

Charter for The Centre for Excellence in Public Sector Design

Australian Public Service

VISION

The Centre for Excellence in Public Sector Design (the Centre) will assist the Australian Public Service (APS) to meet the challenges of delivering innovative, practical solutions to today's complex problems and to explore new methods in solution formulation, development and delivery. The Centre will inspire creativity, innovation and a more citizen-centric approach through consultation, collaboration and co-design.

The pilot Centre will build innovation capability in the APS and provide for better outcomes through applied problem solving, including at the interface between the APS, other jurisdictions and providers, and the users of services.

PURPOSE

The Centre is an exciting new concept to enhance the ability of the APS to better respond to the challenges of the 21st Century. Design thinking is a methodology for developing practical, creative solutions to problems or issues, which will provide better outcomes. It is a key element in enhancing public sector innovation.

The Centre is a collaborative pilot initiative running for a period of up to 18 months. It will undertake two to three projects that are:

- Customer-facing and user-centric in nature
- Of strategic significance and not readily undertaken within the normal operations and existing processes of government
- Cross-cutting or multi-portfolio in scope and of central interest to several departments, and
- Would benefit from new thinking, in particular a design thinking approach.

The Centre will be closely connected to and focused on the needs of the APS but sufficiently independent to be able to develop and test new approaches free from the normal public service constraints. The work of the Centre will be at arm's length from government, who can accept or reject all or part of the outputs produced.

The Centre will build links with other like organisational units within and external to the APS and build networks with other like-minded groups. The Centre will play a strong advocacy role for design thinking and innovation in the public sector.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the pilot will focus on:

- Demonstrating proof-of-concept (or otherwise) of such a cross-APS capability and the beneficial role it can play in aiding public sector innovation
- Demonstrating the potential for application of design thinking across the experience of the APS (e.g. policy, operational, service delivery)
- Developing networks and increasing capability for design thinking and innovation within the APS.

Ultimately the objectives of a centre such as the Centre are that it will work to:

- Develop and test new approaches to complex policy challenges and enhance government program delivery so as to build agency and institutional capability for collaboration and innovation
- Apply and test tools/processes and bring new skills to support innovation in the APS in a physical and virtual 'safe' space for public policy and delivery departments, agencies and stakeholders to collaborate with each other
- Capture, synthesise and disseminate examples of best practice in Australia and overseas through a range of means including building strong domestic and international networks
- Respond to citizen demand for responsive and innovative services
- Design cost effective, innovative solutions that deliver bottom line benefits
- Identify options for the development of a longer-term strategy for incorporating such problem solving approaches into the work of the APS.

These larger and longer-term objectives should influence the conduct of the pilot, though not be held as reportable aims. While these longer term objectives are more relevant to an on-going Centre, they do provide strategic direction for the pilot and are included for that purpose.

COLLABORATION

The Centre will seek to work closely and jointly with APS departments and agencies, engage with the States and Territories, relevant academic centres and not for profit institutes, the business sector and international counterparts.

The Centre will focus on APS issues but with a view to how such a capability might be of value if the pilot is deemed successful and its remit is expanded to cover the Australian public sector more broadly.

The Centre will ensure it stays at the leading edge of thinking and world best practice and contribute to the best practice by publishing and regularly reporting on its work.

CENTRE STRUCTURE

The Centre is a collaborative pilot initiative involving several APS agencies and will run for a period of up to 18 months, starting mid-2012.

The Centre will be supported by participating organisations - support may be financial and/or in-kind:

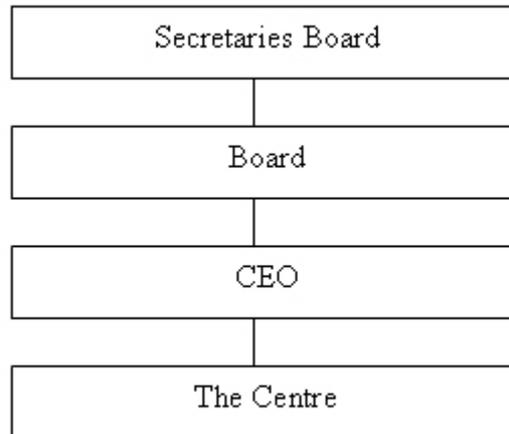
- Australian National University
- Australian Taxation Office
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional resources may be provided by further agencies as the pilot progresses, either as general support or towards specific projects or work being undertaken by the Centre. Such additional contributions will be managed by the CEO and the Board.

The Centre will be located at the Australian National University.

MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE CENTRE

The Centre will be managed by a CEO. The operations of the Centre will be overseen by a high-level Board. In turn, the Secretaries Board will endorse the proposed projects, receive reports on project outcomes and consider an evaluation of the value of the Centre pilot and whether/how it should continue.



BOARD STRUCTURE AND ROLE

The strategic direction, priorities and overall budget of the Centre will be set and monitored by a Board comprising an independent chair, nominees of the APS Secretaries Board, and other members to ensure the requisite mix of skills and experience, including expertise in innovation and design thinking.

Projects

Projects to be investigated will be identified by the CEO in consultation with the Board and endorsed by the Secretaries Board. Projects will be appropriate to the purpose of the Centre and be suitable for the timeframe and capabilities of the pilot phase.

Board Profile

The Board will consist of 7 members including:

- One non-government member with relevant experience to government, who is to be the Chair of the Board
- Three Departmental Secretaries
- One member from the General Government Sector
- One external member and
- The CEO.

Board responsibility

- The Board will meet quarterly and undertake out of session work if needed
- Work with the CEO and APS leaders in selection of appropriate projects

- Ensure the proper and efficient performance of the functions of the Centre
- Act as champions for the work of the Centre
- Approve the key operational matters such as the strategic direction for the Centre, overall budget, and the Key Performance Indicators
- Oversee the work of the Centre
- Report to the Secretaries Board on the work of the Centre.

The Board has the power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its responsibilities. The Board is the primary vehicle for ensuring the Centre is accountable to the Government for its performance. In fulfilling its role, the Board will work with and through the CEO while retaining full accountability for the governance of the Centre.

The Chair is appointed by the Secretaries Board and is responsible for:

- Chairing Board meetings
- Providing the appropriate leadership to the Board and the Centre
- Facilitating Board discussions to ensure the core issues facing the Centre are addressed
- Maintaining a close relationship with the CEO
- Liaising with the Secretaries Board to ensure the work of the Centre remains focussed and relevant to the needs of the APS
- Ensuring that a performance agreement is in place with the CEO and that it is reviewed by the Board on an annual basis.

Board members are encouraged to question, request information, raise any issue which is of concern to them, fully canvas all aspects of any issue confronting the Centre and cast their vote on any resolution according to their own judgment.

Outside the boardroom, Board members should support the letter and spirit of Board decisions.

Board members must keep confidential Board discussions, deliberations and decisions which have not been publicly disclosed by the Centre.

Board members must:

- Discharge their duties in good faith and honestly in the best interests of Centre and for a proper purpose
- Act with required care and diligence, demonstrating commercial reasonableness in their decisions and with the level of skill and care expected of a Board member
- Avoid conflicts of interest - including being alert to potential conflicts of interest and not vote on or participate in discussion of matters where the Board member (or the member's associates) have a material or personal interest in the matter
- Not make improper use of information gained through their position as a Board member
- Not take improper advantage of their position as a Board member and
- Make reasonable enquiries to ensure that the Centre is operating efficiently, effectively and legally towards achieving its goals.

The Board, with the exception of CEO, will provide their services in kind. Non public sector members will receive a per diem to cover expenses consistent with relevant Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal determinations.

Board voting rights

All Board members will have equal voting rights. A quorum will be formed when four members are present at a meeting.

Board members that have disclosed a material conflict of interest must leave the room and not vote on any issue for which they have a disclosed interest.

THE CEO'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The CEO will manage the establishment and day to day operation of the Centre and work proactively with senior decision makers within the APS, including Portfolio Secretaries and their representatives, in agreeing on design projects and building support for the Centre through demonstrated value creation.

Key responsibilities for the CEO will include:

- Strategic planning and guiding the strategic direction of the Centre in consultation with the Board
- Working with the Centre's Board and APS leaders to identify and prioritise appropriate projects for the pilot phase
- Developing and gaining approval by the Centre's Board for Key Performance Indicators and the process by which the Centre's pilot phase will be evaluated
- Management of selected pilot projects and achievement of tangible outcomes
- Financial management and accountability for a budget approved by the Board and day-to-day management of the Centre, its staff, consultants and contractors
- Liaison across Federal Government Departments and building understanding and support for the work of the Centre
- Collaboration across Government, Industry, Universities, Research and Non Government Organisations
- Building and maintaining effective networks
- Ensuring that lessons learnt through the work of the Centre are captured and shared across the APS.

OUTPUTS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The specific outputs and key performance indicators for the Centre will be developed by the CEO for consideration, and agreement to, by the Board with reference to the following material.

Outputs

The outputs of the Centre should be of demonstrated practical value to addressing Government policy, administration or service delivery challenges. They should clearly demonstrate the added value of design thinking and innovation.

Publication of the Centre's work should be driven by needs and the degree of sensitivity of the projects undertaken but recognise that there is a major public interest in transparency, reporting and dissemination of knowledge and best practice. Outputs could include internal reports to departments and government, papers published in professional or academic literature, or knowledge and know-how disseminated through seminars, workshops, conferences, blogs or other social media.

The Centre may deal with the full scope, or with different dimensions of, a problem and solution depending on need. For example, it could be commissioned to workshop, prototype and test certain ideas; it might work on a more complex problem that requires the development of new methodologies; it may need to undertake qualitative research, test and advocate for changed approaches; and so on.

It is crucial to strengthening the innovation performance of the APS that the Centre works collaboratively with departments and agencies and that APS capability building and knowledge transfer to departments is a central output of its work.

Key performance indicators

High level performance indicators will be:

- The extent to which the Centre's work contributes to more innovative, efficient, effective and appropriate outcomes as assessed by collaborating departments and end users
- The degree to which the Centre contributes to more innovative approaches and culture within the APS as assessed by the Australian Public Service Commission's annual State of the Service Report and/or the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education's annual report to the Secretaries Board on public sector innovation.

OPERATIONS POST-PILOT PHASE

The Centre will be evaluated and recommendations made as to whether or how the Centre should continue post-pilot phase. The nature and conduct of the evaluation shall be determined by the Board in consultation with the CEO, but will have due regard to the experimental and pilot nature of the Centre.

The timing and nature of the evaluation should be done in a manner that allows for the continuation of the Centre with minimal disruption to staff and operations, if that is the assessment of the evaluation and subsequently agreed course of action.

The final decision regarding an ongoing role for the Centre, or alternate course of action, will be made by the Secretaries Board.

EARLY TERMINATION OF THE CENTRE

Given the experimental nature of the Centre, it may be determined that the Centre should cease operations and be wound up prior to the end of the 18 month pilot phase. In this eventuality the Board will make a determination and recommend the appropriate action to the Secretaries Board.