

TRANSCRIPT OF EVENT

2023 Annual Address to the APS

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KATHERINE JONES PSM:

Welcome all to our event this evening. I am going to make an acknowledgment of country and I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here in the beautiful ACT, the Ngunnawal people and pay respects to their elders past and present and acknowledge their continuing connection to our country. I'd also like to acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are joining us here today. Without further ado, I'd like to introduce our keynote speaker, the Secretary of Prime Minister and Cabinet Professor Glyn Davis. I think I've got quite a long biography here, Glyn. I think everyone here very well knows Glyn, so I'm going to cut to the chase and welcome him to join us for his presentation. Thank you.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Katherine thank you very much and let me join you if I may, in acknowledging the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of these unceded lands and to recognise the many Aboriginal people with connections to the lands of the ACT and region. We are privileged to be on your country to benefit from your continuing culture and care in this community. As well as thanking Katherine, it's a delight to welcome back National President Andrew Metcalfe and to thank Wendy Cohen and the IPAA team for organising this event. And I want to start with a shout-out to the dedicated staff from across the Australian Public Service. There is so much good work underway and if you were here early, you may have seen the video from Services Australia that was playing as a group of Services Australia employees talked about the joy they get in helping others and the reward they find in making life better for others.

It's an inspiring message and I was very keen that it'd be there because I had the great privilege of spending some time at Services Australia earlier this year starting in a customer service centre in Woden and their very enthusiastic centre manager showed colleagues and I all the subtle design features of the centre that are designed to enhance service delivery. A very friendly meeting place to triage you when you walk in, computers on the left, if you need to do work, if you need to sort of follow up on things before you come back and offer to schedule appointments and to text you so that when it's your turn you can just turn up. And an office expressly designed to protect the privacy of people who are in distress all very nicely set up in the right colours and lovely pictures and just designed to be friendly.

People are there because they're in distress. They're there because they need benefits. They're there because something's not going right in their lives. And the people who've designed this have thought about every aspect of it and tried to make it as accessible as possible. And then behind the public area, a committed team working very long hours to look after those people and find solutions for them. I think for me, the only jarring note in the whole event was the security guard at the door. An unfortunate reminder that Services Australian offices are sometimes abused and threatened. And from the one centre, I went down to the Services Australia operations centre and there I saw how real-time data is collected across the country in these service centres and what's coming in on the computers and what's coming in on the telephones to construct a vivid moving national picture of current needs and concerns.

And this allows a swift response to fires and floods. It gives early warnings of emerging issues. It gives a real sense of local issues, local cues of delays, and it means the operations team can direct surge capacity to programs operating under stress knowing that every data point they're looking at is a real person, an urgent concern, a case needing attention. The Services Australia vision is to make government services simple so people can get on with their lives. And the team members that I met on those occasions were proud of the support that they provided every day to fellow citizens. And that team itself was an inspiring cross-section of Australia. It was diverse, it was experienced, it was committed and it was inventive. And here I thought as I walked around that operation centre is the future of the APS. A reminder of what is possible even a mid-year, which has included the Robodebt Royal Commission and consultancy scandals, and public sector code issues.

And as always, disappointing news must be met by action as we saw during 2023, a renewed commitment to integrity with the arrival of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, legislation to affirm core public service failures, and a truly excellent and I hope widely read APS Integrity Action Plan, which was developed by very talented cross-agency team and distributed widely. So, despite setbacks a year of quiet determined progress. This evening, I'm grateful for the invitation is a chance to reflect on where those changes take us. What is the journey for the Australian Public Service from here? If I think about our history, that recent history at least can be captured in the trajectory of a single agency. So, I want you to think for a minute about the Commonwealth Employment Service. A

timely case study given a report from the parliamentary review into Workforce Australia Employment Services released last Thursday following an extensive inquiry chaired by Julian Hill MP.

The CES started in 1946. It's part of the great post-war reconstruction. After the devastating experience of high unemployment during the Great Depression, the CES was designed to help employers find workers and to direct new migrants and returning defence personnel toward worthwhile jobs. Over the time the CES became a very familiar institution located in many Australian communities. And you probably recall those government issue counters the long lines of plastic chairs for clients, the cork boards with the pinned up neatly written notes with job vacancies on them. The CES became the way many Australians sought work and registered for unemployment benefits and public servants would stand behind a glass screen interviewing clients, outlining job opportunities, and helping them navigate the support system, which is what they were there for. There are obvious continuities with Services Australia. The CES interviewed the migrants within hours of them arriving in this country.

It helped to match skills with existing vacancies, it provided funds for people to travel to new workplaces. There was understandably pride in the service. There was an ABC Radio story, maybe it's a television story last year, which featured interviews with former CES offices here in Canberra and they recalled rushing down to Vinnies to buy up all the white shirts for clients who needed clothes for interviews and that's dedication, that's caring about people. Now we all know that working at the CES and certainly being a client was not always the happiest experience. The lines could be long, the paperwork could be frustrating, and the pickings could be slim, particularly in poorer communities during times of recession when the CES had very few jobs to offer. An extended downturn in the early 1980s provoked questions about whether the CES was still fit for purpose, whether it could work in the times.

I mean clearly, it was under-equipped and it was absolutely underfunded to deal with the reality of high and sustained unemployment at that moment. Job seekers now required training. They needed relocation, they needed wage subsidies to help find that elusive role in the economy and the CES was not able to do much of that. And this prompted a rethink on how employment services were offered and by whom. It was a time when some new ideas were taking hold, ideas that are now all too familiar. Ideas that all government

services needed better management and that some government services might be better run by private companies. Fans of Yes, Minister will recall Sir Arnold, the Cabinet Secretary, expressing his disdain for what he described as, "the whole squalid world of professional management." And yet corporate approaches to organisations were on the rise and they have shaped all our lives since.

That was a profound change in the 1980s, it still matters. Australia soon privatised a long list of public agencies, airlines, banks, phone services, employment services. The Commonwealth shed nearly a third of its full-time employees and for those agencies which remained, it was no longer assumed that public servants, Commonwealth public servants would deliver services, the role of the Commonwealth would often shift from service delivery to writing and supervising contracts and much direct service provision ended. Now citizens looking for employment would not see the CES they'd see a private provider who won the contract, the successful bidder.

Over time, two models of contracting emerged in the Commonwealth, basically fully outsourced and partially outsourced. So, disability and care, childcare for instance remained outsourced fully with funding and subsidies from the Commonwealth going to service providers. But aged care on the other hand remained mixed. Governments and private providers ran residential homes as they still do with government subsidies and capital grants. While the Commonwealth mainly funded home support and home care packages. Employment services were fully outsourced, albeit with a digital service for those most job ready. Last year the Commonwealth spent \$1.7 billion to deliver employment programs through third parties. The results were not always impressive. To quote the Select Committee report from last week, "It's harsh but true to say that Australia no longer has an effective coherent national employment services system. We have an inefficient, outsourced, fragmented social security compliance management system that sometimes gets someone a job against all odds."

Not a stunning endorsement I felt of the system. Now I think that the employment services story is a sort of microcosm of public service trends over the last 40 years. It's a story, brilliantly told by Mark Considine in his 2023 study of contracting, *The Careless State*. There have been benefits. Outsourcing introduced the APS to some cutting-edge technology and new ways of thinking about service delivery. Contracting at least promised an attractive alternative to those CES

counters and lines with more responsive systems and better value for money. But several decades on, the evidence is in about what the shift in service delivery meant because the costs of contracting have become more apparent over time. Many long-term unemployed still struggle to find jobs, the high churn in turnover. So, you get jobs, but short-term jobs, delivers a margin to the private providers but not necessarily fulfilling and reliable employment for Australians.

So, I think a new conversation has begun about the future of public administration of how services are understood and delivered. There are people calling for a return of the Commonwealth Employment Services, notably the CPSU with its Bring Back the CES campaign, but it's not just a local debate. There are analysts around the world who are arguing that the public choice paradigm for government has run its course. Even if the long-term replacement isn't quite clear, hasn't yet got a voice, hasn't yet got a name. But the future of public service delivery was one of several pressing topics that we explored this year as APS secretaries in a series of roundtables that involve different groupings of secretaries during the year and bringing together secretaries with people from industry and academia as we pondered the future of the Australian Public Service. In one of those roundtables in August was the Government Service Delivery roundtable and it mirrored this speculation about where is public administration going.

So, it tested the merits of government delivery versus private provision. It acknowledged that government isn't always an astute manager of contracts. We aren't necessarily good at that task. It wondered about the risk of multiple networks providing fragmentation and do clients get an integrated service. So, didn't just assume that government good, private provision bad it tried to say, what are the merits? What are the merits? How do you choose? The roundtable also looked at some interesting examples from around the world, the trends, and the changes. I'm going to pronounce this with shockingly... Namyangju City in South Korea, which I know you all know well is a poster child for hybrid social services. In 2010, what I'm now going to call The City created the Hope Care Centre. It's a one-stop shop for services from healthcare to legal aid to financial counselling. It's run by local government. It's staffed by an interesting mix of public servants and private providers who enjoy a high degree of autonomy in helping their clients.

And the centre offers a highly successful innovation in social service delivery and it's now being modelled across much of South Korea. In aged care, Sweden points to some interesting trends. With a strong focus on well-being and living at home the Swedish model is heavily subsidised, it's nationalised. Over 80% of care homes are run by local councils. Private providers are part of the system, but there's a high degree of transparency and accountability to taxpayers. And Denmark does childcare particularly well. It's mostly in-sourced. It's run again by local councils across the care and early childhood education system there are national standards, highly skilled staff, low staff-to-child ratios, and capped fees. And because it's so successful, the Danish childcare system enjoys bipartisan political backing and wide popular support. And these are just a handful of examples from different contexts. They don't necessarily translate into our place, but they do invite us to think about what else might work.

They remind us of there's no one right way to deliver services. We can learn from example; we can experiment with options. Knowing what works, not what the model says is what becomes important. There's a recent study by the UK Institute of Government about outsourcing. It looked at 40 years of outsourcing in the United Kingdom and it concluded, it's an interestingly mixed conclusion. It concluded that you could find meaningful economies and improvements in standardised services through contracting, particularly things like waste collection and cleaning where it is a better model than trying to do it through government. The same study found much more mixed results for frontline services when you privatise prisons and hospitals and employment services. It did find measurable gains in cost and service quality sometimes, but it also noted that much of these were achieved by pushing all the difficult cases back to the government services and the private provision of construction for government projects and the outsourcing of probation had been conspicuous failures.

That was a range of results from that. To quote the report, "Some of the people most in need in society, job seekers, benefits claimants, ex-offenders had been let down. Large contracts had gone wrong, badly wrong, resulting in significant overspend while a string of failures damaged public trust and led to calls to bring sways of services back in-house." And yet warrants the report I think carefully we must not draw the wrong conclusions from the record of the last 40 years. There is a case for governments to outsource if the

economics and the expertise and the technology all line up to deliver better services. It takes judgement and evidence to know when a service is best provided by government and when others are best placed to deliver. This is an argument for informed pragmatism over ideology. So, what does it mean? Where next for public administration? Now let me suggest a simple return to the past.

The changes of the past 40 years are too profound, too entrenched. The options open by technology and public expectations about what good service delivery looks like suggests that any future practise, our future practise will be a hybrid. I think a synthesis looms, there will be services as now for which government does rely on competitive markets and external advice. And I think too that the use of consultants will rebalance considering public opinion, but we in the APS will never retain all of the necessary expertise to do everything we want to do. We will draw on consultants. Buying skills for some tasks will continue to be the right choice. We have many great IT experts in government, but the reality of complex system design and implementation means that it's very unlikely to favour insourcing is the best way to do that. The key is the decision about when to go to market.

Evidence over four decades shows that outsourcing can be a valid choice, but it's not intrinsically a better choice. We might anticipate therefore a much broader mix of public and private provision funded by government, delivered by networks of government agencies of not-for-profit partners and sometimes private companies. And one expects these might form long-term alliances around shared program responsibilities with evaluation guiding further investment. This emerging public administration will pay close attention to private-sector innovation. And I saw this at Services Australia, which has learned a lot about online delivery from industry and from the states and territories which have often been in front of the Commonwealth in this area. It adopts those lessons to the better management of claims and benefits, which is great because better service remains a goal. It's not always the reality. We know the phone queues remain way too long yet the 2023... See people are ringing already.

The 2023 review of MyGov and the work underway on digital identity all point toward I think a much more citizen-centred service delivery and here the public sector can and does shine. Think of the extraordinary work of the Australian Tax Office to end the ritual of filling in complex taxation returns, which we just take for

granted. Pre-populating returns with indicative guides to deductions, which makes writing it, doing your taxing so much easier. We've just all taken it on board and forgotten about it and yet again, I've spent some time with the ATO and for all the right reasons in Sydney talking to their design team about how they did this and it's a very complex thing they've achieved, and they've implemented with remarkable little friction. It's an impressive piece of public service work of public service innovation and I think it offers us a glimpse of the future.

Yep, we're going to do lots of improvements on existing services because we can. It's also going to be this other new world that we're going to face and that's the world of place-based services, which requires very different structures and practises and accountabilities because a place-based approach asks the community to lead. It says it isn't government that makes these decisions, it's the community and government fall in behind the community and backs the community.

Well, that rhetoric sounds great until you think about the consequences for how we do accountability, how we account for our results, how we do our auditing, and yet it is clearly going to be an important part of the future and because it does things that fail elsewhere. There's a fabulous project in Burke in Western New South Wales that many people know about the Maranguka project where a group of Aboriginal people in the community decided they were sick of having the highest youth incarceration rates in New South Wales itself an achievement and they were going to do something about it and they led a program which they picked up from the United States called Just Reinvest, which said to the New South Wales government, we think we can make changes and we want you to commit that the savings you make will be reinvested in our community, Just Reinvest.

If we produce less crime you must guarantee to spend the money there. And the New South Wales government to their immense credit, agreed and backed the program. It has had extraordinary results because it allowed the community to face up to some difficult issues that were of its own making of which domestic violence was the key. And by facing up to that issue and by making changes they've halved the rate of domestic violence and the knock-on effects about kids going to school and not ending up on the streets has been remarkable. And in turn, it has produced the savings that the program promised, which is fabulous except it only works because the New South Wales government agreed not to lead but to follow.

Not to impose a standard public sector accountability over the top, but to put funds in and to let the community make decisions including make bad decisions. And it only works because suddenly the ministers don't get to stand up and announce a big investment or announce whatever it is they want and nor do departments. It works because it follows. That is going to be part of our future. It isn't going to be everything, but it's going to be a significant part of our future and none of our current systems are well geared to that. So, it is another part of where the public service is going to have to go. Government must learn how to follow and not to lead.

It's an approach that makes public servants truly servants of the public. Now it will not be simple to align a place-based citizen approach with traditional public service auditing, accounting, or results. Yet empowered communities provide a vital way to address consistent program failure as Burke showed. We'll never close the gap. If we imagine that public servants in Canberra think we can solve the housing, the health, the employment, the education challenges of Papunya in Central Australia. Again, as I experienced when visiting that community with colleagues from the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the women and men of Papunya have very clear ideas about what their community needs and they're frustrated by the lack of coordination between levels of government or as they see it all levels of government failing to listen to them about why getting the sewerage sorted out is really more important than building the houses because the houses can't connect to a system and this really matters.

They are ready to lead in Papunya. What they want is a say in local decisions, a voice even. A place-based approach calls into question much that we take for granted about public administration. It does ask us to think afresh. So, behind the headlines of 2023 is an important conversation about the future of the APS. It is a future with multitudes, some return to government-led service delivery, working alongside markets, delegation to communities, integrating services for citizens through technology, and all these trends happening at the same time. You can glimpse this emerging complexity in the new white paper Working Future: The Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities, which was published in September. It's the third white paper on employment in the history of the Commonwealth and the solutions it offers are so different from the previous two that you get a sense of how thinking has really shifted.

This latest white paper stresses all the policy variables that influence employment, economic foundations, industry policy, skills and trainings, migration, reducing barriers to working particularly for those who've experienced difficulties being heard. And the final chapter it turns to employment services and the role for government in helping Australians find work. The white paper urges lots of initiatives to help those with historic low participation and commits and I quote, "to apply place-based policy design best practises to employment programs." Here's the shift underway. A white paper which sets out a goal for employment policy, notes the complex interacting factors at play and begins to sketch a very different future, one in which government works simultaneously with its own agencies, with community, with private providers to help Australians create meaningful working lives. This is a vision very different from the Commonwealth Employment Service, yet it has the same goal, which is to help Australians into employment.

The white paper does not spell out how this aspiration will translate into programs. In a sense that's our responsibility, but it does seek a future in which services are available locally and online. They're ubiquitous and they're personal. Services flexible enough to evolve with the needs of an individual, services designed to build capacity and resilience in the individuals focused on the whole person grounded in community. Such an approach does not reject all that has gone before. It looks instead to integrate the experience of the past 40 years with opportunities provided by new technologies, by new ways of working. It builds on the hard work and commitment evidenced daily across the Australian Public Service. Here is our opportunity to support citizens through their lives in ways which resonate with enduring APS values, through services we already produce and those to follow a commitment to Australians, the APS will be proud to call our own. So, there is much to ponder and quite a bit to celebrate as this year concludes and even more to explore with relish in 2024. Thank you.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

Thanks very much. Glyn, I think through that address you've grappled with a range of significant historical trends that have influenced the way that we've gone about the business of delivering for the Australian community and supporting various governments in their approaches over the years. And I think it's helpful when we're perhaps a rethinking and a reconceptualization of how we can deliver public services and stepping back and thinking about how we've evolved is great and helpful. There are so many rich things to pick out there in terms of what you've raised.

But one question that I did want to ask to start off the conversation is getting you to reflect on the fact that you're a great student and thinker about public service and you've been outside the service looking in about the APS and how it operates and how it delivers. Now you're on the inside, you've been on the inside for what? 14, 15 months? About something like that.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Or longer.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

I just wonder whether you can reflect on comparing what you thought you were going to deal with when you were coming into the public service and what the reality has been and perhaps looking at both the positives and I hate to say this, but potentially the negatives and any reflections.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Katherine, thank you very much. Thank you all for listening. So, my first public service job at 22 was research grade one. Research assistant grade one in what was the Public Service Board working for a review of the Public Service, the read review. And the single thing that struck me most in that process and of which I was not prepared was how hard people worked. And I know that sounds absurd, but I worked in a review team that if we had to be there at 8:00 on a Friday night to finish that chapter so that the review board could have it, well, that's what we did. And 40 years later I find the same ethos. I find people work. It wasn't that generation or some previous far-gone era, it remains the case in lots of ways made necessary by 20 years of efficiency dividends and other cuts that have really thinned out lots of organisations.

But the dedication that I encountered as a 22-year-old I now encounter again and I'm delighted to see it. And in that sense, I was thrilled to find that it was still here. I didn't know. I had the great fortune of working on at various times on several reviews of the Commonwealth Public Service including the 2010 review that Terry Moran commissioned and then the 30 Review commissioned by Martin Parkinson and Prime Minister Turnbull where I got to work with my good colleague Gordon de Brouwer. And because we spent two years thinking about this and looking at the data and talking to lots of people, I guess less surprises than I expected. If you want the one big surprise it was that I'm in this job. I did not see that coming. That came out of the blue.

It was a phone call, an invitation, the chance to be part of seeing through this change I find an extraordinary privilege and worked hard over the last 18 months or so to make sure that not just the 30 recommendations but

all the things that have come up since because 30 reported in 2019 the world changes. Nonetheless, we worked our way systematically through those recommendations well most of which were rejected at the time. And there's a report that will appear on the APS website before the week is out that goes recommendation by recommendation through the 30 Review just to close that chapter and say here's how that was dealt with.

But the world has changed since then. And I guess the big experience in most people's lives since then is COVID and the way the Australian Public Service stepped up to deal with that was extraordinary. All we read was the criticism. All we experienced was just how well-run Australia was through that process in terms of Public Service delivery, capacity, expertise, mobilisation. It is a remarkable chapter for the APS and I'm delighted to come in at the end of it as people are beginning to reflect on what we learned and how that might change the future.

KATHERINE JONES PSM: Great, thank you. It's timely given the National cabinet is meeting tomorrow and-

GLYN DAVIS AC: My phone is over there buzzing somewhere about it. I know. Yeah.

KATHERINE JONES PSM: I can fully understand that. And you're going to be meeting with your fellow first secretaries later this evening.

GLYN DAVIS AC: 6:30. Yeah.

KATHERINE JONES PSM: So, feeling the pressure of that any reflections, and these are real time reflections then of working with the states and the territories to land significant national reform and dealing with the grave issues that are affecting Australian society today. So, there's a lot of pressure through trying to get the federation to work. You've been in Queensland government, you're now Secretary of PM&C. What reflections do you have and what guidance can you give the rest of us that are also grappling with the Commonwealth and the state relations?

GLYN DAVIS AC: I have a friend in Canada who's a political scientist and he says that if you put any Canadian up against a wall with a firing squad and say, "Is there any last request?" They'll say, "I'd like one more chance to discuss the Canadian constitution." And any public servant has dealt with federalism feels a bit the same. We wax and wane. It's hard to draw a line through the way the federation's changed and say it's a continuing process.

We have periods of remarkable achievement and then long periods where nothing happens. I had the pleasure in Queensland of being in one of those periods of change when we did national competition policy and COVID shift to COAG from the Premiers' Conference. Famously at the Premiers' Conference, you'd get the offer from the Commonwealth would be slid under the door at 9:00 so that you could turn up the next morning to be told what the Commonwealth is going to do for you or to you.

And in the 1990s that shifted through COAG to a more collaborative process. It shifted back in the 2000s. I'd like to think it's gone. We've tried very hard my colleagues and I to make it a much more collaborative process as you say, and I was head of the Queensland Premiers' Department, so I'm now the poacher. The gamekeeper having been the poacher because we used to conspire as states about how we could do the Commonwealth over as the states are doing right now at the Hyatt Hotel trying to work out how to position themselves for tomorrow morning. That's a ritual that has nearly a century of behaviour behind it but in a sense it's good-natured and it's necessary. Nobody will write the constitution we have if you get a chance to rewrite it, but you must make it work. And that's what the federation tries to do and that's what these intergovernmental processes are trying to do.

And so there are very good connections. I mean I meet monthly with the first secretaries across the nation. If I go into any of their jurisdictions, we get together and have lunch or dinner and talk about what they're doing. And that's a long tradition. It's not just previous secretaries have done that and done it well. When I was in Queensland, the states to my chagrin elected me as the negotiator with the Commonwealth, which is a formal role, which meant once a month I would fly from Brisbane to Canberra with my list of things I needed to raise and I would have a 10:30 appointment with one Max Moore-Wilton and he would have his list and we would spend an hour and a half in robust conversation and if I had been a good boy, I would be taken to lunch across the road in the carriage on where Max would regale me and the entire restaurant with wonderful stories about the Public Service.

And if I had been not helpful, I would be sent back to the airport to sit there till 4:00 when the next flight would take me back to Brisbane. I'd like to think that we'd moved on a little since then, but that was the tradition of how intergovernmental relations worked. All the pairs with the Commonwealth because it controls the money and if you're a state, you resent being a

mendicant and you resent not having control over your own income in the sense you are reliant on the Commonwealth.

One of the important changes of that came through National Cabinet and has endured is that states and territories can now put things on the agenda. In the Max Moore-Wilton era, we were expressly banned from raising any topic on the agenda. We responded to the Commonwealth's agenda, but it wasn't a conversation amongst equals, it was very much something else. I'd like to think it's different now and has been for a while. I think COAG reminded us that you can't run the country from Canberra. That key variables belong to the states, territories and they have legitimate interests too and it has changed the federation and that's probably a good thing.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

Right. Thank you. I've probably got time for just a couple, one or two questions, so I'm going to throw it open to the floor. I can see the National President. He's gone hard and fast, so I'm going to hand to him.

ANDREW METCALFE:

Thanks, Katherine. I'll be very quick. I just wanted to congratulate you on your speech, wonderful analysis, but it's great to see a Secretary of PM&C talk about the commitment to service of frontline staff in social services, in Services Australia, in the tax office, and whatever. But I particularly picked up the microphone because my dad worked for the Commonwealth Employment Service for many, many years until he retired in 1976. So, he's smiling at you now in using that example. And it was a place-based solution. As a child walking down Rutherford Street, Toowoomba it was a long walk if you were with dad because he'd either got everyone their first job or he ran into businesses who he'd helped place people and, in the towns, and communities around Australia, the CES was one of the absolute core institutions, part of the glue of the community. So, thanks for talking about it.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Thank you. Thank you very much. That's the point. Yeah.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

I've got a question just there; we've probably got time for that.

MELISSA COADE:

Hi, Professor Davis, Melissa Coade from The Mandarin. You referred to the challenge of this sort of transforming Public Service, which was more place-based and citizen-centric being auditing and sort of performance management. We have various trust checks in terms of how the public perceive the APS. How do you envisage the APS will track its

performance against public sentiment? Will that become more rigorous as part of this transformation?

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Well, thank you and I didn't mean to imply that we couldn't do auditing, that it was impossible. On the contrary, we are going to find ways to do it. It just changes how we currently do it and what we currently measure. The Maranguka process uses a five-year evaluation to say are we hitting the goals? So, it's got goals and outcomes that are quite specific and they're around crime rates and incarceration and the things that the project is about. And in a sense that allows the New South Wales government to decide about whether it's getting value from money against the goals that are agreed with the community.

But it's a very different approach from cabinet agreeing here are our goals and then we measure against those, we provide neat reports against those. Community led just requires us to think differently about what we value, how we measure it, and then how we can assure the public a trust question that they are getting value for money in what now unconventional ways of processing are, of proceeding but within time I think become just a very familiar part of a broader spectrum of how the Public Service works.

These are not insurmountable problems, they're just interesting challenges we're now going to need to address and they're quite exciting to address because we can do something different and something valuable and we're not taking away that we're adding and expanding the ways we might think about what we do as government. Those community projects are enormously exciting to get near when you see the enthusiasm and the commitment and the way they bring people in and change communities. They're great. One of the classics is the Doveton project in Melbourne and its only problem was it was so successful that property prices in the suburbs started to rise because it'd made it a lot more desirable place than the people who were renting started to get pushed out. The sort of perverse outcomes of success. But there's lots to learn from these projects and lots we're going to do into the future. I'm excited to be a part of this.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

I think I'm going to get in trouble if I go to another question.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

I can do one.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

One more super quick.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

The secretaries will appreciate the wait.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

David Pembroke host of Work with Purpose, but also the CEO of Contentgroup. Paul Keating had that great saying about self-interests. At least it's trying and this is a very self-interested question. Your comments about consultants and contractors, could I suggest that that's a softening that you've produced this afternoon? Because it's certainly different to a lot of the sentiment and language in the market about the use of consultants and contractors in Canberra now.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Yeah. Whether it's a softening because it depends on what you're taking as the base assumption here. If you're taking it as newspaper coverage, it might be quite different from policy coverage. The Commonwealth did not stop hiring consultants in whole ranges of areas. It became more cautious about them, and it started to ask, is this an appropriate use of public money? In a way that I imagine most people would find refreshing and worthwhile. But we didn't there wasn't a time since the PwC scandal and all of that where we haven't seen consultants and all of those tend to be about management and policy consultants.

But you think about everything from HR through IT through we are going to go on using consultants because they bring in expertise that we either can't afford to hire into the Public Service, or it doesn't make sense because we don't have enough use of them, but I think we're going to see a rebalancing and that is my view. Now, I'm not speaking for the government, I'm speaking as part of the APS and I'm telling, well, I think it's going to happen. I might be wrong. Our government may have a different view, but I think that it's a reasonable expectation that we're just going to find a new equilibrium and I'm not unhappy with that. That's a good outcome.

KATHERINE JONES PSM:

Okay. Glyn, I can tell you are quite sanguine about keeping the first secretaries waiting, but as someone who's got an interest in one of the agenda items, I'm anxious and I want to get you there. So, I will say, look, on behalf of everyone, thank you. Thank you for the address and thank you for your frank comments. I'd now like to invite Gordon de Brouwer to come to the stage to provide some closing remarks.

GORDON DE BROUWER PSM:

Thank you very much Katherine, and interesting to see your negotiating strategy, Glyn. That's been very instructive because we'll use that in Secretaries Board. So, my comments really are just again, just to thank you and I've got two sets of thanks, and we can do one set of applause at the end, but two sets of thanks. One is to you Glyn; the Secretary of PM&C is addressed to the Public Service hosted by IPAA is important and I

want to thank you and congratulate you on the address you've given. It gives us a lot of material to go back to. So, it also reflects your own leadership very much, I think. What it reflects is on a conceptual focus on substance and informed by evidence. It's grounded deeply in the way organisations run and operate and it's always empathetic. That is, it's focused on people and that's what we're all about. We're all about people and that's your leadership style, but it's also reflected very much in the message around where we've been as a public service and where we're going. So, I wanted to say on behalf of everyone here, thank you.

GLYN DAVIS AC:

Thank you.

GORDON DE BROUWER PSM:

The other thank you is going to be to IPAA. This is an event hosted by IPAA. IPAA for the Australian Public Service is kind of like a first cousin in thinking around the nature of public administration and public and government. So IPAA's one of our first cousins and a deeply loved first cousin and very close to-

GLYN DAVIS AC:

No. We're not going to marry her.

GORDON DE BROUWER PSM:

No, we're not going to marry. No, no, not going to do that for him. And we have other first cousins like I think ANZSOG, Sir Roland Wilson's Scholars, and Pat Turner. Even ANU is the only PGPA ACT entity university. They're all our first cousins and wanted to say thank you very much. And we can't, frankly, I think for the Australian Public Service, we can't work too closely with our first cousins. So, I'd really reach out if there are things we can do. There's always lots of things we can do and frankly, there's a lot to do and the Public Service Commission or the Public Service can't do it all itself. And our first cousins are important. So, I wanted to say thank you, Katherine, as the president of ACT, Wendy, for you and your team and what you've done and the National President Andrew as well. Thank you for your role in public service. So please join with me now in thanking Glyn and the team.