PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

Delivering front line services needs to be our priority. The reforms I am announcing today are part of that process and will deliver real cost savings that can be allocated in direct public service delivery for Queensland taxpayers. They will also help create a more modern, efficient and effective public service.

Source: Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland, 2008[4]

This chapter explores the purpose and current implementation status of key reform initiatives in the QPS, including the government's vision for the state to the year 2020, structural reform of government to improve service delivery, and new administrative arrangements to support improved agency efficiency and performance. It also examines measures that will be taken in the future to improve performance in some of those areas which require a stronger focus. While there have been a number of recent key reforms relating to integrity and accountability, these are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

Introduction

On 12 March 2008, the Premier announced a suite of wide-ranging reforms aimed at improving public sector performance. The five reforms included the establishment of the PSC, the creation of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), the introduction of a productivity dividend, establishment of an expenditure review committee, and a review of all government boards and statutory bodies. These reforms became part of a broader platform for improved efficiency, more integrated service delivery and better prioritisation of resources by agencies that has fundamentally changed the structure and operations of Queensland Government departments.

Considered in an international context, the changes implemented in Queensland since March 2008 are not unusual. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

4   Bligh, A. 2008, *Record of Proceedings (Hansard)*, Wednesday 12 March 2008, p. 712,
     http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/hansard/

notes that countries are establishing frameworks for the management of public servants that not only encourage confidence in government, but also efficiency, productivity and effectiveness.[5]

This focus on improved public sector performance can be seen nationally in the recent review of the APS. The review's independent advisory group prepared a blueprint, *Ahead of the Game*. The report sets out a range of recommendations to drive improvement in key areas, such as delivering better services for citizens, creating more open government, enhancing policy capability, improving strategic leadership, and improving agency efficiency and effectiveness.[6]

The reform priorities identified in the review of the APS are remarkably similar to those already in progress in Queensland. Importantly, the Queensland Government has made significant progress in implementing its reform agenda in the areas of improved openness and transparency, more integrated service delivery and streamlined government structures.

A focus on strategic outcomes: Toward Q2

On 8 September 2008, the government launched a new vision for the state, *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*.[7] The plan describes five ambitions to make Queensland:

- Strong – creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas
- Green – protecting our lifestyle and environment
- Smart – delivering world-class education and training
- Healthy – making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people, and
- Fair – supporting a safe and caring community.

Each of the five ambitions has two long-term measurable targets (see Figure 1), which address major challenges such as hospital waiting times, economic growth, climate change, entrenched disadvantage and preventable disease. The targets are aspirational in intent, and cannot be achieved through 'business as usual' approaches. Each target is supported by a Target Delivery Plan, which sets out the contributions of the relevant government agencies in achieving the target. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) reports annually on progress against the targets, and new performance information is published on the Toward Q2 website as it becomes available.

A number of the targets have a strong community component. Achieving these targets will require the assistance of industry, business, non-government organisations, local governments and the community. To do this, the Queensland Government has established two programs to encourage and guide involvement:

- The Q2 Partners program was created to acknowledge the shared responsibility in achieving Toward Q2 targets. Current partners include the Australian Industry Group, the Heart Foundation, Green Cross Australia, Volunteering Queensland and the Local Government Association of Queensland.[8] A full list of Q2 Partners is available from the Toward Q2 website at www.towardQ2.qld.gov.au.

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5   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2008, *The State of the Public Service*, OECD, Paris, p. 9.

6   Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration 2010, *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, http://www.dpmc.gov.au

7   The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2008, *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, http://www.towardq2.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx

8   The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2010, 'Q2 Partners', http://www.towardq2.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/q2_partners.aspx

- The MyQ2 website (www.myq2.com.au) is a social networking site that personalises the targets and inspires and encourages people to create a strong, smart, green, healthy and fair Queensland. It allows people to choose how they contribute to the targets by signing up to simple commitments and tracking their progress.

The five ambitions guide the strategic planning of government, with each department linking its strategic plan to the relevant ambitions. This approach provides a common frame for cross-agency collaboration, and helps imbue an awareness of the ambitions within departmental business areas.

FIGURE 1: TOWARD Q2: TOMORROW'S QUEENSLAND — TARGETS FOR 2020

Strong	• Queensland is Australia's strongest economy, with infrastructure that anticipates growth • Increase by 50 per cent the proportion of Queensland businesses undertaking research and development or innovation
Green	• Cut by one-third Queenslanders' carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use • Protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation
Smart	• All children will have access to a quality early childhood education so they are ready for school • Three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications
Healthy	• Cut by one-third obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure • Queensland will have the shortest public hospital waiting times in Australia
Fair	• Halve the proportion of Queensland children living in households without a working parent • Increase by 50 per cent the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers

Source: The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2008, *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, p. 8, http://www.towardq2.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx

Structural reform: the streamlining of government

In the public interest: a review of government bodies

An independent review of Queensland Government boards, committees and statutory bodies was undertaken by Ms Simone Webbe and Professor Pat Weller AO between July 2008 and March 2009. The purpose of the review was to "reduce bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape; improve the overall efficiency of government bodies; and maintain the integrity and security of necessary regulatory functions".[9]

The review covered 459 government bodies and made 210 recommendations. A total of 177 recommendations were accepted by the government, with 103 bodies to be abolished and a further 81 subject to governance changes or pending other changes.

The government also accepted the review's governance decision-making framework, the Public Interest Map, which has an underlying principle that the establishment of a separate government body should only occur if it is in the public interest to do so. This would be determined by a public interest case identifying:

- whether there is any compelling reason why a department cannot or should not undertake the proposed activity, and
- if not, what is the most suitable non-departmental government form, in the public interest.[10]

This Public Interest Map allows the structures and functions of government to be considered consistently and transparently.

Combining people and performance: the creation of the Public Service Commission

The PSC was established on 1 July 2008. It replaced two organisations, the former Office of the Public Service Commissioner and the former Service Delivery and Performance Commission.

The amalgamation of the two bodies was designed to combine the expertise in human resource management and organisational performance and achieve greater efficiencies.[11] The PSC is supported by a Board of Commissioners, whose membership is drawn from business, academia and government.

The key functions of the PSC under section 46 of the PS Act are to:

- enhance the public service's human resource management and capability
- promote the management and employment principles
- conduct commission reviews
- develop and implement public service-wide workforce management strategies
- together with other relevant departments, consider improvements in the performance of departments through remuneration and conditions of employment

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9   Webbe, S. and Weller, P. 2009, *Brokering Balance: A Public Interest Map for Queensland Government Bodies: An Independent Review of Queensland Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities*. Part B Report, p. 268, http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/government/boards-committees/review.aspx

10 Webbe, S. and Weller, P. 2009, *Brokering Balance: A Public Interest Map for Queensland Government Bodies: An Independent Review of Queensland Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities*. Part B Report, p. 6 (Appendix A), http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/government/boards-committees/review.aspx

11 Bligh, A. 2008, 'Premier announces public sector reform initiatives', 12 March 2008, http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/index.aspx

- facilitate the purposes of the chief executive and senior executive services and the position of senior officer
- advise the minister about the need for commission reviews about particular matters
- promote a culture of continuous improvement and organisational performance management across all public service offices, and
- provide a best practice advisory role on public service management, organisational performance management and workforce practices.

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

One of the most significant structural reforms of the Queensland Government has been the establishment of QCAT. The independent body commenced operation on 1 December 2009, following the amalgamation of 23 separate tribunals and bodies. QCAT offers a single gateway for members of the community to seek decisions on civil and administrative matters and seek reviews of government decisions. The size of the change is such that it "represents the most significant structural reform to Queensland's justice system in 50 years."[12]

QCAT makes decisions on a wide range of matters including (but not limited to) anti-discrimination matters, matters affecting children and young people, guardianship, residential and retail tenancy disputes, business regulation matters, and debt, consumer, building and minor civil disputes. QCAT also reviews a range of decisions previously reviewed by the Supreme Court, District Court, Magistrates Court and other statutory bodies.

Machinery of government changes for improved service delivery

Following the state election in March 2009, significant new machinery of government changes were announced. The changes saw a reduction in the number of departments, from 23 to 13. The new arrangements will deliver a number of benefits, including:
- more integrated service delivery
- increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- more durable structural design, where departments can report to multiple ministers across a range of issues, irrespective of whether ministerial responsibilities change, and
- greater flexibility to respond to changing circumstances.

Under the new arrangements, ministerial portfolios are no longer aligned with departmental structures. This matrix approach allows ministerial portfolios to change over time, but avoids the need for disruptive and time-consuming changes to be made to departmental structures. The changes will result in greater efficiencies through a reduction in the required number of chief executive, senior executive and corporate services roles. It also provides the government with greater flexibility into the future to respond to changing priorities and circumstances.

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12 Department of Justice and Attorney-General 2009, *Annual Report 2008-09*, p. 25, http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/corporate/general-publications/annual-report/08-09-jag-annual-report

The structural reforms support better coordination of public policy and service delivery. The 13 departments have been grouped into the following six clusters, each comprising complementary business priorities:

- policy and fiscal coordination
- employment and economic development
- environment and sustainable resource management
- social development
- law, justice and safety, and
- government services.

New structures and ways of working

The machinery of government changes introduced in March 2009 changed the structural and reporting arrangements of government. The number of departments was reduced from 23 to 13, with the 13 departments grouped into six clusters to reflect complementary priorities:

Clusters	Departments
Policy and fiscal coordination	• Department of the Premier and Cabinet • Queensland Treasury
Employment and economic development	• Department of Infrastructure and Planning • Department of Transport and Main Roads • Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
Environment and sustainable resource management	• Department of Environment and Resource Management
Social development	• Department of Communities • Department of Education and Training • Queensland Health
Law, justice and safety	• Department of Justice and Attorney-General • Queensland Police Service • Department of Community Safety
Government services	• Department of Public Works

The new arrangements are characterised by new ministerial reporting relationships. Most departments retain the traditional arrangement of working to one Minister. However, some departments report to two or more Ministers, with two departments (the Department of Communities and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) having four Ministers each.

Conversely, some Ministers have responsibilities across more than one department. For example, the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships has responsibilities spanning both the Department of Communities and the Department of Infrastructure and Planning.

Source: Public Service Commission 2010

The new structural arrangements provide the opportunity for agencies to revisit the way they deliver services to the community, the relationship between different government services, and the service delivery and access needs of citizens. To assist them in this process the PSC has developed service delivery principles, which focus on delivering services in Queensland that are:

- aligned to strategic priorities
- citizen-centered
- simple and accessible
- integrated, measured and sustainable
- based on strong partnerships, and
- adaptable in regional and rural areas.[13]

One example of an agency which is applying these service delivery principles is the Department of Communities through their No Wrong Door approach.

A new focus on client service – 'No Wrong Door'

The Department of Communities' No Wrong Door approach to client service reflects the priority government is placing on more responsive service delivery. The department combines five previously separate agencies and delivers a broad range of services:

- housing and homelessness services
- disability, home and community care, and community mental health services
- youth and youth justice services
- child safety and family support services
- concessions and card schemes for seniors and carers
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services
- community participation and community recovery services
- sport and recreation services
- multicultural services, and
- women's services.

No Wrong Door is designed to link people with the support and assistance they need, in the easiest way possible for the client. The approach places the client at the centre of service delivery, and requires staff to work together in new ways and respond to a range of client needs. Access to departmental services will be easier, and client needs will be addressed in a holistic, client-centred way.

The approach is based on the view that clients should not have to navigate their way through different parts of a department to access the services they need. Rather, service delivery business models should be re-engineered, so that clients can access the range of services they need in a more coordinated way.

13 The State of Queensland (Public Service Commission) 2009, *Service Delivery Principles*, http://www.psc.qld.gov.au

No Wrong Door will be supported by multiple service delivery channels, including Smart Service Queensland (SSQ), other government agencies, and non-government organisations. The approach will also be supported over time by more integrated business and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems.

The new holistic, client-centred approach will be especially helpful for those clients with complex or multiple service needs. For example, the Department of Communities has many clients who receive concurrent services from two or more of the programs delivered by the department, such as housing, child safety or disability services.
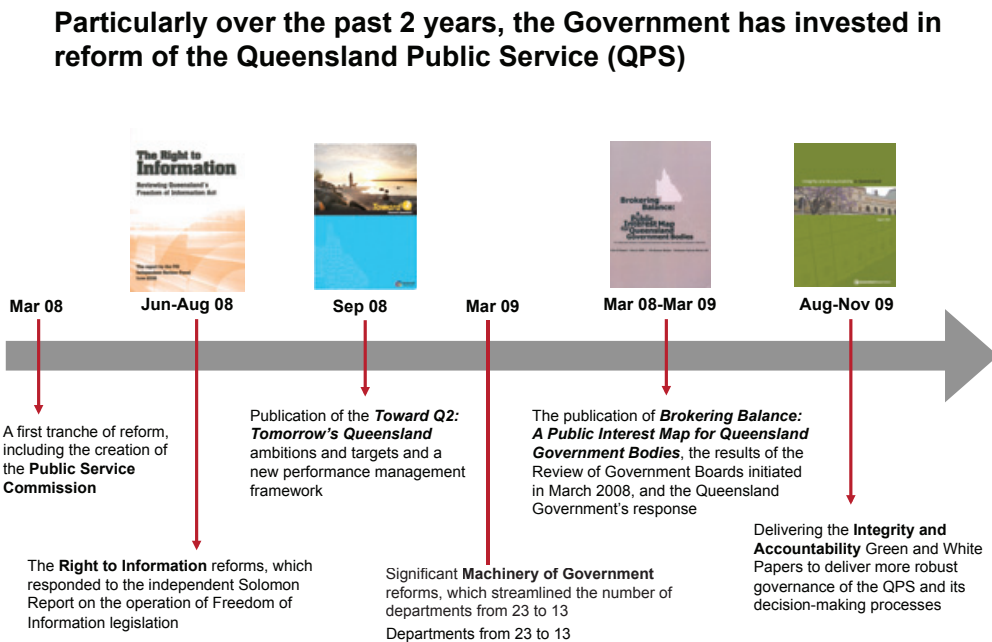
Where as in the past clients with multiple needs may have found it difficult dealing with a number of separate agencies to get their range of needs met, No Wrong Door means that Department of Communities staff from all service streams will work together to ensure that clients requiring access to several departmental programs get more coordinated service responses.

While full implementation of the No Wrong Door approach will take some time, the eventual result will be a more accessible and coordinated service experience for clients.

Source: Department of Communities

Many of the reforms outlined above are captured in the following graphic:

FIGURE 2: SEQUENCE OF REFORMS IN QUEENSLAND SINCE 2008

Particularly over the past 2 years, the Government has invested in reform of the Queensland Public Service (QPS)

Mar 08 — A first tranche of reform, including the creation of the **Public Service Commission**

Jun-Aug 08 — The **Right to Information** reforms, which responded to the independent Solomon Report on the operation of Freedom of Information legislation

Sep 08 — Publication of the ***Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*** ambitions and targets and a new performance management framework

Mar 09 — Significant **Machinery of Government** reforms, which streamlined the number of departments from 23 to 13
Departments from 23 to 13

Mar 08-Mar 09 — The publication of ***Brokering Balance: A Public Interest Map for Queensland Government Bodies***, the results of the Review of Government Boards initiated in March 2008, and the Queensland Government's response

Aug-Nov 09 — Delivering the **Integrity and Accountability** Green and White Papers to deliver more robust governance of the QPS and its decision-making processes

Source: The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2010

Getting results: administrative reforms to improve efficiency and performance

Savings and improved efficiency

The government announced two further initiatives in March 2008 designed to improve efficiency and create savings:

* implementing a departmental productivity dividend of $60 million in 2008-09 and $80 million in subsequent years ($300 million over four years). While front line service delivery budgets were quarantined from the dividend, agencies were encouraged to identify efficiencies and improvements across their business, and

* establishing the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet (ERCC), to oversee the achievement of the productivity dividend and identify further efficiencies.

The ERCC undertakes a rolling program of discussions with agencies to consider their financial performance, opportunities for savings as well as imperatives for service delivery. This approach acknowledges that there are practical limits to universal savings targets, and that a more tailored agency-specific approach is required. It also reflects that significant savings have already been identified in whole-of-government information technology, procurement and fleet management areas.

Taken collectively, these initiatives reflect the priority placed on maintaining service delivery and the need for sustainable approaches to achieving savings and efficiencies.

The Queensland Government Performance Management Framework

The Performance Management Framework has been progressively introduced since 2008 to help agencies improve the way they plan for, monitor, manage and report on their performance. It encourages:

* better use of performance information in agency decision making

* improved quality and consistency of performance information and monitoring, and

* improved alignment of performance information across the public sector planning, budgeting and reporting cycle.[14]

The framework provides the mechanisms for agencies to work together to achieve government objectives, such as the ten targets set out in Toward Q2. It incorporates planning, budgeting and reporting processes for agencies, as set out in Figure 3. It is designed to be flexible to allow it to take into account changing priorities for government and agencies, such as the establishment of new National Agreements and National Partnership Agreements under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations. Agencies are encouraged to streamline performance measuring and reporting by making linkages between agency, Queensland Government and national objectives, and performance information.

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14 The State of Queensland 2009, *A Guide to the Queensland Government Performance Management Framework*, p. 8, accessed on 18 May 2010 from http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/guides.aspx
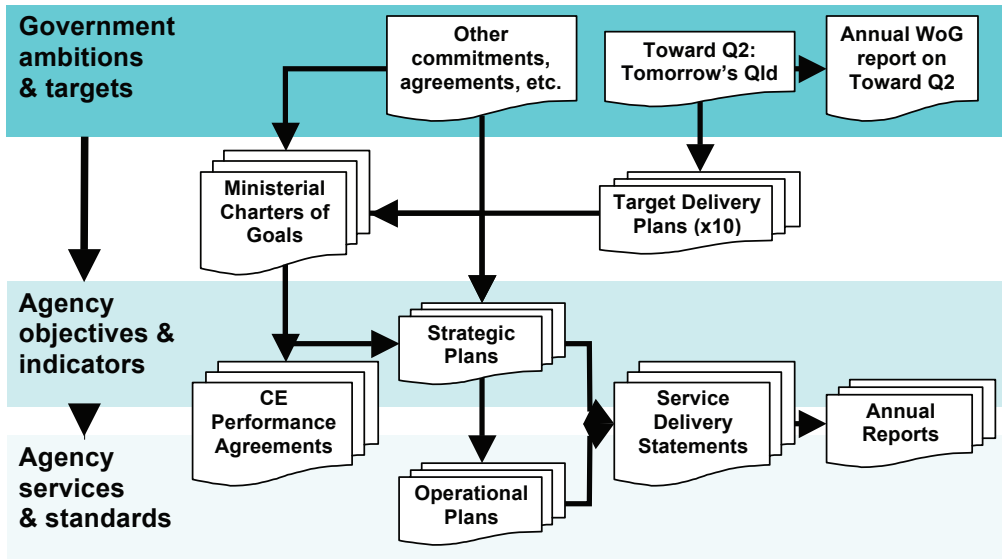
Source: The State of Queensland 2010

Documentation supporting the framework includes *A Guide to the Queensland Government Performance Management Framework, Agency Planning Requirements* and *Annual Report Requirements*. All of these are updated and published annually. Importantly, the Auditor-General concluded in 2009 that the governance arrangements and guidance material produced under the framework address recommendations made in previous audit reports. These relate to the need for agencies to improve the completeness of reporting and to set objectives that are aligned to strategic plans and whole-of-government priorities.[15]

Implementing the framework is strengthened by the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, which supports the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*. The standard requires that each accountable officer and statutory body must, in managing the performance of the officer's department or statutory body, comply with the framework and have systems in place for deciding whether the agency is achieving its strategic objectives and delivering its planned services.

This effectively gives the force of law to the planning and annual report requirements. These requirements reflect the progressive implementation of the framework, which will be completed on preparation of 2010-11 annual reports. These reports will include actual end of year performance against agencies' performance indicators (from agencies' strategic plans) and service standards (from Service Delivery Statements published as part of the State Budget). This will provide a clear line of sight between planned, budgeted and actual performance.

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15   The State of Queensland (Queensland Audit Office) 2009, *Report to Parliament No. 7 for 2009: Follow-up on government owned corporation and budget sector performance measurement and reporting: A Performance Management Systems Audit*, p. 3, http://www.qao.qld.gov.au

DPC is currently working with the Queensland Government Chief Information Office (QGCIO), the PSC, and agency representatives to further refine the framework and ensure that it integrates with other whole-of-government frameworks and methodologies.

Inclusive government: citizens having their say

The OECD notes that open and inclusive policy making not only increases government accountability, but also improves the quality of policy and service delivery outcomes. Engaging with a range of stakeholders allows government to identify people's needs and concerns, draw on innovative ideas, galvanise people's support and involvement, and develop and implement policies and services as efficiently as possible.[16]

Queensland has a number of new and well-established forums for citizens to have their say on issues that are important to them. Some forums are issue-specific and time limited, while others are ongoing. Some of the forums in Queensland include:

- Community Cabinet, which gives individuals and community groups the opportunity to meet ministers and, if desired, make formal or informal deputations. Community Cabinet meetings are held in a variety of locations across the state, including regional areas, and vary in number, with six held in 2009 and nine in 2008.

- People's Question Time, which is a series of one hour question-and-answer forums giving people the chance to submit their questions and concerns to the government. Each forum is usually themed around a particular issue and features a panel typically comprising the Premier, ministers and relevant issue experts, as well as a moderator to facilitate the discussion. Community members can submit questions online in the lead-up to or during each forum. People's Question Time is filmed in front of a studio audience and streamed live online at www.qld.gov.au/questiontime.

- Get Involved, a website which is the gateway to consultations being undertaken by Queensland Government agencies. The 'Have your say' section lists current consultations, and information on how to make a submission or provide feedback on particular matters. The website also provides information on how to participate in community activities, such as volunteering, and provides links to information about Community Cabinet and People's Question Time. Further information is available from www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au.

The MyQ2 website, discussed earlier in this chapter, is a new initiative that encourages community participation in the ambitions and targets set out in Toward Q2. It also allows people to provide feedback and ideas on how the targets can be achieved.

A recent example of Queenslanders getting actively involved in policy development is the two day Growth Management Summit held in March 2010. The interactive nature of the summit, which included live streaming of the event over the internet, allowed people not in attendance to participate in real time. More traditional engagement options, such as making submissions and completing a survey, were also available.

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16 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2009, *Focus on Citizens: Public Engagement for Better Policy and Services*, OECD, Paris, pp. 13-14.

Growth Management Summit

The Growth Management Summit brought together representatives from industry, the community and federal, state and local governments, to discuss strategies on managing Queensland's population growth. The summit was supported by an independent expert panel drawn from planning, development, infrastructure and sustainability areas.

The summit was interactive, with proceedings being streamed live across the internet, and opportunities to put questions forward prior to and during the summit. By the end of the summit:

- more than 10,000 people had visited the website
- almost 800 people had completed an online survey, and
- 1600 people had experimented with interactive scenarios to accommodate future growth.[17]

The government responded to the ideas generated at the summit in the form of *Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland: a Response to the Queensland Growth Management Summit*. The response includes 22 new initiatives and 25 new supporting actions to manage growth across Queensland, in six priority areas: shaping the future, strengthening our regions, promoting liveable and affordable communities, delivering infrastructure, protecting our lifestyle and environment, and connecting communities.[18]

Key initiatives, informed by community submissions, contained in the response include establishing Growth Management Queensland within the Department of Infrastructure and Planning to guide future growth management, developing a Queensland Regionalisation Strategy and Queensland Infrastructure Plan, and establishing an Infrastructure Charges Taskforce.

Source: The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2010

Importantly, public servants have also observed a willingness on the part of their agency to encourage community participation in the policy process. Results from the State of the Service employee survey found that only about one-fifth of respondents did not feel that their agency encouraged the public to participate in shaping and administering policy.

Public sector innovation: making good on good ideas

An innovative public service is essential if government is to provide policies and services that meet the evolving needs of the community. The service delivery environment in areas such as health, community services and education is increasingly complex and, while new technologies are enabling innovation, fresh ideas and creative approaches are needed. At the same time, the public sector's accountability requirements, hierarchical structures and high levels of scrutiny tend to make the sector more risk averse and less tolerant of failure. Building an innovation culture in the public sector will therefore be a challenge.

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17 The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2010, *Queensland Growth Management Summit Communiqué*, http://growthsummit.premiers.qld.gov.au

18 The State of Queensland (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2010, *Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland: A Response to the Queensland Growth Management Summit*, http://growthsummit.premiers.qld.gov.au

These and other issues are raised in the May 2010 report, *Empowering Change: Fostering Innovation in the Australian Public Service*. The report, which sets out 12 recommendations to support and drive an innovation culture in the APS, notes that "an effective public sector must be one that recognises, rewards and nurtures innovation." [19]

The PSC recognised the importance of innovation when it developed its Principles for Developing Innovation in a Work Environment in 2009. The principles identify some common elements that agencies require to support innovation.

Principles for Developing Innovation in a Work Environment

1. Ideas come from anywhere – staff input, ideas and suggestions are highly valued and respected

2. Leaders set clear vision – staff know what is going on, what are the priorities and the future directions of the organisation

3. Effective innovation may start small, it can be simple and focused and while it may not be instant perfection, creativity, experimenting, risk taking and continuous improvement are fundamental features of the workplace

4. Innovation comes from challenging the status quo and actively seeking out new ideas and information

5. Staff have faith and trust in the organisation, the leaders, managers and supervisors to be receptive to their suggestions and to action and take forward ideas that add value to the organisation

6. Decision making is open and transparent – it is not necessarily consensus decision making. Honest feedback is actively and constructively provided

7. Innovation is rewarded – staff feel valued with achievements recognised, celebrated and valued

8. Organisational culture is inclusive, solutions focused and not blame oriented with results owned by staff

9. Working in partnership and collaboration with stakeholders are fundamental modes of operating

10. Staff at all levels strive for individual and collective excellence in everything they do

Source: The State of Queensland (Public Service Commission) [20]

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19 Management Advisory Committee 2010, *Empowering Change: Fostering Innovation in the Australian Public Service*, p. iii, http://www.innovation.gov.au

20 The State of Queensland (Public Service Commission) 2009, *Principles for Developing Innovation in a Work Environment*, http://www.psc.qld.gov.au/page/corporate-publications/catalogue/organisational-management.shtml

At a cross-agency level, the Business Improvement In Government (BIIG) network aims to establish sustainable business improvement practices across the Queensland Public Sector. As part of its work agenda, BIIG has developed the BIIG Toolkit, comprising a suite of online tools, resources and information that supports business improvement and innovation within government. The BIIG website can be accessed by Queensland Government employees.

Results from the State of the Service employee survey indicated mixed evidence of an innovation culture. While over half of SES respondents (54.8%) agreed that SES officers in their agency encouraged innovation and creativity, only 39.3 per cent of all survey respondents (senior leaders and other respondents combined) agreed that senior leaders in their agency are receptive to ideas put forward by other employees. Survey results for the latter group may be influenced by respondents' individual proximity to senior leaders. More positively, almost half (43.3%) of all respondents agreed that senior leaders discuss with staff how to respond to future challenges.

Employee reform readiness

The pace and magnitude of public sector reform is such that agencies require a certain level of agility and resilience to drive change at an organisational and whole-of-government level. The ability to manage change, and be open to the idea of change, is therefore critical for both agencies and individuals.

The State of the Service employee survey asked respondents about their views of how well they, and their organisation, deal with change. Survey responses clearly showed a high level of self-belief by individuals in their ability to adapt to, and bring about, change. Over 90 per cent of respondents agreed that they were able to adapt/respond quickly to new challenges, and 58.9 per cent agreed with the statement that they had been influential in bringing about constructive change in their work area. Some 83.8 per cent felt they would be described by others as flexible and open to change. These results suggest a certain confidence and resilience on the part of employees as they implement, and respond to, change.

However, the picture changes somewhat when survey results regarding the management of major change are considered. About one-third of respondents agreed that major organisational and workforce change is managed well in their agency. This response is understandable in light of the magnitude of the changes in many agencies resulting from the implementation of new machinery of government arrangements, with some organisations still embedding new structural, reporting and leadership arrangements as a consequence. Future survey results will provide further insight into the issue and it is anticipated that in view of the other survey results above, the climate may well be more positive in the future.

Key themes and future directions

Since March 2008, the Queensland Government has embarked on a wide-ranging reform journey that has involved setting new strategic directions, streamlining the structures of government for improved efficiency and service delivery, and implementing new administrative systems and processes to drive public sector performance. The first phase of implementing these reforms is complete, with future priorities now focusing on public sector efficiency and better quality, more client-centred service delivery.

There is still progress to be made on the service delivery front. The government recognises the need for improved service delivery and that people's needs for government services often do not fit neatly within the boundaries of government departments. Queenslanders want integrated and easy-to-find government services. Simple enquiries and transactional services may be best suited to web access, whereas more complex matters may require phone access or face-to-face communication.

As a result the government is pursuing a range of channel options including integrated web and phone portals to streamline access to services. SSQ has already improved access, and the No Wrong Door reforms being led by the Department of Communities provide a practical example of how revisiting the way services are designed and provided can make a positive difference to clients. The financial, ICT and workforce challenges associated with such change are significant and will take some time to deliver on the ground. Importantly, however, the way the public service conceptualises its relationship with the community has evolved, and 'service' will be a key priority for the future.

Delivering high-quality services to the community is made easier when the public sector has strong policy skills to inform the shape, implementation and evaluation of service delivery. The importance of policy skills has been identified in a number of jurisdictions, with the review of the APS recently identifying the need to strengthen its strategic policy capability.[21] Queensland has already identified the importance of high-quality advice to government as part of a more holistic approach to managing public sector performance.[22] Strategies are currently being developed to build the policy capability of the QPS.

What distinguishes Queensland from the APS in terms of the focus of reforms is the state government's extensive role and experience in providing front line services in education, health, policing and other areas, and the consequent need for policy and service delivery to both reinforce and inform one another. Improving the linkages between service delivery and policy is therefore an important focal point.

Improving service delivery also requires greater collaboration with the community to inform government priorities and the policy development process. Community Cabinet and websites such as MyQ2 and the 'Get Involved' site provide a strong foundation. Another approach that might be considered in the future is the use of citizen satisfaction surveys, which the Australian Government plans to undertake as a result of its reform blueprint, and which both Canada and New Zealand already undertake. Citizen surveys provide a direct way of gathering information

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21 Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration 2010, *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 42, http://www.dpmc.gov.au

22 Service Delivery and Performance Commission 2008, *Report on Strengthening Performance in the Queensland Government*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, p. 2.

about front line service delivery and other matters that are important to people and could further enhance linkages between government and the community.

Agencies across the QPS recognise the future challenges associated with delivering high-quality, efficient services. The State of the Service agency survey asked agencies to rank the five greatest challenges facing their organisation over the next five years. A range of challenges was raised by agencies; however, there were four challenges that were raised most consistently. These were:

- improving the quality of service delivery to clients/the community – this was the challenge raised most often as the number one challenge for agencies

- improving the efficiency of service delivery to clients/the community – this was the second most regularly raised challenge (75.7%)

- attracting and retaining appropriate skill sets for the workforce – this was raised by the majority of agencies (89.2%) as one of their top five challenges, and

- managing an ageing workforce – nearly half of the agencies (18, or 48.6%) identified an ageing workforce as one of their top five challenges.

These survey results clearly show that agencies recognise the challenges associated with implementing major public sector reform and that, ultimately, the public service delivers on this agenda through its people. Attracting and retaining appropriately skilled employees and putting in place strategies to address the ageing workforce will therefore be a high priority if public sector reform objectives are to be achieved. The QPS approach to building workforce capability is explored in more detail in Chapter 8.