of those and where the priorities are such that people feel that they are adequately acknowledged, engaged, and given the time to make their contribution to the partnership?

DAVID PULLEN:

I think you do that through respect really. I mean, if you've got an open trust relation, respect, you've got an attitude where you are listening to each party, you're listening to their perspective, making sure when you're holding meetings that you're allocating time to hear everyone and contribute, then everyone will feel like they're being heard. And then you're involving everyone in the decision-making process. I think that that certainly helps. And also, being open to people playing a little bit outside their role as well. So, it's not black and white, there's a lot of greys in the partnership. But there's also being very clear which part of the team are you on, where are you adding most value.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

So, Janine, you come from a public sector research background. Why is it important to bridge the divide between some of those research insights and the ultimate decisions that are made when policy is agreed and ultimately implemented?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

To me, it's absolutely essential because both of those parties have separate, and we're talking about partnerships, separate types of expertise. But particularly in the field of public administration and public policy where I spend most of my time and effort over my career, these are really tightly sort of interlinked areas. So, I can't have anything, in a sense, legitimate to say about what's going on in public management unless I know what's going on in the day-to-day lives of public servants who are practicing in that. And so, I spend a lot of my time in those conversations in my classrooms.

Just earlier today, I was meeting with colleagues in the APS. In some fields it's quite tightly linked and there's a very iterative sort of process. So, for scholars in public management and administration, we're always very keen to know what's going on in the ground that feeds into our applied research and our more big picture, long-term theoretical thinking, which I think have a really great relationship with practitioners. They test us on that.

There's nothing like standing in a classroom with a hundred people from across the world to really let you know if your work is hitting the mark. And people do let you know that and it's a real sense test for us. But being in those rooms in the classroom, having the

opportunity through organisations like IPAA to have access to what is keeping people up at night or what are the challenges that they're facing really helps.

So, I've often thought that our fields are some of the most tightly bound. We're driven by the challenges that are confronting public servants in practice. We hope through our research to be helping them to do a better job. And at various points in time, perhaps we've all been better or worse at exchanging our ideas. But this morning, I spent a couple of hours in the room with leading scholars from across Australia and people in Prime Minister and Cabinet talking about just that, how do we work together, how do we bring our expertise, how do we share that.

And I think it's great for academics to be learning about what it is that really challenges our colleagues in practice, how we can help in that. But also, how do we get a sense of what are the sort of dynamics of the world that they live in, how do we help to improve that, how do we help to learn how we can do our work better. My work is always better by having had a conversation with someone who has to practice that on a day-to-day basis than just talking to my colleagues up and down the corridor. It's very important.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

Sure. So David, from a implementation perspective, what role does diversity of perspective from researchers, other organisations, or people of different skills play in an effective partnership?

DAVID PULLEN:

It's absolutely essential, I think particularly for really complex problems. And I'd even go to extent to say even including compressed timeframes. A partnership might take you a bit longer at the front end. But for complex problems such as COVID, you're probably not going to get there solving something by yourself. And so, what the diversity does, it allows your partners to see the problem from another angle and allows you to identify a lot more options and their costs and benefits. It kind of helps you pick up a bunch of blind spots, but also allows you to develop a wider solution set. So, the way I think about it is it actually scales your upside, and it manages your downside risk.

And I've got a couple of examples I can share with you on the Sydney Energy Forum with the Business Council, they really helped us kind of reimagine what the event could really look like. So that kind of came up with the idea that with the businesspeople coming out, how can you get them out of the forum venue for a day, and get them to go and see some of the great things that Australia's doing down in the Illawarra with hydrogen. And see some of the things at University of New South Wales around their solar research so to make it a really experiential experience and to showcase

Australia. And so that was the upside, kind of imagining what could be.

And then on the de-risking, on the downside, helping you discover blind spots that you wouldn't even think of just because you just don't, that kind of unknown unknowns. And one of those with the forum was we're about to pick a date and we had a Japanese representative on our advisory panel, and he said, "Oh no, no. You can't choose that date because there's just Japanese public holidays during that period and they'll all be in reporting season so just no Japanese will come." Otherwise, would've chosen that date. And we end up having really good representation from the Japanese government, including Japanese ministers. It's really helped de-risk the events. So, diversity I think is essential, both in terms of getting a good result but also reducing risk.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And Janine, from your perspective, out of David's answer, what do you take there in terms of best practice around building partnerships?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

I mean, one of the things that really struck me as you were just talking is this idea of you can draw down on relational capital. And I often think about it like that. It sounds like a terrible way to talk about something that's built up over time and is we can't really measure it and it's something that's important for the way that we function as humans together. But when you can build up that trust and that relational capital, you can draw down on it in different settings. And I was thinking a lot of the work that was described, David, that you were doing on COVID. That allowed government to draw on expertise from across all sectors of society in a very compressed timeframe.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

But that was a crisis, wasn't it?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

Absolutely. And it happens totally differently in crisis. I think that's something that we could talk about forever. But it did allow for a drawdown on a lot of that relational capital that existed with experts, with communities, with public, private, non-profit organisations in what we probably thought at the start, although the epidemiologist would've known better, might be a short timeframe, but which turned out to be a very extended crisis.

And so, the experience of COVID told us something also about crisis that perhaps we hadn't thought about as much. Because we often think of that as sort of short, sharp shocks of crisis that we're going to be in this for a short period of time. There's a terrible natural disaster. Everybody seeds their turf. There are existing ways of operating that we can use to marshal the resources that we

need to deal with that crisis. And then we sort of go back to our own patch.

And perhaps at the start, that's what happened with COVID. But over an extended period of time, we had to institutionalise some of that way of working. And I think it allowed government to build new types of trust and relationship with parties that perhaps have deepened. I'd be interested on David's perspective on that. But as someone who watched that with great interest, both from a researcher's perspective but just from a citizen's perspective, it did seem to me that we were not sort of snapping back to the way that we did things before. But there has been some new institutional sort of architecture built and relationships built that will stand us in good stead for the future.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So...

JANINE O'FLYNN: Yeah.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Take the invitation there, David.

DAVID PULLEN: Thank you. Thanks for the invitation. I'd absolutely agree. I think you're absolutely right, Janine. Moved from just a short crisis to longer crises but compounding events, one after the other. Like in Canberra, we had the hailstorm and then the bushfires and then COVID. It just feels like it's continuing on. And then that kind of need for longer term architecture. I mean, National Cabinet's the obvious one. I remember working very regularly with the states and territories through the official's mechanism. And that kind of definitely strengthened during COVID, and you saw sort of a deeper relationship and a form of effective partnership from something that used to be quite transactional.

And then I think more broadly, the Australian government, because of the expectation of the Australian public that's more involved, public servants are now much closer to the ground in terms of what's happening. So particularly our delivery agencies like Services Australia, they've got a much closer relationship with local councils and other community members. And there's a number of partnerships occurring at that level too.

DAVID PEMBROKE: But David, to Janine's point about going back to old ways, you are suggesting there that in terms of the gains made through COVID, that there has been improvement in the partnerships but there's also been improvement in the architecture that underpins the partnerships.

DAVID PULLEN: I think that's right. And I think there's been new partnerships that have been formed as well where, the Australian government, they strengthened the relationship with the states and their territories was also going down another layer in terms of having more direct relationships as well. Beyond just the usual types of, say, the peak organisation groups that it would normally deal with.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Now partnership sort of seems to suggest the sort of an equality of position. But ultimately in your case, David, it's the government and the policy makers who will make that decision. So how do you manage a partnership when in fact there may be that imbalance of decision making and power?

DAVID PULLEN: Yeah, that's a great question. It can be hard. I think what certainly helps is just a shared understanding of everyone's role, and governance around that can really help. So that provides clarity on what the role of each partner is, how they contribute to the ideas and the information, but then ultimately who the decision makers are. Because sometimes you want the situation where a partner is joining and feeling like their contribution should also be deciding on decisions. And some cases that just can't be the case.

So, the Sydney Energy Forum, ultimately it was the Australian government that decided key aspects to the event. But we were very clear in the partnership in the terms of reference, the role that the business council had, and the International Energy Agency had in contributing to the discussion and the ideas. We worked with them very closely and a lot of their ideas were incorporated, but ultimately it was the government's decision.

So, I think that kind of terms of reference style, document, and communication helps. But also, you've got to go to some of those other key ingredients elements Janine and I were talking about earlier around trust and respect. I think once you've got those elements, even if you get to tricky points, you can kind of find a way through.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah.

JANINE O'FLYNN: One-

DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah, your experience?

JANINE O'FLYNN: I mean, one ingredient that we haven't spoken about, but I think is sort of lurking around our conversation and it goes to this point about power is humility. And I think there's something that when you get in... We've talked about vulnerability, and we've talked about trust and so on. But there is something when you do have

great power. We're talking about the power of the Commonwealth government here in different types of partnerships. I think there's space in there to be humble about that power. And part of the challenge of developing partnerships and great relationships with a whole range of parties is being able to say, "We don't have the answer." I mean, that's the ultimate sort of expression of humble government.

There are academics working on this idea actually now about this notion of humble government and this sense that you can say, "We don't know the answer." That's very risky in different political environments. I would note that it's the Finnish government that's talking like this a completely different political setting. But I think the idea is interesting. It allows for some of the things that we spoke about. And David mentioned around changing, about being a bit iterative, changing our mind, taking on new information.

And I think, to me, that's been something that I've been really interesting to watch. This idea of, 'we're living in a much more complex world'. Obviously, it's characterised now by things everybody's got a name for it, by polycrisis, mega crisis, all interacting with each other at once. It's a complicated place. But within that, no one party is ever going to have the answer to everything. And there's a sort of sense, I think, particularly in this post-COVID world emerging, that humility can be a good friend to government. The sense that we will have to adapt, we won't always have the answer, and that working in a partnership model can help us to get at least some of the best possible responses.

And in the end, as David explained with the COVID experience, citizens expected government to be out front of that. They expected government to bring together all of the capabilities to be able to resolve that crisis. They weren't looking to other sectors to do that. They appreciated obviously that we drew on all the resources that we could across community sector, across the private sector, and across government. But there was an expectation, absolutely, that government led that. And that's the obligation that comes with that power.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

So it's interesting, this notion of humility, isn't it? Because can an organisation be humble or is it really the people who are inside those organisations who need to be humble and display humility?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

When you say, "can organisations be humble", it reminds me of the questions of, "can organisations trust each other?". And on the one hand, we sort of think they can. But really, they're made up of people, aren't they? And it's the human-to-human interaction that builds that trust across organisations and across sectors. We talk

about this idea of legitimate or highly trusted organisations, which David mentioned.

There that's built up over time, not by some weird legal entity, but by the actions of people who comprise those leaders in it. And so, I think it's really interesting question, where does trust come from? Where does humility come from? But it's expressed through the behaviours of members of that organisation. So, David mentioned the idea of public servants being much closer now to where sort of implementation happens. And that's been a lesson from COVID.

But that brings with it, I think, an obligation for that humility that we're not always going to have the answer. Usually, people living in their own community will know what needs to be done. And we're very happy to tell you if you've got the listening ears on. So, I think it's a combination. It becomes embedded in the routines and the culture of organisations, and you can structure and engage in things in different ways. And people talk a lot about co-design and co-production. But that brings with it a sense that people have to have the skills and capabilities to do that in different ways in partnerships.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

So, David, for you, the leading people and teaching people and showing people, how do you bring humility into your team?

DAVID PULLEN:

It's really hard because you have to be vulnerable. I think it goes back to that. So being really open when you don't know. Some of these big projects that I've led, it starts by sort of finding those key partners and you sort of jointly sharing the problem. And then you kind of in the boat on the journey together, earn the twists and turns. And so, I think if you're upfront at the beginning and then everyone's on board, you kind of share the journey together.

Janine's reflection around, I think it absolutely is the people. And I think if you have enough core of the people within the organisation that then creates the organisational culture, and the work that is being done around the values of the public service I think is really important because things like respect and trust, I think, a lot go to the humility point as well.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

Now a final question to both of you. And it really is about looking into the future and thinking about improvement, stronger partnerships, and looking from a public sector point of view, what we might be able to hope for, perhaps, dream for in terms of future behaviours around partnerships. David, I might start with you.

DAVID PULLEN:

Oh, sure. So, I think, firstly, more of them would be good because the ones that I've seen have largely worked pretty well. I think the

second point I'd make is that if some of them fail, generally that should be okay depending on the tolerance or risk and what the project is. So, I think more experimentation and learning. It's about the public service building its muscle and building APS capability in terms of how we do it.

And then I think the third point I'd make is the kind of more conscious decision making up front before launching a big project. Conscious decision making about how are we going to go about and do this? Are we going to do this through a partnership? Would that be beneficial? Or would some other form of model be beneficial, whether that be forms of consultation or collaboration? So that kind of really deliberative process rather than just, "Oh, let's do it the way we've always done it and we'll think about consultation at a later point." So yeah, more of them, more experimentation, and more deliberate decision making is what I think we should do.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And to you, Janine?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

I think the learning aspect is a really interesting one. So, thinking about what's worked and what hasn't in the past and sort of building in some feedback loops for that. Because it'll be no surprise, to anyone who listens to this who knows me, to say that we've been doing this for a long time and trying to launch big collaborative endeavours and partnerships and so on. And we keep coming back to some of the same questions. This is hard work. I've described it in an article I wrote as a hard grind. This is not you wake up tomorrow and we've got a partnership. This is iterative work over a long period of time.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And those barriers. To call them out, what are those barriers that you've running into time and time again in your research?

JANINE O'FLYNN:

Some of it is about what we call a supporting architecture. So for all of the goodwill of people who might want to build relationships and build trust, we do have some things hardwired into the way that we do government, whether it's programmatic styles of budgeting, whether it's the way that we do our performance management, which tends to be, not all the time, but in a fairly siloed way for good reason in the system that we work with. So, asking people to be able to buck against that in a sustained way over long periods of time is really too much. And we have to think about how we can adapt some of the architecture for different types of projects that we want to do.

We don't have to turn the whole thing down or burn it down, but there is opportunities and we've seen them work. And usually, they're operating outside of the normal way that we do things. So,

there's something in that magic of operating outside. Now we might not want to do that all of the time, but the experimentation is important. Building in the feedback loops for what worked is really important. So, we found a lot of it was in that supporting architecture, or what my good friend would call getting the plumbing right. And some of that is around really important things like budgets, performance management, how do we build our systems and structures to support that work.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

And David, perhaps a final word, given that you are sort of in the middle of some of those constraints. How do you manage those?

DAVID PULLEN:

I think as a senior leader now, particularly the Minister for Public Service has been pretty clear around her expectations on how the government wants to build public sector capability. And we've got a big agenda with PM&C, a new secretary position on public sector reform. So yes, there are some of those barriers in architecture that needs to be put in. But in the meantime, I think pretty clear message from the government that we need to be more focused on partnerships and the expectation that senior leaders just get on and do it.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

Well, Professor Janine O'Flynn and David Pullen, thank you so much for sharing your reflections on partnerships today. Common purpose, trust, vulnerability, time, respect, diversity, patience, experience, listening, humility. There's a lot to it. There's a lot to it. And really, it's about practice, I imagine, as much as anything else as really to start with the end in mind and really to move through those qualities to be able to achieve better outcomes ultimately for the Australian people. So, thank you so much for coming in today.

JANINE O'FLYNN:

Thanks for having me.

DAVID PULLEN:

Thanks, David.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

So, thanks very much. And again, thank you to Janine and to David for that fascinating conversation and very insightful conversation about the improvement of partnerships. And it's encouraging, isn't it, to see that it is a priority of the APS that the government is going to try to improve. It is going to improve, not try. It will improve these partnerships. So that's a great thing.

So, listen. Everybody, if you'd like to follow either contentgroup or IPAA ACT on LinkedIn, that would be great. Or email events@act.ipaa.org.au. If you have any thoughts about the programs or you'd like to ask a question or have any sort of insight. Work with Purpose is produced in collaboration with contentgroup and the Institute of Public Administration of Australia in the ACT,

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So, a big thanks again to David Pullen and Professor Janine O'Flynn for coming in today. My name is David Pembroke, and I'll be back at the same time in two weeks with another fascinating conversation. It's bye for now.

VOICEOVER:

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