



Institute of Public
Administration Australia

The Nationwide Professional
Association of the Public Sector

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IPAA calls on governments to get serious on service

A policy discussion paper released today by the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) found that there are few national, state or local government agencies with publicly disclosed service strategies that match best practice internationally. Moreover, except for South Australia and to some extent the Commonwealth, it's hard to find directives and guidelines on preparing comprehensive and integrated strategies for delivering public services.

The National President of IPAA, Percy Allan AM, said "although positive service initiatives are sprinkled around Australia via customer charters, client surveys, e-access channels, and complaints handling mechanisms, there is huge potential to 'join the dots' and design truly client-focussed Australian public services."

The IPAA paper recommends that:

- Service delivery should be elevated to a national conversation – we need to better understand and share service delivery expectations and existing developments to reach a broad consensus on what good practices and standards are.
- Momentum needs to be built at all levels of government to make public service delivery improvement a top priority and governments need to recognise this can't be done without closely involving citizens.
- Consideration should be given to requiring all public sector bodies to develop, publish and rollout integrated service delivery strategies and holding CEOs accountable for their success.

"Such action would demonstrate that Australia's public sector is ready to put citizens first," said Mr Allan.

"To put citizens at the centre of public policy prioritisation and service delivery requires seeing government through the lens of the citizen as a client. This requires rigorous analysis of the service delivery value chain; knowing how to progress from a deep analysis of clients' needs and expectations to delivering a

service of quality with strong client input and feedback; and the empowerment of front-line staff to fix problems and complaints as they arise.

“Global standards for service delivery set by countries like Denmark, Finland, Canada and the United Kingdom should be within our reach. Features such as empowering citizens through better information, unequivocal commitments to service standards including just-in-time problem resolution, highly personalised or tailored services, and front-line workers who ‘own’ the quality improvement agenda are attainable.

“The question is how do we unlock the potential for innovation and improvement in Australia?

“It’s time all governments got serious on service delivery,” Mr Allan stated.

The paper was prepared by IPAA’s Policy Submissions Committee comprising Percy Allan (Committee Chair), Tony Katsigiannis, Mark MacDonald, Martin Stewart-Weeks, Dahle Suggett and Lynne Tacy. Catherine Watson assisted the Committee with the initial drafting and later editing of the document. IPAA is the nationwide professional association of the public sector.

A copy of IPAA’s paper *Getting Serious on Client Service* can be downloaded from IPAA’s national website www.ipaa.org.au

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