From our Commissioner

The public sector does many things. It oversees our health and education systems, protects our environment, keeps our communities safe, supplies us with power and water, provides our transport network, looks after our heritage and culture, and helps those in need.

These things don’t just happen. They happen because of the many people working in agencies who dedicate their service to the public.

To move with the changing times, issues and needs of Western Australia, agencies have to keep getting better at what they do and their people have to be ready and able to respond.

That’s where we as the Commission come in. With the support of the sector, our central purpose is to develop a future-fit public service for this State; and to provide leadership, direction and support for sector performance and improvement.

To meet this purpose, we need to be clear about our remit and responsibilities – at times leading and at other times collaborating and supporting.

This plan sets directions and outcomes for each of us who works for the Commission – remembering that all our work is for the sector.

That’s why four of the five priorities – leadership and talent, workforce, culture and improvement, and integrity – are sector-facing.

The fifth priority is how we build our own performance and capability as a Commission to better deliver the kind of leadership, guidance and support needed by the sector.

The plan also reflects the Government’s public sector reform program and ‘Our Priorities’ to deliver better services for Western Australians.

This is my first strategic plan as Commissioner, and I want to acknowledge the collaboration and effort that have brought us to where we are now.

The public sector needs a strong Commission in its corner. I look forward to leading the work in this strategic plan with you.

Sharyn O’Neill
PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONER
Who we are

In essence, we are about the performance and improvement of both individuals and agencies in the public sector.

Our remit and responsibilities are around shaping, building and regulating the public sector so it can meet the public policy challenges of both today and tomorrow.

Our role is described in legislation, including the Public Sector Management Act 1994, as strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and capability of the public sector to meet existing and emerging needs; and deliver high quality services.

Our legislated role also includes maintaining and advocating for public sector professionalism and integrity.

The place of the Commission with an independent Commissioner is important and unique. While supporting policy objectives of government, this independence also ensures the continuity and sustainability of efforts to improve the sector regardless of which government is in place.

Our aspirations for the sector

We have high aspirations for the public sector.

We want a public sector that:

- is led by the best
- has accomplished and innovative people
- is known for its high performance and improvement culture
- is trusted by the community.

Importantly, we want a public sector that is well supported by a strong Commission.

To achieve this, we need a Commission that has the right mix of people and skills; that is driven by evidence-based policy; and that delivers high quality leadership, advice and support to the sector on performance and improvement.
How we measure our progress

It is important for us to put in place a coherent strategy to measure our progress as a Commission and track our impact on the sector. We will develop an internal data and analytics strategy to underpin this.

In addition, a more sophisticated sector-wide approach to data and analytics is needed to help drive improvement and evidence-based policy making in the workforce area. An examination of how and why we collect data from the sector, and what we do with it, is critical. This will be work for the life of this plan.

As we work across the sector, it is important to understand that some of the impact of our work is less direct. It will be more visible and evident to agencies as it contributes to achieving their stated goals. While more difficult to measure, we will work with agencies to better understand our impact.

Internally, our regular governance and accountability requirements use formal and informal mechanisms to assess and evaluate progress and performance against priorities.

Active consultation with stakeholders remains an important way to inform planning. It also tests the impact of our work as we shape strategies and policies to support sector reform and improvement.
Our priorities over the next three years

Priority 1: A public sector that is led by the best.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE WILL:

- set expectations for the highest levels of performance among public sector leaders, including mindsets, characteristics and behaviours
- ensure chief executive officers have the appropriate level of authority to make the decisions that matter to delivering services
- strengthen transparency and measures for holding chief executive officers accountable for performance, including internal and external validation
- develop a comprehensive leadership strategy that incorporates all stages of leadership, providing context for agency efforts
- introduce a dedicated, sector-wide approach to talent to ensure a sustainable supply of the best upcoming leaders
- establish credible flagship programs to build leadership capability, complementing efforts of agencies and others
- harness the expertise and energy of talented people across agencies to contribute to sector-wide improvement and innovation
- use insights from data and analytics to support future leadership development and succession management
- implement a contemporary approach to managing the senior leadership cohort of the sector
- leverage and facilitate the sharing of good practice.
Our priorities over the next three years

Priority 2: A public sector that has accomplished and innovative people.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE WILL:

- establish clear expectations of high performance for the public sector workforce
- set directions for overall workforce strategy to meet government expectations and policies
- investigate evidenced-based assessments of skills for current and future business requirements
- investigate options and implement plans for modernising and streamlining the current employment framework including flexibility in recruitment and selection
- lead proactive efforts for increased diversity across the public sector
- provide advice, tools and resources for agencies to build the capabilities of their workforce
- deliver high quality legislative, policy and advisory services for effective workforce management and government reform
- develop more sophisticated workforce planning approaches for the sector including a focus on workforce stability, performance, agility and mobility
- employ a strong focus on data and analytics to develop appropriate measures to inform government policy and evaluate the impact of workforce policies and processes.
Our priorities over the next three years

Priority 3: A public sector that is known for its high performance and improvement culture.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE WILL:

- lead a culture of high performance, excellence and care across the sector
- build a focus on public sector value and identity
- position the public sector as an employer of choice by promoting the spirit of service, innovation, excellence and equity
- promote leading practice principles in workplace safety, health and wellbeing
- use employee perception and other data to drive plans for building a positive workplace culture
- promote a proactive focus on building ethical, diverse and inclusive cultures
- foster sector-wide innovation and participation in sharing ideas for support and improvement
- build contemporary knowledge and capacity in organisational change management practices to ensure successful policy implementation
- work with agencies to assess and improve their own performance, culture and capability, and to leverage sector-wide knowledge
- acknowledge and celebrate public sector success in reform, improvement and innovation.
Our priorities over the next three years

Priority 4: A public sector that is trusted by the community.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE WILL:

- set clear expectations for behaviour for the public sector workforce and clarify accountability of agency heads
- make better use of data and analytics to inform policy and benchmark integrity practices and outcomes
- provide accessible and contemporary resources to assist agency efforts in improving integrity, and preventing fraud and corruption
- ensure agencies have robust integrity systems, controls, policies and processes
- build strong integrity principles and practices into workforce planning
- build an intelligence system to respond more effectively to matters as they arise
- introduce a maturity model for integrity systems, controls, culture, policies and processes across all public authorities
- maintain a visible and leading presence in integrity education across the sector
- review current approaches to misconduct oversight to ensure greater agency decision making and accountability
- lead reviews of agency capability to improve integrity processes and practices.
Our priorities over the next three years

Priority 5: A public sector that is well supported by a strong Commission.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE WILL:

- continue to develop the health of our culture and our maturity as an ethical organisation
- create contemporary internal leadership, talent and workforce plans so we have the right people to deliver on our remit and priorities
- invest time and effort in growing the capability of our people as leaders in their fields
- strengthen performance development and assessment of our people to promote improvement
- forge stronger relationships and partnerships with the sector and others, and align communications to deliver maximum impact
- strengthen our IT, workforce, finance and project management systems and processes to support and better align our work

- plan our work to support government priorities and reforms
- provide advice and support to the Premier and Ministers to deliver the Government’s policy objectives and ‘Our Priorities’
- develop a coherent data strategy to measure progress and track the impact of our work
- maintain high standards of transparency and governance through robust frameworks and processes
- review and enhance our key performance indicators and budget arrangements.