

Significant issues impacting the agency

4

Strengthening integrity and accountability

Public administration is largely dependent on the community's trust in its institutional integrity and ability to uphold the public interest. The Commissioner has a legislative role to monitor and report on the state of the sector's administration and management, assess compliance with standards and ethical codes and, more recently, oversee minor misconduct.

The end of the 2015/16 financial year saw the conclusion of our first 12 months of operation implementing legislative changes emanating from the proclamation of the CCM Act on 1 July 2015. These changes gave the Commission responsibility for the oversight of minor misconduct of public officers and the misconduct prevention and education functions. The transition of functions from the CCC has been smooth and cost effective, with the new functions integrated seamlessly into our core business.

Providing programs, products and guidance to authorities to educate and inform CEOs and practitioners about misconduct prevention has been a key focus of our work over the past year. The initiatives associated with this focus have contributed to ensuring notifications about minor and serious misconduct have been made appropriately. In the year ahead we will continue to work with agencies to ensure minor misconduct is managed efficiently and effectively across the sector.

As part of our monitoring and oversight role the Commission may at times be required to investigate matters of a serious nature where there is a clear and heightened public interest. On 20 January 2016 the Premier directed the Commissioner, under sections 24H(2) and (3) of the PSM Act, to arrange a Special Inquiry to examine the system of fire management in the rural area of Waroona during the bushfire that occurred earlier in that month. The Special Inquiry report, entitled *Reframing Rural Fire Management: Report of the Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire*, was tabled in the Parliament on 23 June 2016. The report highlighted the urgent need to effect fundamental changes to the system of rural fire management in order to improve the systems of community safety and bushfire risk management in Western Australia. The Commission is currently considering the report's recommendations, in particular, those made in relation to structural reform.

Matters that do not require a comprehensive investigation in the form of a Special Inquiry are assessed through reviews or investigations. In April 2015 the Commission commenced a thematic review of ticket use by government bodies for sponsored or

financially supported events. The review arose from a written request from the Premier to assess information and provide advice in relation to answers provided to a series of parliamentary questions about the acquisition and provision by all public sector agencies of ticket and box access for sporting and cultural events. The report of review findings, entitled *Ticket use for sponsored or financially supported events*, was tabled in the Parliament in February 2016.

Increasing efficiency and flexibility

As the public sector evolves over time, it is important the Commission promotes a flexible approach to service delivery and continually seeks ways to become more efficient and effective. The Commission is currently subject to the Agency Expenditure Review (AER) process announced by Government with the release of the 2016/17 budget. The AER process, which has also been extended to 53 other public sector agencies, intends to increase the transparency of agency operations and drive a critical examination and re-definition of agency programs.

The entirety of the Commission's recurrent operations are within the AER's scope and the focus of the first stage of the process will be programs that can either be wholly ceased, materially altered in their delivery or Government policy shifted to reduce the extent of program delivery. This will be a significant body of work for the Commission and will help shape the future direction of our organisation. It will also provide an opportunity to rethink the Commission's vision in the context of how we think the public sector will operate in the future and the challenges it will face.

Promoting transparency in evaluation and reporting

Timely access to accurate data and information is essential to our core functions. The Commission sources system-level intelligence about public sector administration and management performance through a range of tools. This information supports the advice we provide to our key stakeholders including CEOs and Ministers. The year ahead will bring fundamental changes to the way in which we collect and manage public sector data.

The *Western Australian Whole-of-Government Open Data Policy* aims to facilitate greater release of government data to the public in appropriate and useful ways to generate value and productivity. The Commission has embraced this approach, publishing on its website information about what we collect, why it is collected and how it is published, including the scope and volume of its evaluation and assurance activities. Assurance exercises examining how agencies collect and report data and proactive performance evaluations to identify risk issues relevant to all public authorities will continue as a key priority.

As the public sector evolves over time, it is important the Commission promotes a flexible approach to service delivery and continually seeks ways to become more efficient and effective.

Building an inclusive and diverse workforce

Diversity and inclusion is an increasing focus of the Commission and reflects a growing economic and business interest in ensuring diverse perspectives, experiences and backgrounds are reflected in the workforce to meet the expectations of the community. It is widely recognised the public sector needs to have cultural competence and confidence in responding to an increasingly diverse State.

In collaboration with the DEOPE the Commissioner has committed to a collective statement of priority, entitled *Time for Action: Diversity and inclusion in public employment*. This statement expresses our joint commitment to support public authorities to create diverse and inclusive workplaces and provided the launch pad for *See my abilities: An employment strategy for people with disability*. A suite of other diversity strategies, as part of *Time for Action*, will be released in late 2016.

During the year ahead we will support chief executives to lead change through their agencies by coordinating a collective response to key diversity and inclusion issues. This includes:

- providing better statistical and best practice information
- ensuring diversity and inclusion becomes more central to leadership and talent identification
- incorporating diversity and inclusion into relevant system priorities
- exploring new approaches to talent supply and recruitment through the development of awareness about unconscious biases and how these can impact on the composition of the workforce, de-identified recruitment and a review of panel interview processes.

Expanding our partnerships

Collaboration across jurisdictions is key to strengthening public sector reform and further building connections with our national and international counterparts. Working effectively with other sectors and the community ensures that we are best placed to confront the evolving challenges faced by the public sector, now and into the future.

Over the past year the Commission has worked to strengthen our inter-jurisdictional relationships to promote information sharing across sectors and deliver outcomes for the benefit of the Western Australian community. In August 2015, at the request of the Hon. Joe Francis MLA, Minister for Veterans, we worked with former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members to undertake Australia's first ADF 'talent attraction project' to better understand the transition of employment. Based on the key findings arising from research undertaken as part of the project, a Veterans Employment Transition Support (VETS) guide was developed and a mentor network established to support ADF members seeking employment in the public sector.

Over the past 12 months we have also lead two significant inter-jurisdictional projects. In collaboration with the Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions we developed a joint success profile and associated measures for Chief Human Resource Officers (CHROs) to build human resource capability and promote a more strategic contribution by human resource professionals across the Australian and New Zealand public sectors. We also became the lead Western Australian partner organisation with Griffith University to deliver an Australian Research Council Linkage Project entitled 'Whistling While They Work #2: Improving Managerial Responses to Whistleblowing in Public & Private Sector Organisations'. The three-year project will investigate the effectiveness of public interest whistleblowing laws, policies and systems.

Asia continues to play an important part in Western Australia's future and developing stronger and more sustainable relationships with our Asian counterparts is an ongoing priority of the Commission. Over the past year we successfully worked with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to foster a solid partnership and exchange program with the Indonesian and Bruneian civil services. In partnership with the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) we have introduced a professional learning opportunity with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore University, during the last year and we will continue to seek opportunities to further develop our relationship with our neighbours going forward.

Recognising achievement

The Australian Honours System recognises the outstanding achievement and exceptional service of its citizens to encourage and reinforce national ideals by identifying role models. In 2015/16, 37 Western Australians appeared on the Australia Day Honours List and 45 were acknowledged on the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Dr Diane Patricia Mohen, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Bunbury, was awarded the Public Service Medal (PSM) for outstanding public service through the development and provision of maternity health programs and service delivery in regional Western Australia and our own General Counsel, Mr John Lightowlers, was awarded a PSM for outstanding service through the provision of high level strategic advice in Western Australia.

After 18 years of representing Western Australia on the Council for the Order of Australia and serving as the Chair of the State Selection Panel the Commissioner has relinquished his position.

As part of the Commission's role in promoting leadership and excellence in the public sector we administer the Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management. In 2015 the winner in the 'Strengthening Families and Communities' category and overall winner was the Housing Authority for the 'Foyer Oxford' project, which brings together a range of stakeholders to deliver a holistic response to youth homelessness.

Going forward we will continue to recognise the significant accomplishments of the public sector and encourage all public sector employees to strive for excellence.