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Ref: 29/4/19

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15th April 2019.

Review Panel.

Independent Review of the APS.

P.O. Box 6500

Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.

As discussed with [REDACTED] on 11/4; I wish to provide some brief 'Plain English' feedback relevant to your timely Review of the APS.

But firstly; my P.S. background; --- why I feel qualified to make these comments.

I started my career as a Cadet Civil Engineer with the (then) Commonwealth Department of Works (C.D.W.) circa 1961. (More on that later.)

Upon completion of my Engineering Degree course at Melbourne University, in 1963, I commenced work in Darwin N.T. and later specialised in the field of heavy aircraft pavement design and construction. I then joined the (then) Department of Civil Aviation (D.C.A.) in 1971.

During my APS ^{career}, I was involved in every facet of Planning, Design, Construction, Operation and Maintenance, of Aerodromes.

I wrote many of Australian Aerodrome Regulations and Standards, represented the Country before the International Civil Aviation Organisation (I.C.A.O.), and was Counsellor Transport with the Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C. U.S.A., from 1977 until 1981. Whilst based in the U.S.A. I was a member of the Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) and member of the Board of Directors of the Airport Operators Council International (A.O.C.I.).

In later years, I held Senior Executive (SES) Positions within the Transport portfolio.

After becoming 'surplus to requirements' in 1995; I worked as Director, Technical Services with the City of Sunshine in Victoria; and later undertook Consultancy work with P.S. Agencies, including Axi-Aid, CASA, and Public Service Commission.

My Concerns.

By the early 1990's, downsizing of Government Agencies had become an 'art-form', with a disproportionate reduction in the numbers of relevant Technical people within Departments; particularly at Senior Management Level.

The demise of the CDW was an early casualty. Australia no longer has a genuine 'Works' Department. We do have major issues associated with ongoing persistent de-skilling; coupled with the dominance of Generalist Managers, where upon Agencies are acting as uninformed Regulators, Purchasers, and Protectors of Public Interest.

This situation is in fact magnified, when Consultants and Contractors are engaged without the benefit of relevant 'in-house' specialist input. Cost-effectiveness and 'value for money', etc; not on the Agenda.

I continue to be amazed and annoyed, by the number of Project Fiascos reported in the media. (and many that are not).

Late completion, cost overruns, functional failure, wastage, inadequate investigation, and ^{lack} of quality control, etc.

Traditional values are centred around Projects delivered to quality, and within cost and time.
— now extinct.

More to the point; Public Safety is being compromised, by a lack of risk awareness associated with Roads and Aerodromes.

I am particularly worried when I see obvious road hazards like blind-spots, shoulder drop-offs, pavement roughness, slipperiness, loss-of-shape, etc.

In the case of Aviation, the Safety Regulator CASA, is virtually bankrupt of Airport Engineering skills.

These observations are not restricted to my area of expertise. Family and friends working under the APS and State Agencies, regularly indicate common concerns about deskilling, generalist management, and lack of leadership.

My Recommendations.

Firstly,

I see a need to re-skill the APS, in accordance with relevant Departmental roles.

This will not be easy; given the present situation and loss of Corporate memory and intellectual property across the Agencies.

As part of this objective, the Panel could consider reinstatement of a Cadet Scheme as a positive step towards re-skilling.

Under the old scheme, people were paid a salary whilst attending University; and would undertake work experience along the way.

In return, Cadets were required to work for the Commonwealth for a 'bond-period', being equal to the number of years at University.

This process acts as a conduit towards an informed Public Service, and later on, offers the option of benefits to the Corporate sector.

Secondly,

I recommend a shift away from Generalist Management appointments.

Leadership is an essential requirement for re-skilling, based on 'empowerment' of individuals, in a team environment.

In fact, leadership is a rare management attribute in its own right; and will not be achieved, unless the

Managers concerned, 'know their stuff' - in other words, they come to the role with relevant qualification and experience.

What I am suggesting, is a significant cultural change whereby Senior Managers are selected primarily on technical credentials. Management appointments made in favour of the best managers/Leaders from the pool of quality technical candidates.

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Finally,

I believe the Government should look to the creation of a genuine specialist infrastructure Technical Agency, reminiscent of C.D.W.; but modernised in line with present needs and Organisational structures.

Some Authorities like CASA, will benefit in having in-house specialist capability, but with cross-reference to the Infrastructure Department.

The C.D.W I have in mind would be Australia's design and construction Authority, with responsibilities across all Agencies.

(I'm not talking here about the current Infrastructure Agency which is essentially concerned with policy and economic interests.)

The objective here is to facilitate a Government acting as an informed Regulator, Purchaser, and custodian of Public Interest.

I am under no illusion, there is a challenging 'catch-up' ahead.

In conclusion

My objective was to make this submission as brief as possible; -- but you may wish some* further detail I am happy to discuss same, if required by the Panel members.

* e.g. Fiasco details, safety issues, public interest issues, etc

(GRAHAM BAILEY)