

SPEECH

Ms Renée Leon PSM

Secretary of the Department of Employment

All-staff address

including a panel discussion on

Innovative Service Delivery in the Digital Age

2pm, Thursday, 19 November 2015

Ground floor meeting rooms

12 Mort St

Acknowledgements

- Karen Middleton, MC
- Paul Shetler, CEO of Digital Transformation Office
- Dr Hugh Bradlow, Chief Scientist for Telstra Corporation

Before I start, I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay respect to their elders, past, present and future.

I would also like to extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are present or watching the live stream.

Good afternoon and welcome to everyone here in the room and watching online.

This is an exciting event — for at least two reasons:

- We are approaching the end of another successful year, with a solid record of achievement which prepares us well for further progress next year.
- And we are doing something different today, with a timely panel discussion among experts about innovative service delivery in the digital age.

2015 in review

2015 has been a year of impressive achievements across the Department.

As a few highlights, we have:

- welcomed a new Minister
- delivered the huge project that is jobactive, and are rolling out other employment services programmes very successfully,
- and supported Fair Work legislative amendments through the Senate, as well as reform of the Commonwealth workers' compensation scheme, working closely with Comcare.

Also, the Capability Review conducted by an independent team from the Australian Public Service Commission awarded us a high rating.

On the people front, we have further defined and embedded our culture, with strong, effective and consistent leadership.

I particularly pay tribute to Deputy Secretaries Sandra Parker and Martin Hehir for the leadership they have continued to demonstrate this year.

My overall sense is we have ended the year with a stronger reputation across government, and with our partners, than last year.

Shaping the future as thought leaders

That's good news, because we have a challenging programme of work to deliver next year and beyond.

Our new Prime Minister and Minister are fully supportive of us innovating to find the very best ways to support the nation in our areas of responsibility for employment, workplace relations and workplace health and safety.

The Government has also begun to prepare next year's Budget, and we are considering the development of policies and programmes that match the needs of current employers and job seekers, and even anticipate their future needs.

The establishment of the Digital Transformation Office is an important enabler of innovation in government services, confirming that this Department and the Australian Public Service as a whole must now step up in terms of digital information and service delivery.

The top-level support for the DTO's work means there are really no more excuses possible in terms of providing seamless and efficient services from Government.

All these factors combine to deliver unique opportunities and challenges at this particular time.

We have the ear of the Minister and the broader Government in terms of policies and programmes to deliver what the Government wants and the community expects in terms of high-quality advice, programme design and implementation.

It is up to us to deliver — new ideas and innovative services — and do it all as efficiently as possible.

This is where the opportunity to improve our standing as a thought leader comes into its own.

The recent APSC Capability Review concluded there is more we can do as a thought leader in the economic and social space in which we deliver our employment and workplace relations policies and programmes.

By thought leadership, I mean actively sharing and disseminating our views and expertise so we are positively influencing and supporting the economic and social progress of the nation, as well as purposefully shaping our own future as an organisation.

Thought leaders offer innovative and forward thinking views and ideas that are implemented by connecting and collaborating with stakeholders.

Thought leaders also seek opportunities for proactive collaboration which can lead to better results – and transformational change – for the community.

I ask all employees of the Department, from today, to consciously begin a new era in our thought leadership activities and engagement with others.

This is not as daunting as it may seem.

To help, I am pleased to launch today an On Target note giving further detail about thought leadership as it applies to our work, with copies available here and on the intranet.

And through our Strategic Plan we are already innovating across four themes of delivery, collaboration, people and being forward-looking.

As a Department, we have a wealth of expertise and unique labour market and other data which we publish or share in different ways, and have of course recently appointed the inaugural Data Champion, Debbie Mitchell.

And we are implementing our freshly minted Innovation Framework, to support everyone in embedding innovation into all our work activities.

We also place emphasis in our work on making Indigenous business everyone's business and supporting people with disability, which are important priorities for the Government across all portfolios.

There are specific research and evaluation projects underway, auspiced by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and we are undertaking our own exploration of how we can forecast the future of work.

Innovative service delivery using digital capabilities is a crucial component of these new approaches.

We should be mindful the digital offering by the Department and the Government is constantly being accessed by people familiar with using a smartphone for banking, and knowing precisely when the next bus is arriving on a wintery Canberra evening.

There is clearly much more we can do as a Department in this area of innovative service delivery.

The good news again is that the Department is already heavily involved in the digital transformation agenda.

jobactive was launched with significant digital innovations, with more in the pipeline.

The Shared Service Centre is in itself an exciting innovation in this space, and is also a leading source of innovation in service delivery.

As you know, the SSC manages the “back office” activities of its customers, allowing them to focus on their core business, also providing valuable economies of scale.

This is a highly-valued service, underscored by the fact even the Digital Transformation Office is one of the SSC’s clients.

Nevertheless, the reality is we have a long journey ahead of us in terms of innovative service delivery using digital and other approaches.

That's why we have the panel discussion today and the opportunity to hear from two leading experts who can help us to understand and shape our future path.

Our MC, Karen Middleton, is of course very aware of the needs, expectations and aspirations of the community, as well as working every day at a high level in the government, industry and community environment in which the Department also operates.

Thank you to all three for joining us today and helping us to commence a new era in thought leadership and innovative service delivery in the Department of Employment.

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