



INSTITUTE OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AUSTRALIA



IPAA ACT PUBLIC SECTOR ACHIEVEMENT MODEL

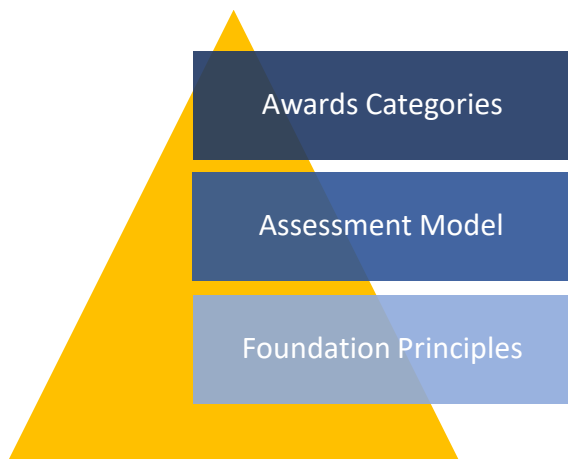
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In partnership with:



THE IPAA ACT PUBLIC SECTOR ACHIEVEMENT MODEL

The foundation for the IPAA ACT Public Sector Awards is the IPAA ACT Public Sector Achievement Model (the Model). This Model draws on the best features of international excellence frameworks and assessment methodologies and contains the following elements:



The **Award Categories** are the achievement areas of focus for each awards cycle and may change from time to time.

The **Assessment Model** describes the assessment stages and the assessment components against which the initiative will be assessed.

The **Foundation Principles** underpin the Model. They are used to determine the extent to which excellence and innovation form part of accepted practice for conceiving, designing, implementing and reviewing initiatives. They also form part of the Assessment Model.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Each year Awards will be offered in four or five Categories that describe the areas of achievement that will be recognised in any given year. These Categories may change from year to year. In 2023 the Award Categories will be:

COLLABORATION AWARD—Recognising cross-agency and/or cross-jurisdiction initiatives where organisations have collaborated to deliver superior outcomes.

This Award acknowledges that the complexity of contemporary challenges within Australia will be addressed in a more comprehensive way when solutions are not limited by structures and hierarchies. Sustained outcomes are achieved through meaningful and ongoing collaboration within and across organisations and jurisdictions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD—Recognising initiatives where communities have been engaged in novel ways and have played a key role in designing and delivering superior services, regulations and policies that positively impact the quality of community life.

This Award acknowledges that competing stakeholder views and needs must be considered when designing or changing a policy, program, or project. The extent to which the needs and expectations of different stakeholders will be satisfied may vary, but it is important that they are clearly defined in order to ensure excellent and innovative outcomes.

BREAKTHROUGH AWARD—Recognising initiatives that develop and/or apply novel and ingenious analyses, products, processes, services, technologies and/or management practices to create better outcomes for beneficiaries. Breakthroughs also include continuous improvement and repurposing of existing practices.

This Award acknowledges the importance of high-quality thinking when defining a challenge and designing and implementing a response. It is also about the ability to apply an open and constructive mindset and a readiness to explore new ideas and accept new ways of working within the framework that applies to public sector activities.

LEARNING AWARD—Recognising initiatives that deliberately engage with risk and potential failure to build public administration practice to address complex problems. This Award is about the bold journey

of taking on difficult challenges where the path is not clear and failure is part of the improvement process that leads to further learning and better outcomes.

This Award acknowledges that underway or complete learning journeys require a willingness to falter and learn from calculated trials, mistakes, and changes in operating conditions in order to future-proof complex issues.

The Judges will select one winner and one runner-up in each of the Award categories. Winning entries should show practical application and measurable success. One discretionary Award will also be offered each year, the **Kerry Kennedy Award**. This Award recognises organisations that are 'punching above their weight' and demonstrating excellence and innovation. This Award honours the late Mr Kerry Kennedy for his contributions to IPAA ACT and its past Award programs.

Nominating agencies can choose the Award Category(ies) against which they want to be assessed.

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES

Decades of leadership and management research, theory and practice show that organisations will achieve high performance if they are guided by principles that address capability in all aspects of the organisation's systems. IPAA ACT has developed eight principles that underpin capability in the public sector. They are:

- Provide clear direction and leadership;
- Identify stakeholder needs and expectations, and use these to define positive outcomes;
- Use breakthrough thinking to drive and implement innovation;
- Use a holistic approach to innovation and continuous improvement;
- Build, capture and share individual, team and organisational learning;
- Underpin all activities with sound planning and governance;
- Ensure that decisions are based on data, information and knowledge; and
- Focus on results and outcomes that add value in a sustainable way.

The high-level factors that need to be present as a precursor for sustainable achievement are articulated in these principles and all eight principles need to be linked together in a systematic way to deliver positive outcomes and results for an organisation.

Provide clear direction and leadership

Outstanding results and outcomes in an initiative do not usually happen by accident. They typically occur because teams have a clear direction and purpose that helps them to know what to do, why they are doing it and how their individual and team efforts will contribute to achieving excellent outcomes.

Effective leaders are able to clearly articulate a purpose and motivate a team to strive towards a common goal. They inspire trust and build strong relationships, both inside and outside the team, to unleash talent and build resourcefulness and enthusiasm within a team. They are also able to align systems and marshal the resources that will support the team in achieving excellent outcomes. These key leadership characteristics can reside in any team member, not just with those individuals that hold formal leadership roles.

This principle encourages explicit consideration of the leadership approach and the overarching roles and responsibilities which support an initiative, rather than simply opting for the default setting of normal organisational leadership roles.

Identify stakeholder needs and expectations, and use these to define positive outcomes

Stakeholders/citizens/end-users ... different words are used to describe the key recipients of public sector activities and these recipients can be either internal or external to the public service. In an environment where the public sector is constantly under pressure to deliver high-quality services with limited resources, it is

important to understand what stakeholders want, need or expect in order to ensure excellent and innovative outcomes.

Teams within the public sector often work with a wide range of individuals and groups whose complex needs must be considered in designing or changing a policy, program, or project. The extent to which the objectives of different stakeholders need to be satisfied will vary, but it is important that they are clearly defined.

This principle is not only about process, nor only about outcomes; it is the process of defining stakeholder requirements in order to inform the specification of desired outcomes.

Use breakthrough thinking to drive and implement innovation

Innovation includes any non-trivial application of new or improved methods; it is the process of developing and applying novel products, processes, technologies and management practices to create significant value for stakeholders and users. It is not solely restricted to 'big bang' changes or inventions and it can apply to technologies, products, services, processes and management practices.

Innovation results from learning from others, developing a novel insight into a problem, and understanding the needs of stakeholders. Innovation can be a leading-edge idea that is world's first thinking that has never been applied elsewhere. Equally, it can be just as valuable to have innovation by bringing in a process that is new to a particular agency (even if it is well established in other areas), or by applying an existing approach in new areas or in new ways. Because there are a wide variety of public sector organisations with many different challenges and constraints, innovation may not look the same in each one, or even within different areas of a single organisation.

Irrespective of the approach to innovation, this principle is about excellence in the quality of thinking applied to defining a challenge and designing and implementing a response. Breakthrough thinking refers to the ability to apply an open and constructive mindset, and a preparedness to accept new ideas within the framework that applies to public sector activities.

Use a holistic approach to innovation and continuous improvement

Innovation may be many things—it may be a measured change or a more progressive change; it may consist of a continuous improvement approach that systematically seeks to achieve incremental changes to improve efficiency and quality, or a discontinuous approach where a complete break is made from the past; it may result from a 'light bulb' moment where a new technology, product, service or process is invented and implemented.

Innovation takes place within a larger context or system, and sustainable results are more likely to be achieved if a holistic approach is taken to understand the forces and relationships that shape that context. Taking a holistic and long-term view of innovation ensures a better understanding of the delays and feedback loops that occur over time as change is happening. This contextual approach also helps to reveal any potential unintended consequences which may result from the changes.

This principle is about taking a holistic-thinking approach that not only conceives of an initiative as part of a broader context or system but which also plans, implements and monitors it in a way that pays attention to the direct and indirect impacts, consequences and outcomes that flow from it.

Build, capture and share individual, team and organisational learning

Outstanding results and outcomes are underpinned by individual, team and organisational learning. At its simplest, learning can involve correcting errors, fixing problems and making sure that work is done in the right way (single-loop learning). As learning becomes more embedded into a team or organisation, team members begin to question underlying assumptions and beliefs about whether the team is doing the right things (double-loop learning). As the culture of an organisation shifts towards a learning culture, learning can move beyond insight and context into understanding how problems and solutions are related, even when they are separated in space and time. This is triple-loop learning and, at its heart, it is about how we decide what is right.

This principle encourages building purposeful processes into management systems that capture learning (single, double or triple loop) in a systematic way so that it is sustainable over time. It also includes using learnings in different situations, including application to other initiatives and activities in the organisation.

Underpin all initiatives and activities with sound planning and governance

Governance refers to the broad range of processes, structures and institutions used to control an activity. Governance is multi-dimensional and can include:

- Processes, structures and institutions external to the organisation and often provide the broad framework in which the organisation must operate. For example, codes of ethics, legislation, accountability and reporting to/on behalf of key groups such as parliament, ratepayers or statutory office-holders;
- Internal processes and structures that are common across the organisation. For example, lines of management authority and delegation, internal committees and internal audits;
- Internal processes and structures that are specific to the program or project. For example, steering committees, project-specific risk management plans and stakeholder advisory groups;
- Internal and external risk management frameworks, strategies and processes;
- Internal people-focussed frameworks, strategies and processes that are required to deliver a successful policy, project or program and also ensure that the organisation's culture is able to sustain outcomes in the longer term;
- Culture change management frameworks, processes and strategies that focus on shifting/transitioning individuals, teams and organisations from a current state to a desired future state; and
- Change management as a project management tool to manage changes during project planning and implementation.

This principle encourages the application of governance and planning to all aspects of an initiative because they enhance the ability to achieve the desired results and outcomes, and may also enhance the ability to successfully complete other projects and programs.

Ensure that decisions are based on data, information and knowledge

An initiative is more likely to achieve its outcomes if it uses existing or newly obtained data, information and knowledge to support decision-making and to track progress, performance and results.

Qualitative and quantitative data that is used to support initiatives may be gathered from a wide range of sources, including best practices from other organisations internal and external to the public sector, scientific and other academic research, data collected for the specific initiative, or information and knowledge applied from another field of activity.

This principle encourages the definition and recording of data, information and knowledge in a purposeful way that improves objective decision-making about the initiative, its progress, its results and its success.

Focus on results and outcomes that add value in a sustainable way

The objective of any initiative should be to deliver positive results and outcomes to the targeted beneficiaries and stakeholders. While the processes and systems to achieve this are important to the organisation, the focus should remain on these results and outcomes throughout the entire initiative life-cycle. Desired results and outcomes should:

- Be clearly defined at the beginning;
- Have measurement systems in place;
- Be monitored and measured during implementation; and
- Be reviewed periodically.

The purpose is to ensure that positive results and outcomes can continue to be achieved into the future as well as the immediate present. Commitment to this principle will enhance the ability to sustain success.

ASSESSMENT MODEL

Whilst the Award Categories describe the areas of achievement for each Awards cycle, the Assessment Model and Assessment Components describe the framework against which those achievements will be assessed.

The Assessment Model for the Awards involves a two-stage approach to assessment. For Stage 1 Assessment, nominating agencies will submit an online nomination plus relevant evidence for the Award Categories against which they wish to be assessed. Stage 1 Assessment will ask the nominating agencies to provide information about the 'Why', 'Who', 'What', 'When' and 'How' of the initiative and each nomination will be scored on how

they have put the eight foundation principles into practice. Assessment and scoring will be done by trained volunteer Award Assessors who are drawn from the Commonwealth and ACT public services.

At the end of Stage 1 Assessment, a shortlist of finalists in each Award Category will be asked to progress to Stage 2. For Stage 2 Assessment, nominating agencies will present a short 10-minute pitch presentation to the Judges Panel. These finalists will be provided with pitch training to help them prepare for the final stage of assessment. Pitches may be delivered either face-to-face or by video recording.

Once all the Pitch presentations have been delivered, the Judges Panel will convene and choose the winner and runner-up for each Award Category, plus decide which nomination will receive the Kennedy Award. The Judges will be reviewing the Pitch presentations and the Assessor reports to make their final decision. Winning entries should show practical application and measurable success.

The Judges Panel will comprise eminent persons drawn from the ranks of senior and retired public servants, academia, industry and the community. Judges volunteer their time to assess the Pitches and determine the Award winners each year.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

The **WHY** assessment component seeks information about the triggers for an initiative and the context in which it will be implemented and achieved. At the heart of any initiative is a reason or purpose. That reason or purpose can be inspired by a vision or a strategic goal or be a response to a situation, issue or event. Regardless of how the reason or purpose is identified, success is more likely if the response fits within the context of an organisation's vision, purpose and goals. Without context, an initiative may lack meaning and relevance for the stakeholders who are intended to gain benefit from the initiative. This may also be true for the individuals, teams and organisations that need to translate the reason or purpose into tangible actions, outputs and outcomes.

The **WHO** assessment component seeks information about who will benefit from the initiative and whether those benefits will be experienced directly or indirectly. In the public sector, initiatives are undertaken ultimately to drive positive change for the Australian people. Specific initiatives are typically targeted at specific groups, whereas broader policies and programs point towards the larger systems of society in Australia. Positive outcomes of important initiatives can be experienced directly or indirectly. Regardless of the perspective, a clear understanding of who will be impacted by an initiative will assist in designing responses to issues, situations and events that are people-centric.

The **WHAT** assessment component seeks information about the activities, outputs and outcomes of an initiative. Where an initiative is incomplete, the 'what' assessment component will seek information about progress and, where relevant, positive trends. Whether it is an ongoing policy, program or project, or a one-off initiative that delivers a tangible output or outcome, every endeavour of public sector management produces results. In order to demonstrate that the desired results have been achieved, it is important that both the implementation and the completion of the initiative have been measured and documented. Measurements and performance can be tracked using both qualitative and quantitative performance measures and indicators, and this information should be able to demonstrate a strong cause-and-effect relationship between the work that was undertaken and the results that were achieved or expected to be achieved.

The **WHEN** assessment component seeks information about the timing elements of the initiative. Regardless of whether an initiative is complete or still being implemented, this assessment component will provide an opportunity to describe the development and management of timeframes, strategies used to manage/mitigate delays and the expected/actual timing of delivering the expected outcomes and results for the initiative.

The **HOW** assessment component seeks information about the ways in which the eight foundation principles of the Model are put into practice for an initiative. The way in which an initiative is planned, implemented, monitored, measured, evaluated and reviewed can be predictive of the likelihood of success and, where relevant, the likelihood of sustainable success. The eight principles that underpin the *IPAA ACT Public Sector Achievement Model* all point to areas of better practice that will support excellence and innovation in how individuals, teams and organisations translate the "why" of an initiative into the desired outputs, outcomes and results.

ELIGIBILITY

Commonwealth and ACT Public Sector organisations are eligible for the IPAA ACT Public Sector Awards. Cross-jurisdictional nominations are encouraged, provided the lead organisation is from the Commonwealth or ACT public service. This Awards program explicitly recognises the work of teams, and therefore IPAA ACT will not accept nominations that focus solely on the work of an individual.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any inquiries about the *IPAA ACT Public Sector Achievement Model*, or the IPAA ACT Public Sector Awards, please contact the IPAA ACT team.

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