

JUG SUB 14

OPSSC

Office of the
Public Sector
Standards
Commissioner

Mr A.P. O'Gorman MLA
Chair, Community Development
and Justice Standing Committee
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Our ref:
Your ref: 7439 V1
Contact:

Dear Chairman

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN GOVERNMENT

I refer to your letter of 2 October, 2007 seeking a submission on collaborative or joined up initiatives between government agencies. While this Office is not a direct community service agency, I am pleased to respond in the following terms regarding broader initiatives undertaken which have involved collaboration with other public sector agencies.

1. Integrity Co-ordinating Group

In July 2005 this Office was instrumental in establishing the Integrity Coordinating Group to promote and strengthen integrity standards in Western Australia, comprising the Auditor General, the State Ombudsman, the Crime and Corruption Commissioner and the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

The formation of the Group was partly in response to research conducted by Griffith University, together with Transparency International Australia, in 2004 which focused on how different elements of integrity systems interact, conflict or work interdependently. The paper suggested that integrity systems are defined not just by institutions but the interfaces between them.

As independent office holders responsible for various aspects of integrity in WA public bodies, the ICG member agencies recognise a need for policy coherence and operational coordination between their organisations. Individual and collective integrity is essential for public sector organisations to deliver their services effectively in accordance with legal requirements. However, the ICG recognises that building and sustaining integrity within organisations is a complex task, hence the integrated approach. The model is unique within Australia and to the best of our knowledge, internationally.



The ICG has also been involved in activities such as:

- ensuring a common understanding of integrity within the WA public sector;
- participating in a national research project on whistle blowing being led from Griffith University;
- development of a resource kit to help agencies improve the management of conflicts of interest;
- development of the 'Taking Action on Integrity' brochure, designed to offer guidance on what action should be taken when integrity issues arise in an agency, and
- facilitating forums for senior public sector officers in a range of integrity issues.

The Group has provided information on its role and scope to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission.

2. Collocated agencies

In June 2001, the Report of the Taskforce Established to Review the Machinery of Western Australia's Government was published. The report suggested that statutory officers of certain agencies should examine the feasibility of co-location, and this occurred in 2002 with this Office co-locating with the Information Commissioner, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (the Ombudsman), the Director of Equal Opportunity in the Public Sector, and the Office of Health Review.

This co-location has led to the establishment of a single entry point for the public and a sharing of support structures, while allowing adequate independence for each statutory office.

3. Shared Services

As well as being part of the move to shared services for our own internal processes and systems, this Office has been working with the three shared service centres, namely the Office of Shared Services (OSS), the Department of Education Services, and Health Corporate Network. The aim has been to work towards ensuring processes and systems comply with the Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management and the WA Code of Ethics and agency codes of conduct.

The Office has been providing assistance on an as needs basis on request from the shared service agencies, as well as sitting on the Human Resource (HR) Policy Subcommittee (which is a sub-committee of the Heads of Corporate Services) which meets on a regular basis to discuss human resource management policy and

associated business rule issues related to the application of the OSS system requirements.

4. Simplifying government processes

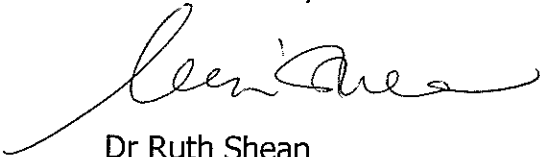
This Office works with government agencies on an ongoing, collaborative basis, particularly when progressing key projects. Recently we established a CEO Reference Group to assist the Office with the development of a Conduct Guide and new Code of Ethics, and we intend to establish similar groups as we progress work on the development of a quality framework for the sector and a review of the Public Sector Standards.

We have also collaborated with other agencies in bringing human resource issues to the sector in a joined up way. We joined up with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Public Sector Management Division and the Government Media Office), the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, and the Crime and Corruption Commission to present forums to the sector on recruitment and selection issues. This approach has been so successful (being delivered to almost 500 public sector staff with high levels of satisfaction reported by participants) that in 2008 the Office will run similar forums on grievance issues, joining up with agencies such as the Information Commissioner, Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, and others.

Summary

I hope this information is of some assistance to you in your Inquiry. Should you require any additional information, I can be contacted on

Yours sincerely



Dr Ruth Shean
COMMISSIONER

31 December 2007