

# **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

## **Transformation: Modernising the AFP Andrew Colvin APM OAM**

Department of Finance, Canberra

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Rosemary Huxtable: Let me begin by also acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we're meeting today, the Ngunnawal people and pay my respect to elders both past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today. Can I also echo Carmel's welcome and endorse her acknowledgement of the special guests who are with us.

Rosemary Huxtable: I also want to add my congratulations to you, Andrew, on your term as AFP commissioner, and to acknowledge your contribution as a friend and a colleague around the national security title in particular. You've made a significant contribution and it's very fitting that we hear from you tonight as you reflect on this in relation to modernization of the federal police.

Rosemary Huxtable: Some might think it's an odd pairing for finance in the AFP to be talking about transformation in the public sector. We are two very different organisations. We have different purposes, people values and stakeholders, and yet as we grapple with ways to best achieve our purpose, we are faced with many of the same challenges. And I'm sure many of you here today would also resonate, these challenges would resonate with you.

Rosemary Huxtable: How we can leverage data and digitization more effectively, how we can build effective connections and relationships to drive improved outcomes, the need to grow and adapt capability and to modernise processes, freeing up staff for more strategic and value added work, and of course how we enable a more flexible, diverse and mobile workforce. Finance and AFP I'm sure we're not alone in facing these challenges.

Rosemary Huxtable: It really is a journey, I think for all organisations, that's certainly how we see it here. We need to embed continuous improvement into the culture of our organisations, and ensure we have the right systems and processes in place for the future.

Rosemary Huxtable: As my staff will tell you, I'm a strong believer that those who do the work, who are embedded in organisational processes and outputs, have the greatest insight into how this work can be made efficient and effective. The challenge really is to empower their voice and to have an organisation that is able to reflect, to be so reflective and x. There is much we can learn from one another and events like this are great opportunities to share our different experiences and challenges, and in particular to share the success stories, and the lessons learned that we can apply going forward.

Rosemary Huxtable: I would say that within the IPS there is a real commitment to modernise the public sector. I have the privilege of chairing the secretary's IPS reform committee, and I think that's a great example of about how the public sector is really coming together and working to be as effective and forward looking as possible.

Rosemary Huxtable: While we await the findings of the independent review on the IPS, we're really getting on with the job of driving innovation, increasing productivity and

delivering better services. We had the modernising the public sector expo here in March, some of you may have attended that, and we saw some great examples of modernization in practise, whether that there's three things like, digital annual reports or the process automation that's being used in shared services and in grants administration.

Rosemary Huxtable: As leaders in the public service, being wise stewards and actively ensuring more effective public administration, it's not only the right thing to do but really the best thing to do as a collective and in our respective departments. I just really want to draw out, but before I introduce Andrew, one of the key issues in terms of the finance transformation. It's very much our focus and I acknowledge that Andrew also has been very much focused on that in the AFP.

Rosemary Huxtable: But for me, one of the keys around transformation is really around stewardship. So how we build positive and influential relationships with our stakeholders, we in finance want to rely less on our role as a gatekeeper and operate more as a collaborative and productive partner. It's so easy to admire a problem or take a narrow view or just say no, but we wouldn't be doing our job well if we didn't work with others, to knit together the range of government objectives to find and deliver shared solutions.

Rosemary Huxtable: I think in our relationship with the AFP, there's some very live examples of that in action. We have an officer embedded in the AFP, really working to develop a shared understanding, and we put in place structures through which we can properly understand each other's perspectives and really stand in each other's shoes. I think it's by investing in developing those foundational trust relationships where we can share data, we can share problems, we can come up with shared solutions. To me, the benefit of that is really taking the disputed facts off the table and working instead around options and solutions, and I think in our work with Andrew and his team, we've gone a very long way to achieving that.

Rosemary Huxtable: So, I'm certainly privileged to be here today, to both listen to commissioner co and to learn from his experience and to have a discussion with you at the end as well. As many of you know Andrew's a career police officer, having joined the AFP in 1990, where he investigated a range of serious and organised crime offences. In the early two thousands, he coordinated the national and international aspects of the AFP's response to terrorism, followed by leadership opportunities as the AFP Chief of Staff, a National Manager of High Tech Crime Operations, and a number of Deputy Commissioner roles.

Rosemary Huxtable: In 2003, Andrew was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his contribution to the investigation of the Bali bombings, in Australia's counter terrorism frameworks, and in 2008 was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, and awarded the Australian Police medal. Andrew was appointed the AFP seventh commissioner in October, 2014, he's been a passionate advocate for the role of policing in society and in government, and as a Male Champions of Change has achieved significant increases in the representation of women in leadership positions.

- Rosemary Huxtable: He ends his term at the end of September this year, and so it's very timely that we hear from him this evening on his reflections on modernising the AFP. Please join me in welcoming the AFP commissioner Andrew Colvin.
- Andrew Colvin: Good evening everybody. Rosemary thank you very much for those kind words. A few things first ... Thank you for acknowledging of course that my seven and a half weeks, who's counting, away from my last day in the AFP. But of course, when IPAA approached me to speak today, that wasn't necessarily public, although I knew what my plans were. So while I'm happy, and I look forward to a discussion about that today, I'm really excited and passionate about transformation and change, and that's what's on my mind and wanting to speak to today. I hope that my thoughts, my insights and my experiences are a benefit to some of you in the room.
- Andrew Colvin: Can also join with Carmel and Rosemary, I want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, pay my respects to the elders past and present, but also acknowledge all cultures that are here today. You're very welcome and thank you for coming along.
- Andrew Colvin: Drew, thank you very much for, to IPAA for inviting me back. It was really interesting to me that a few years back as a police commissioner, I think I was the first police commissioner to speak at an IPAA event. It was always an experiment in my mind. Would IPAA ever want me back, they did. That was nice.
- Andrew Colvin: But it gets to a little of what Rosemary said as well, that the role between police and the broader public services closer, more aligned than it probably ever has been before, certainly in my 30 years, but as I look forward, we have to be acting as one in so many ways. You'll here every police commissioner say that the challenges that we face as police policy challenges somewhere else, and that we are often the agency, the organisation that has to deal with those challenges. So this is really good opportunity for me and I'm pleased that IPAA have asked me to come back.
- Andrew Colvin: It's also quite ironic in many ways as well. Ironic for probably two reasons. There's two things that every police officer knows and hates. One is the way things are, and the other one is change. And it's a truism that again, I know I can say sits well with policing across the world. It's also ironic that I would be here talking about transformation, my great staff in the office helped me put together a presentation today on an iPad, and I have notes with me. At the last minute I decided I wasn't transformed enough digitally, to actually do this on the iPad. But it is great to be here and I really do appreciate it.
- Andrew Colvin: I'm going to talk a little bit about the lessons that I've learned, a little bit about what the AFP has done, and I'll say a bit more about that. But the reality is, and as I look out in this room now, what I see are a lot of people who are enthusiastic, keen and leaders in their organisations. When I say leaders, that's not because you might be at a senior position in what, you could be a graduate and you're on your first days, weeks, months in the job. But you here because you want to be a leader, you're here because you value transformation, and whether leadership is

about transformation or transformation is about leadership, they're both interchangeable in my mind. So first up, congratulations to all of you for wanting to come out on a pretty bleak Monday night in the middle of ... in the heart of winter in Canberra and listen to some of this.

Andrew Colvin: I'll give you a few thoughts and lessons and just some of my experiences. But let me say this right upfront, transformation, change, call it what you want, is hard, it's really, really hard. And it's rarely, if ever, perfect, and I will say a little bit more about that. It's rarely, if ever, going to be perfect, and you're not going to see the rewards or the benefits or the fruits of your labour until probably well after you've tried to take someone down that journey.

Andrew Colvin: So talking about the AFP experience, and I brought this book with me, which I see at the front, free plug for IPAA. I saw it on the stand as we come in. If you haven't had the opportunity, take an to grab that and have a read of David Thodey's presentation to IPAA towards the end of last year. Now there's a lot more work that David will be doing as part of his review into the public service, but he lays forward in that, some really clear ideals, some really clear values and a vision for the IPS, and it's a vision that I think we can all aspire to. So grab that because there's some great lines in there.

Andrew Colvin: But a few things about the AFP's experience, firstly, it's a truism again that every commissioner that there ever was in policing around the world has wanted to make change. And in eight weeks' time AFP will have a new commissioner who will want to make change. That's because you don't aspire to these positions, and I know I speak for the secretaries who are here with us today or Dep Secs or whoever, you don't aspire to be in senior positions because you want power, you aspire to it because you want influence. You aspire to it because you want, you have a vision and you have values.

Andrew Colvin: And the best way to transact what that vision of values is, is to seek higher office, where sometimes it's easier. I can tell you it's not always easier, but often as you go up the food chain, things get a little bit easier for you to transform into the vision that you see. So, leadership is not about rank and status when you think about transformation, it's about that influence, it's about those values and it's about those ideas, and it's frankly why I think you're all here today.

Andrew Colvin: When I became commissioner five years ago, I became commissioner on a platform that I sold, I hope sold. Chris was in the room, I think at the time, of what my vision was for the organisation. It was a vision based on my 25 years and what I saw and what I felt and what I thought was required. It wasn't necessarily a perfect vision. It wasn't necessarily well-formed, and five years later I'll probably say it wasn't all that well thought out. But it was a vision. I knew what I wanted to do and I knew what I felt the AFP needed, and I'm sure the same goes across the public service.

Andrew Colvin: I wanted us to be better equipped for the future. I wanted us to be able to have certainty about the future and gets the work that we've done with Rosemary and her team here in finance. I wanted to be comfortable in our skins as the AFP. I

didn't want us to feel uncertain about who we were, what we did. I wanted us to have a steel like focus on what we wanted to be good at, and I wanted us to be just this steel like in our focus on what things we should discard and jettison along the way. And I really wanted to make sure that we were adding value, we weren't just going through the motions. That no matter what we did, that we were bringing somebody to the table.

Andrew Colvin: The AFP is six and a half thousand people strong, and that includes nearly a thousand people here in Canberra. In some ways in the public service, it sounds like a medium sized to larger sized organisation, in policing terms, it's a small organisation. There's many organisations, many police organisations in Australia bigger than the AFP. So what will we bring to the table? What was our value proposition and where we laser like in our focus of understanding what that was. I wanted to know that we were adding value.

Andrew Colvin: But to get there it became very clear to me early on that we needed to change, and that we needed to transform. Like every leader that comes into an organisation, you start to turn rocks over. You start thinking, let me have a look here. I want to play with this. I want to see what we can do better here, and you find things that you weren't prepared for. I can tell you five years down the track in the AFP, and I've got some of my senior colleagues with me and I look in the room a lot of AFP, we found a lot of things that we weren't prepared for. A lot of things that when I set at my interview before becoming commissioner, that I wasn't aware of in the AFP. Should I been? Maybe.

Andrew Colvin: So five years down the track, are we where I want us to be? No, we're nowhere near it. We're a long way advanced, and unless the next commissioner wants to be in the job for 10, 15, 20 years, he won't see it through either, and she won't see through after that, or whoever it might be. This is always going to be an iterative process and you'll rarely get it done in the time that you think. I remember quite distinctly in my mind having a plan when I became commissioner. And naively, I thought, well that should take two years, maybe three. Then I'll be able to settle in and support what I've done, and bare in what I've done. No, it's not like that at all. It takes a lot longer. But we have made significant progress and I'm really proud of everybody in the AFP for supporting us in that endeavour and the progress we've made.

Andrew Colvin: A lot's been said, if you Google the AFP or your Google my time as commissioner, maybe not recently, about media freedoms, but go back a little bit. I know there's media in the room to please be coined. But if you look at what we've tried to do, a lot of the focus will be about culture. It will be about diversity, it will be about inclusion, it will be about some of the tough decisions that we've taken internally, to look deeply at ourselves and see not what we do but how we do it, not who people think we are, but who we think that we are. And we've done some really good work as Rosemary said.

Andrew Colvin: In that culture and, and diversity space, I think we've got some things that we can be proud of, but we've got some work to do. We've seen a 31% increase across the AFP in females in leadership positions. We've seen a 36% increase in females

in the SES. We've increased our people within the organisation, readily identifying as Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander. We sit at around two and a half percent, which is getting closer to where we should be with the population. We've seen significant rises in people who self-identify as LGBTI. We have a target there are 10% because that's what the community would be, is about 10% people identifying. So, it makes sense that in my organisation in the AFP, there's probably 10% of people. Until they're comfortable and confident to come out and to declare themselves or to identify, we're not doing the job that we need. So we've got a lot closer to that.

Andrew Colvin: Now we've seen a 7% increase in our female protective service officers. We've seen a 4% increase in our female police officers and we've seen a 4% increase in women in the AFP generally. Now, those numbers are small. I'd love to very stand here and give you double digit numbers. But the truth is, and this isn't a reflection to finance because I'm standing here in finance, but as an organisation, we're pled out in our numbers. If anything, we've gone down in numbers over the last few years, for good reason. So trying to change a demographic when you're actually not expanding is tough. It's tricky. Trying to change the demographic when you're recruiting and growing and building is a lot easier. So I'm really proud of the fact that we've made the hard decisions that we needed to make and we've made them early. But it hasn't just been about culture, it's been about our operating model as well.

Andrew Colvin: I wanted us to move to an operating model that was based around our capabilities and our future sustainability, including our funding sustainability, not about the numbers of police. So you'll hear me talk rarely about how many police I have. You'll hear me talk a lot more about what I can do with what I've got. Do I have the right capabilities? I'll use the adage and I've used it for five years now, that I want to be sure that when a police officer knocks on a door, regardless of what is on the other side of that door, regardless of the reason they're there, they know that there is a line of people behind them ready to support them with every eventuality that sits behind that door. Because that's the role of police. That's the life of police. We don't always know what's next, we don't always know what's around the corner. But we need to make sure that we've got the capabilities to support them.

Andrew Colvin: We've also brought a really sharp focus on our impact. There is always going to be more work than a police force can do. There's never been a ... Minister Dutton said it the other day when announcing the new police commissioner. He's yet to find a police commission that doesn't ask for more resources. He won't find a new police commissioner that doesn't ask for more resources. But there will always be more crime than a police force can deal with. So we needed to get laser-like about making sure that we were dealing with the crimes that were going to have the most impact on the criminal environment. Rather than just the next crime. That meant some really tough decisions inside of the AFP at its most basic level, we stopped worrying about the size of a seizure of drugs and worried more about, if we decide to take this matter on and take it to 10th degree, who are we likely to arrest? Who are we likely to dismantle?

- Andrew Colvin: It saw that we'd stop worrying about transaction or high volume crimes that we see in child exploitation for instance, and start to focus on how can we actually make a meaningful difference in the environment. That's a trick and that's a challenge for police. Because it might mean that the outcome is not always an arrest and prosecution. It might mean other outcomes that will actually have a better effect on the environment.
- Andrew Colvin: Of course, we've done a lot of work on our health and well-being in the AFP. And again, you don't have to look very hard to the challenges that the AFP and policing and frankly, might I add society has with mental health and with suicide, and we need to call it out for what it is. But the AFP has made significant steps. We did it before our current challenges that we had because we knew that we needed to do more to support our members, and we'll continue to transform and we'll continue to make that a front objective, front line objective for the AFP.
- Andrew Colvin: What have I learned through all of that? I'm trying to be conscious of time. I hope I'm not going to go over time too much. Let me give you a couple of lessons and a few one liners just to take away. The first one is, and there's people in this room that hate it, Dr. Black, wherever you are, culture trumps strategy, each and every time. I really believe it. I've believed that for five years. I believe it now and I'll believe it in whatever I'll do next. You can have the best plans, the best strategy, but if you don't have the culture, you'll fail. If you don't have an organisation that wants to change you'll fail, if you don't have an organisation that believes in the change, you will fail.
- Andrew Colvin: It doesn't matter what you put on your posters, in your corporate plans, in your annual report, it doesn't matter what I say or what you say in your master's or your all staff messages, if you don't have a culture that's ready to change and transform, then you will fail. If your workforce is empathetic, if it's this interested, if it's not motivated, you will fail. Culture will trump strategy every time. In police we have a nostalgic culture. I suggest it's probably the same in many other agencies across the Commonwealth as well. We love tradition. We love conformity. We love collective vision. We love compliance. It's what we do. It's what we hold strong. We love tradition, but not managed properly, that will be a killer for transformation. Because the old adage of we've always done it that way and it's always worked, will stop you each and every time. You're to break that shackle, you're to break that assumption, because culture will trump strategy.
- Andrew Colvin: The good news is when you look at David Thodey's speech to IPAA, when you talk to him and hear what he's been up to, there's a public service out there that wants to change, it has an appetite for change, is keen and eager and can see why we need to change. So we've got a long way down the path before we even start.
- Andrew Colvin: The second one though is to know your workforce, and it flows very much from that first one. Know what your workforce is. Because this is what I've learned. I was told this upfront, I didn't know that I believed it but I guarantee it's true. On any change journey that you start, you're going to have about a third of the organisation, probably 30%, that you don't need to convince. They're on board

already. In fact, they'd probably move the argument from their head to their heart, and they're ready to go. Just point them in the right direction and they're off to make those changes. I daresay a lot of the people who come on a yucky Monday night, in the middle of Canberra winter, are already in that 30%. You've probably got about 30% of the organisation who are ignorant, not interested, haven't listened to a that you've said. Okay, they come to work, they go home, they're happy, and you know what? They probably do a fantastic job. But they're disinterested, they're apathetic.

Andrew Colvin: You've got 10% of the organisation, maybe more, maybe less, who want to kill the change. I don't care about it, I don't care whether it's good, bad or indifferent, they will want to kill that change. And then you've got another 30%, and this is the important 30% that you have to focus your work on. Hopefully I'm in finance, that adds up to a hundred. Pretty sure it does. Just checking! God help the new commissioner. That's the 30% you have to focus on, because that's the 30% who want to know, want to understand, want to champion it, they just need to be convinced why. They just need to know, what does it mean to them, why should they change? If you can get and if you can focus on that 30%, then you will find that 60 to 65% will get your change through, will build the momentum for what you need. So you need to focus on that.

Andrew Colvin: Don't as I did, focus too much on the 10%, worrying about those that will always be critics. Okay, I got to the point of calling them cultural terrorists. That's a terrible term I know. But it wasn't going to matter what I said or did, they weren't going to be convinced, and I wasted too much energy focused on them. I needed to focus on the ones that were ready to change.

Andrew Colvin: Then that ask the question, why? Why are you changing in the first place? Do you believe in the change? Have you articulated the change? And no matter how many times you've stood up and said, this is what we're doing, keep selling the message. Because long after you've given up on your message and you're sick of hearing yourself say it, is when people start listening. There's statistics that say that people don't hear a message until they've heard it 18 times. Now, as a leader, I can tell you I get sick of it after the first four or five, I think I said it. What else - didn't they hear it? No, they didn't.

Andrew Colvin: Don't give up. Whatever effort you've put into the why part of the equation for transformation, double it, triple it, because I guarantee you're under cooking it, and that's a lesson that we've certainly learned. You've got to keep it simple, but you've got to reinforce it. You've got to keep it simple, but you can't compromise it. When the challenges comes and the bows and arrows and things come and start coming in from the side, don't lose sight of what you're trying to do. Because as soon as you compromise, as soon as you go, well maybe he will step back, or maybe he's not as committed anymore, you'll fail. That 30% that we're waiting to be convinced, just add it to your 10% or at best, they're in 30% empathetic.

Andrew Colvin: Know the reasons why, know the statistics of it, know the business analysis of it, know why it's going to make you a better organisation, but don't think that will

win the day. Because again, most of your audience probably understands stats and understand business prerogatives and logic, but they want to understand why. They want to move it from the head to the heart. So don't over engineer your statistics, don't over engineer the business analysis, absolutely over engineer how this will change for an individual, and make it about the individual. Make it meaningful.

Andrew Colvin: The other thing I learned too, I started this journey as commissioner once we realised the changes we needed to make, and thought, well I wish I had a burning platform. And again, some people in the room will know, I used to talk about this. We don't have a burning platform to use, if we just had a Royal commission. No, I don't think we really want that. If I just had some catastrophe that I needed to deal with, I'd have the momentum to get the change. You know what? It's okay to have a burning ambition. It's okay just to want something more. It's okay to think we can be better. We're great and we can be fantastic. We're fantastic and we can be awesome. We're awesome and we can be the best. It's okay to have a burning ambition. You don't have to have a burning platform. In fact, I now feel that if we have a burning platform, you've probably got a bigger problem with the change, because it's going to be forced on you, rather than be organic.

Andrew Colvin: And that takes me to leadership. Transformation absolutely across leadership. If you don't believe in what you're trying to do, you will fail. If your organisation can see through you and you are not genuine, then you will fail. If you falter the first step when the challenges come, you will fail. Don't compromise. Own the vision and be accountable. One of the things that we did that was highly controversial in the AFP was not the review, there was a big project due to the AFP that was controversial enough, but to make it so public.

Andrew Colvin: That was a really tricky decision for us to make and for me to make to go public with those findings. It wasn't with the edits critics inside the organisation. In fact, one of the strongest memories I have, that will stay with me is, the reaction of the organisation who said, "Commissioner, you just embarrassed us." I've had to go home and tell my family that that's not me that they're reading about on the front page of The Australian. That I'm not that person. And you know what they weren't, because it's always a small number of people that make it bad for everybody.

Andrew Colvin: But if I didn't own our problems, if I didn't make myself publicly accountable with our problems, then I would've been like, I counted up four reviews since I've been in the AFP, that all came to the same conclusion, but nothing actually changed. Because we were able to sweep more, under that massive carpet, that was building up for that AFP. So you've got to own it. You've got to take accountability for it. As I often say, your backside needs to be in a sling. And you've got to find other people who are going to put their backside in the sling as well. Because as much as you want to delegate, and you should delegate, that's a good part of leadership, don't delegate too far because what you're going to do is disperse the message. You need to make sure that you're going to own it and you're going to be accountable for it. It requires leadership. Don't let the message be diluted.

- Andrew Colvin: Couple more very quickly, and then I really am keen to get some questions. Closely aligned to that leadership is, what is the authorising environment? Why are you doing this? Is the minister on board, is the CEO and the organisation on board? Is the secretary on board? Commissioner, whoever it might be. Is the SES on board, is your senior leadership team on board? And when I say on board, it gets back to where it came from with that leadership. I don't mean, "Yes boss. This is a great idea. We're right there with you." They've got a stake in it. If this fails, they fail, not just you.
- Andrew Colvin: That translates to any level of transformation. It doesn't matter if you're a frontline IPS six and you want to make changes in your organisation. You need the people below you who are going to help you deliver on that. They need to own it as much as you do. Because nothing is sure, that if you don't have your leadership team on the same page as you, and running hard with you, then you'll fail. So what's the authorising environment? Are you prepared to lose it all in order to get these changes done?
- Andrew Colvin: Then the last one that is probably more a lesson that I've learned over the last 12 months to two years, but it's probably one of the most important. Don't let perfection be the enemy of the good. We've done that in the AFP for far, far too long. Transformations and changes that were well intentioned, and we still do it to this day, have stagnated and stalled because we wanted it to be perfect. We found every reason along the way to say why it isn't perfect, therefore, let's not go to the next stage. Now I get that, that's admirable. We should always aspire to be perfect, we should always aspire to not make mistakes. But it's easier to turn the titanic if it's moving than if it's standing still.
- Andrew Colvin: So don't let the quest for perfect get in the way of doing good things and building momentum and driving forward. And if you have to fail, fail first, accept it and move on. Because you're not going to get it perfect. Coming back to what I said at the start, you're not going to get it perfect. It's going to be messy. It's going to be ugly. I stand here five years down the track as commissioner, if I knew now what I thought I knew, sorry if I knew in 2014 what I now know that I know. Wow, I'll start that again.
- Andrew Colvin: I knew at the start what I know now, would I've done it differently? Yes, I would. Would I've simplified my messages? Yes I would. Would I have not embarked on an ambitious programme? No, I would still have done that, but would have done it differently. But I still stand here after five years knowing that we have changed the foundations of the AFP and I feel confident for a new commissioner coming in eight weeks' time or there about, that he will be able to build on those foundations. It's incumbent on all of us as leaders to do what we can to make the next person who follows us better than we are. That's what we should be doing and that's why we should be making changes, so that they don't have to. Or their changes can build on the changes that we've made.
- Andrew Colvin: Rosemary and Carmel, Drew, thank you very much for the opportunity today. I really appreciate it. I've enjoyed my opportunities with IPAA. I look forward to the next few sessions, you've got a great schedule coming up. To everyone that came

out tonight, I really appreciate it. It says a lot about you, about why you would want to be here on an evening that is not the greatest of the evenings I know, but it says a hell of a lot about you, so thank you very much for your time.

Carmel McGregor: Well done and thank you so much for some pretty honest reflections on what's been a very challenging five years, and an ambitious five years, and sharing with us some of those achievements. I guess I was interested, because Rosemary even when you started, you mentioned stewardship and therefore that's about legacy and it's about what is the ... As people turn over or change and whatever else, and so that's an issue which will be facing the AFP in a matter of weeks.

Carmel McGregor: So, the transition to someone new who everyone wants to put their own imprint, but is, it's not about an individual, it's about an organisation. It's part of the greater public administration or public sector. How do you sustain that or what do you do and how do you keep the ... Because my next question was going to be something about the leadership below you that needs certainly to keep that transformation enduring. Do you want to just comment on that? I might see what Rosemary would like to say as well.

Andrew Colvin: It's a good question and I found myself thinking about that a lot. But, I guess if the changes in the transition and the transformation you're making are based and grounded on foundational values and principles, then they will endure no matter what. Now I'm really pleased that the government have announced my successor. I know the individual well and I know that his vision and his values align very closely with what I think the AFP's vision and values align. And that's important, will he want to do things differently. Yes, he should want to do things differently, but I'm confident that he can take the building blocks that we've started because the building blocks that are about who we are, not what we do.

Andrew Colvin: The building blocks that are about our values rather than just our outcomes. And that's what we've tried to ground a lot of what the AFP's transformation has been about that, it's about the values, it's about our culture, it's about our identity, it's about who we are, the building blocks on which you build an organisation. So, it will be a challenge for the organisation. It will be a challenge for the new commissioner that we're going to have to go through a little bit of uncomfortableness when he looks at things and goes, "Well, I don't like that or I do like that." But I'm very comfortable and confident that the core parts of what we've done will stand the test of time.

Carmel McGregor: Okay. Rose, would you want to make a comment as well?

Rosemary Huxtable: Yeah. I think on the stewardship theme, as we've developed it here, yes, I agree with Andrew, it is pretty cool that you're setting the tone at the top and you're really communicating your expectations. The reason we do that and the reason we're committed to stewardship, it's not because it makes our lives easier in a sense, it's really about how do you generate sustainable outcomes, how are you as effective as you can be? And I think, when people come to work every day, their ambition is to be as effective as they can be, and so you've also got to really

empower staff to be communicating about, what is the most effective way that we can do our work.

Rosemary Huxtable: It's not always easy to take a stewardship approach because you've got to be a really good listener. You've got to develop those foundation partnerships, you've got to build trust. But I think it doesn't take long for people to understand that you get a much more sustainable, enduring outcome from that. Because if you see every interaction as a series of tactical battles, where you might win the odd tactical battle, but you're not going to really create the foundation to achieve the long term end that you want to achieve.

Rosemary Huxtable: So, I think you need to almost do it from both ends of the organisation but ... And it does beget itself over time because people get a lot of satisfaction in working that way. A lot of positive feedback from other entities. And I think at the end of the day we're all much more influential and effective through those partnerships.

Andrew Colvin: Look, just I think ... this reflecting what Rosemary said, she's spot on. When I think about the AFP experience, I don't believe it would be possible, and certainly wouldn't be easy to turn off what we've started because, the organisation owns it now. And it's not about the new commissioner or the new senior executive team or whatever. It's about the organisation and the organisation will sustain that change.

Carmel McGregor: That next level of leadership, where you mentioned Andrew about, you've got to own it, you can't dilute it. But equally you need that next level to be fundamentally there to sustain and support and generate a much broader view that it's not just about one person. Do you want to just say something about how you really built that leadership?

Andrew Colvin: Yeah, that's crucial. It can't be about an individual, can't be key man or key lady syndrome, it's got to be about the organisation, it's got to be about collectively owning it. We spent a lot of time as a senior executive team over the last five years, probably more time than I can remember in certainly my time in the SES, as a team, working at what we want to do, and developing the plans and the solutions together. Sure the direction might have been things that came from the deputies or the commissioners, oh commissioners, commissioner, obviously was only one of me, or the deputies, but we took it to the SES. And that's a double edged sword too, you can't consult and try and create consensus too much.

Andrew Colvin: But we did that, we worked hard to get consensus, we worked hard to build ownership of the message. We worked hard to make sure that people were on the same page. Were we successful with time Carmel? No, I'd be honest with you, we weren't. But you've got to keep at that. That's not a set and forget. You can't assume that everybody understands, agrees and even if they do understand and agree, that they're prepared to drive it for you as well.

Carmel McGregor: Okay.

- Rosemary Huxtable: I agree. I think communication's absolutely essential. And some of it is the structures that you have in your organisation, so whether that be how your executive board is communicating, how your senior leadership group is communicating, being very clear about what your expectations are of leaders in the organisation. I also have a very broad definition of leaders. I think almost everyone in the organisation is a leader, anyone who is supervising anyone has a leadership responsibility. And I think it's also really important to talk to staff about what they should expect from their leaders so that you're also empowering to have a voice, and to demand that their voices heard in that process.
- Carmel McGregor: Very good. Now we do have a question over here. Thank you.
- Andy: Brian Andy, work for transformation within the Australian Army. Can you just speak about, from an AFP perspective, how you found the challenges of being an employer's workforce? And one way typically we don't recruit from the career level, and then how that does impeded your training, your change process.
- Andrew Colvin: Good question. As you know, in policing the general rule of thumb is you start at the bottom and you work your way through, and it's probably more ... The AFP is probably further progressed in our state and territory colleagues on this than anyone, but we still have an absolute lack of diversity of thinking, diversity of experience and thought, coming in from the side. We're getting better at that. How has it made it difficult? I'll tell you how it's made it difficult and especially even for me. As commissioner, I'm sure, Leanne is here as a deputy, and I've got other SES, when you have grown up in an organisation, for me I joined when I was 19, there is nothing that has happened in that organisation that you haven't felt some connection to. So the baggage that you carry all the way through to the role of commissioner is huge.
- Andrew Colvin: And when you stand there with Elizabeth Broderick and talk about the pitfalls of your culture, you naturally stand there thinking, what role have I played in this? What conversations have I taken part in? What have I turned a blind eye to? Now that clouds your thinking when you need absolute clarity. And I do think that organisations that either structurally or through their culture are better at bringing diversity of thought, diversity of background, experience, culture, whatever it might be into their senior levels is far better versed to make change than organisation that has grown up in this through the same ... We wonder why we don't have diversity.
- Andrew Colvin: We take people from incredibly diverse backgrounds, we put them through the same mince machine, and we get out at the other end, the person that we have trained and that we want. We don't get the diversity we need. So yeah, it does my transformation hard because again, it's that nostalgic culture that sits within police or the military particularly that hold ourselves very tightly to our traditions and that can be problematic.
- Carmel McGregor: So I don't know whether it's different of course for Rosemary in the IPS, but you do wonder whether you want to comment about the phenomena of group think, or adherence to a particular way of thinking as opposed to embracing diversity.

- Rosemary Huxtable: Actually, I do have a comment too in respect of that question. From my observation of both defence and the AFP, there comes a point in people's journey through those organisations where they move away from operational, and move toward policy and strategic and probably functions that are much more like the functions that our leadership teams perform. And we've certainly had a very strong relationship with defence. That's changed and developed over the past few years, particularly after the first principles review. And the reason really that underpins the strength of our relationship now is that capacity to stand on each other's shoes. So, the opportunity in the case of defence are sitting on the defence investment committee, which came out of the first principles review.
- Rosemary Huxtable: I talked about how people are being seconded into the AFP to work on particular things. I think the opportunity for those entities to also have people, seconded to us. But, it really does change the dynamic when you're creating structures where people cannot be about disputing facts but about developing solutions, and finding solutions and finding the shared space. And for us more broadly, I don't think it's really any different to that.
- Rosemary Huxtable: We put a lot of effort into engaging at our senior levels with other departments. We have formal executive board, engagement with executive boards from departments. Not to go through specific problems, but more to share challenges and talk about what are the things that we're going to be dealing with in the next six to 12 months as departments. And that just begins to create that foundation of relationships and foundation of trust, where you can have a much more mature engagement and conversation I think.
- Andrew Colvin: One of the things that the AFP is doing a lot more than we used to is encouraging secondment. Encouraging people to step outside the organisation, and that there isn't a negative aspect to that. It's not all that long ago, in fact it's quite recent memory in policing that, if you left, you were seen to have left. Why would you leave and you're not welcome back. We're turning that on its head and making it quite permissible to leave, not just permissible, encouraged to leave particularly at senior levels, and then come back in with new experiences. So, again, that's a culture shift though for policing. I suggest it's probably a culture shift for the defence force as well.
- Carmel McGregor: Thank you. Now, do we have any other questions, any more hands in the air?
- Katherine Jones: Katherine Jones, Finance. Be interested in reflection from both of you because, you've talked a lot about both your passion for driving reform in your organisations, and as leaders, you've got a real sense of ... that's part of your obligation as a leader in an organisation. We talk at the moment about disruption, about the future of work, that change is always coming at us from external forces. How do you convince staff at all levels of your organisation that they can do their business as usual, do their delivery and engage with transformation and change, and perhaps persuade people who sometimes talk about, "All right, I'll deal with change for a bit, but then I want change to finish, and I want to get back to doing my day job." What's the way to cut through and encourage people not to think about it in a binary way of change or no change?

Andrew Colvin: Good question KJ. There is such a thing as changed fatigue in its real. And organisations feel it, individuals feel it all the time. And I think what can happen is when an organisation embarks on a transformation to change, everything that is BAU, and BAU keep in mind is not stagnate, do the same thing the way you've always done it, BAU is constantly improve but improve within the realm of what you are doing, all of a sudden becomes linked to a change agenda, when in fact it's just BAU.

Andrew Colvin: So, what we found in the AFP was as soon as we publicly said we have a future ready agenda, we are changing this organisation, everything became part of the change agenda. So, the eight or 10 or 20 principle things you want to do all of a sudden became a hundred as everybody just threw their normal BAU into the pot of change in positive way. The intention was good, but the outcome meant that they gave ownership to somebody else, and we forgot that BAU is about constantly evolving and reforming new processes anyway, in the public service particularly.

Andrew Colvin: I have a really strong view that, in policing but I'm sure it goes for all of the public service, the public sector. If you are maintaining the status crawl, then you are going backwards. Because the pace is too quick around us. We can't just allow evolution to get us by, we have to actually start forcing some of those changes. And I think that's what happens. So change fatigue is real. That gets back to how do you make it meaningful for the individual to want to change. But also, again, if I thought about this, if I was doing this again or starting the journey, I'd be very clear about what is the change agenda that we're doing at an enterprise wide level, organisational level. But my expectation is everywhere, people are constantly seeking to improve, that you are constantly testing the assumptions of the practises around you and refining them and improving them. I think we muddled that up in the AFP a little.

Rosemary Huxtable: Well, I think too, it's important to celebrate success in the change journey and like, I agree that it's like we're changing all the time. The environment around us is changing all the time. We need to change with it. My experience is that people are really keen to find ways to do things differently and find opportunities and really engage with those opportunities.

Rosemary Huxtable: We've made, as you know, as you've been leading it, we've made it very clear in our business planning processes, that we have a very structured approach to business planning, it fits in with our financial cycle, and there's a focus on what have you done to improve the way you work, and what are your plans to continue to improve the way you work. And I think it is very important to identify the successes. But I think often we don't, we're not very good at that. We just keep moving without stopping and reflecting and saying, this is what we've achieved, so I think that's really important.

Carmel McGregor: Can I ask you, Andrew, perhaps this will be the last question, but what has been your proudest moment over these five years?

Andrew Colvin: Sure, warming me up the truck. Now I shouldn't have an answer to that. And I think that-

Carmel McGregor: Too often last question like, what's been the biggest disaster?

Andrew Colvin: No, I-

Carmel McGregor: We want to know.

Andrew Colvin: Just read the paper. What I'm proudest of, what I'm absolutely proud of in my time as commissioner is we didn't shy away from the difficult problems. We confronted them and tackle them head on rather than do, what I think the easy course would have been, and frankly, the course that is taken more often than not, tinker with the edges but don't actually address the real challenges. So I walk away from the organisation, from policing knowing that we took on headfirst, the tricky issues, and we made ourselves accountable for it.

Carmel McGregor: Thank you. Well, thank ... Can you please join me in thanking both Andrew and Rosemary.