

TRANSCRIPT OF PODCAST

WORK WITH PURPOSE

EP#1: COVID-19 RESPONSE: ACCELERATING REFORM OF THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE with Peter Woolcott AO, Australian Public Service Commissioner and Katherine Jones PSM, Deputy Secretary, Department of Finance

Hosted by David Pembroke, Founder and CEO, contentgroup

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DAVID PEMBROKE: Hello ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the very first edition of Work with Purpose, a podcast about the Australian Public Service. Two weeks ago I was on my way to work when I struck on the idea to make a podcast about the Australian Public Service. The day before the Australian prime minister had stood in the courtyard at parliament house to talk about COVID-19 and he announced that anyone coming to Australia would face 14 days in self isolation. Foreign cruise ships were banned from docking and it was the first suggestion, or at least the first suggestion that had registered with me, that we were looking at least six months before there was any real resolution to this crisis. Certainly that's when it hit home for me and it was no longer a problem that was a long way away or somebody else's problem. It was a problem, it was a big problem that was heading into my life and the lives of everyone who lives here in Australia and indeed around the world.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So anyway, on that walk to work, I was, as I like to do, listening to a podcast from the United States called Gov Matters. It's a great podcast and it features senior figures in the US Public Service who explain their programmes, their policies, their services and their regulations. It's good, solid, straight forward information communicated respectfully in a way that helps the audience to understand. Anyway, I thought to myself, "Why don't we do the same thing here in Australia?" Given the absolutely fundamental and critical role the Australian government will play in the economy, in our communities and indeed in all of our lives in the weeks, months and years ahead, I thought, "Why not?" That sort of podcast has got great potential and will be really useful for the Australian people. Anyway, without a word of a lie, when I got to my desk, there was a message from my friend and colleague, Drew Baker, who is the CEO of IPAA ACT, which is the Institute of Public Administration in Australia, and Drew had said, "Look, I think IPAA needs to do more content." And we at content group, are IPAA's digital content partner.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Anyway, I told him about the podcast idea and he responded very positively and very quickly. And here we are two weeks later, with a new podcast. So who says that the APS can't move fast? Actually there was a great quote from the Australian health minister last Sunday when announcing the further health policy measures. He said that what would previously have taken 10 years had taken 10 days. And this notion of speed and decision making in a time of crisis will be one of the topics that we will discuss with our guests today, but before we get into the discussion, I do want to say a big thanks to a number of people who were very supportive of Work With Purpose from day one. Reg Chamberlain in the Prime Minister's office, when I reached out to him he said, "Great idea, go for it." Dana Robertson at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Trish Johnson at the communications advice branch over at finance and Naomi Bockler and Richard Bartlett from the Australian Public Service Commission. Thanks to all of you. These things don't happen without cooperation and people supporting good ideas. And from the outside of government, Jane Madden, a former senior and very respected bureaucrat, jumped straight in to lend a hand. So to you Jane, thank you for your encouragement and support.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, Work with Purpose, a podcast about the Australian Public Service. So as a country and as a global community, we are entering completely and totally uncharted waters. No one knows what's ahead, and in many ways it's quite futile to speculate. But what we do know is that the Australian Public Service will be front and centre in delivering the Australian government's agenda in support of the Australian people and the Australian economy. They will be the people who will make it happen. And in many ways the scope and the scale of that involvement is simply massive. I was talking to a colleague yesterday who's been moved into a task force who will be working on plans to restore the airline industry, and if you just think about how big this is across the whole of the Australian economy, the whole of the Australian community, there will be change, massive and unprecedented change. So because of that, I believe that it's critically important that we as citizens, have a much better understanding of how the APS works, how it makes decisions and how it gets things done and what's happening, particularly now as we deal with this unprecedented fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a general observation, I would say that the vast bulk of the Australian public have little to no understanding of the work of the APS beyond the sort of dopey clichés of cardigan wearing, do nothings. But to be fair, I don't think the APS has done a particularly good job in explaining what it does in order to take on these big challenges and to negate some of those stereotypes.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Now, if you're looking for a podcast where people are interrupted, they're challenged at every point and they're not allowed to finish sentences, I'm sorry this isn't for you. These discussions will be me asking what I think are quite simple and basic questions, and the tone will be polite, it will be respectful, it will be civil, it will be constructive. So consider yourself warned. Today we're certainly kicking off Work with Purpose with a bang. Joining me in Studio 19, you get the joke? That was a gag from our technical producer, Ben Curry, earlier today. It has to be said, and we are sitting at a very appropriate social distance, are two of Australia's most senior and influential figures in the Australian Public Service. Peter Woolcott, AO, started his role as Australian Public Service commissioner on the 9th of August, 2018. And Peter, that's my birthday. Peter has a distinguished career in the Australian Public Service serving in a variety of senior diplomatic positions around the world. He served as Australia's High Commissioner to New Zealand between 2016, 17, Ambassador for the environment, 14 to 16, permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, an ambassador for disarmament from 2010 to 2014, ambassador for people's smuggling issues in 2009, an ambassador to Italy in 2004 to 2007. He has also been a Chief of Staff to the Australian Prime Minister, or former Prime Minister. Peter was appointed an officer in the Order of Australia in 2017 for his distinguished service to public administration in the field of international relations and as a lead negotiator in the non-proliferation and arms controls fields. Peter, welcome to Work with Purpose.

PETER WOOLCOTT: Thank you, David.

DAVID PEMBROKE: We're also joined by Katherine Jones, PSM, who was appointed Deputy Secretary of business enabling services at the Department of Finance in October, 2017. Katherine leads corporate and ICT services in the department where her responsibilities are for the provision of facilities and online services for ministers, members of parliament and across government, as well as business services for government departments through the service delivery office. Katherine is also the chair of the whole of government chief operating officer committee that was set up to help deliver the Australian government's reform of the public services part of the secretary's board. But we'll certainly be talking to Katherine about that particular committee. Prior to joining finance, Katherine was the deputy secretary in the Attorney General's department where she led the National Security and emergency management group. And in 2017 Katherine received a public service medal for her outstanding contribution in this role. Before joining the Public Service in 1999, Katherine spent 10 years as a publisher at McGraw-Hill. Katherine, welcome to Work with Purpose.

KATHERINE JONES: Thank you very much.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Why don't we start there? A publisher at McGraw-Hill. What was your role there?

KATHERINE JONES: I worked in academic publishing and so my job was to commission authors to write academic books for the university and secondary school market in Australia. And believe it or not, academic authors are just like the cliché authors in the movies. They're neurotic and they call you in the middle of the night and they're very demanding. So, it was a good lesson early on in my career about managing challenging stakeholders.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So in terms of that journey from publishing into the public service, how did that take place? Did you see a job you liked and thought, "I might apply for that."?

KATHERINE JONES: I have told this story previously, I think I probably had a slight early midlife crisis and I loved my job in publishing, it was absolutely fantastic, a lot of fun. But talking about Working with Purpose, I actually felt that it wasn't going to be the job where I was going to make a difference. So I made a strange decision at that point. I decided to go off and do a law degree, which if you're looking to make a purpose, is not serve purpose with purpose. It's perhaps not always the decision people would take, but I did that. I knew pretty quickly doing that degree that I didn't want to practise law, I wanted to work in government. And I was just very lucky, I got the opportunity to work in the Attorney General's Department and had a fantastic career working across a range of areas there.

DAVID PEMBROKE: What do you like about working in the Public Service?

KATHERINE JONES: I like working with people who actually do have a sense of mission and contributing, and I think that permeates every part of the service that I've worked in. That sense of really being able to help Australians help deliver on government priorities. And I've been fortunate to work in areas where people have been really imbued with that sense of purpose.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And, Peter, for you, obviously a famous name, Woolcott, your father, a famous Australian and a very substantial figure in Australian history really in many ways. Was it a bit like for you going into the family business when you decided that you would be going into the Public Service?

PETER WOOLCOTT: I tried not to actually. I went to a law school, to the Sydney Bar, and spent a number of years as a barrister doing a lot of legal aid work, lot of trial work. I'd grown up in a diplomatic family and was sort of imbued with real interest in international affairs and the sense of public duty, and so in the end it was an easy switch for me to decide to join the Public Service, which is what I did.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, to both of you and probably perhaps to you Peter first, this is just an incredible time for the Public Service and to do things, but I am interested in you as people. How has this affected you and your family? You have a family but you're the head of the Australian Public Service Commission. What sort of impacts have there been for you?

PETER WOOLCOTT: Yeah, and you mentioned my father. In fact, one of the things I've had to do is drive down the Sydney, pick him up about 10 days ago and bring him down to Canberra to live with us. He's 92, lives by himself. All these coffee shops and bars and restaurants have closed around him, and he can't cook, can't do laundry. And I thought, "Hang on, I can't just leave him there." So he's living with me, as is my son and his girlfriend and her guinea pigs and my son's cat. My daughter's joined us from Melbourne, so it's a menagerie at the moment. So working from home, which I'm trying to do every now and again, is a challenge, but it's a challenge for a lot of people, I reckon.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Indeed, it is. What about for you [crosstalk 00:12:05].

PETER WOOLCOTT: I think the novelty is going to wear off very quickly?

DAVID PEMBROKE: Well, it's interesting. I was talking to a colleague today who is at home trying to do a job with two toddlers, and they were both climbing on top of her and I think it's going to be a real challenge as people try to settle there. What about for you Katherine? Have you found the disruption, the challenge, the personal side of the impact of this, given that you do have such a busy job?

KATHERINE JONES: I think everyone has at all levels. I don't have quite the noisy, complicated household that Peter is juggling at the moment. But, I have been reflecting on the fact that as public servants, quite often we deal with crises, we deal with emergency, we deal with really big delivery responsibilities, but we're doing things for other people and we're in our normal mode. Right now we're dealing with something where every single person in Australia is affected, including every single one of us. We're living differently, we're engaging with our families differently. We're working remotely, many of us, and we're struggling with the isolation, with the fear, with the stress. And in the Public Service, given huge responsibilities to deliver. So, it's an incredibly interesting time, I think, for everyone where you have to deliver, but also manage the personal experience of going through this with everyone else.

- DAVID PEMBROKE: Without any sort of experience about how to actually do anything about it. Everyone's making it up as we go.
- KATHERINE JONES: That's right, that's right. And I think we've been, Peter and I, have been in a lot of conversations and everyone has across government. And it's never been a time where we have to combine some of the key aspects of leadership, which is yes, you've got to get support people to deliver, but you've got to consciously be thinking about supporting your staff, creating the right environment, making sure that the cultural aspects of leadership are still being focused on in a very, very different environment. So, it's incredibly different. And I think this is why I think this podcast is a great idea because I think talking about it, sharing the experience, is really, really important at the moment.
- PETER WOOLCOTT: Yeah. I mean that's absolutely right. We're not working from a playbook. I mean, yes, we've had some big crises like the GFC, but this is on a scale that none of us who work in the Public Service now have ever dealt with in terms of its implications in regard to people's health, people's welfare, the economic implications, the national security implications. And people are working extraordinarily hard at every level of the Public Service. We're feeling our way of it I've got to say, because it's something that none of us have ever had to do on this scale. And I think the other thing that people are realising as well is this is not going to be over anytime soon.
- DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah, you mentioned that before and I do think it's a hard concept to even think about, just how long it may in fact take. But if I might, Peter, to you, as I said in my introduction, I think it was probably two weeks ago for me anyway, that I just sort of thought, "Oh okay, I really do have to pay attention now." But how long has the Public Service been gearing up for this? How long have you been getting ready and what's been happening behind the scenes as the government who's been watching and trying to gather and understand the complexity of what it was heading our way?
- PETER WOOLCOTT: Well, it wasn't so long ago, we were all very much focused on the bushfire crisis. Obviously at the beginning of the year, and maybe it's for some a little bit before that, we were seeing what was happening in China, that there was this issue with a new coronavirus. Turned out to be COVID-19 and I would say probably about the middle of January is when government really started to sit up and think, "Hang on, we've got to focus on this. This could be potentially a very nasty thing."
- DAVID PEMBROKE: So if I could just stop you there again, just for this understanding of when you say the government's looking at it, where are you getting that sort of information from? How does that come to you in your senior positions? That perhaps midway through January, "Everyone, we better start paying attention to this." Where does that advice come from?
- PETER WOOLCOTT: Well, it comes from within the system. It comes from the Health Department. It comes from the intelligence agencies. It comes from Foreign Affairs, it comes from Home Affairs, it comes from a range of sources. And you have Secretaries Board, which is at the apex of the Public Service and the management of the service. And

already you're starting to have conversations there about the need to gear up and deal with this. In terms of the Australian Public Service Commission, which is my agency, we actually put out our first guidelines on this on 30th January. So we've actually been thinking about this for a while.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And so then, Katherine, from your point of view, when did you start to get engaged in this? Was it about the same time? Because I do want to talk about this chief operating officers committee in a moment. In your role at the Department of Finance at a deputy secretary level, is it a similar sort of thing that you are seeing that advice and starting to talk about it?

KATHERINE JONES: I think very much the structure that Peter referred to, so through, I mean, obviously government through its cabinet and other committees, is provided with information to start considering what are the steps that we need to take to prepare and then get through a situation like this. But it's through the Secretaries Board that you get the key messaging that comes out to all departments and that filters through to the operational level where I'm operating and focusing in terms of the Department of Finance in particular.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So just again, just for clarity for people to understand, the Secretaries Board, Peter, you sit on the Secretaries Board? So just explain, how often does it meet? Who's in charge of the Secretaries Board? How does it run its business?

PETER WOOLCOTT: Well, the Secretaries Board consists of all the 14 secretaries plus myself, and also the head of the Office of National Intelligence. So there's 16 of us. Phil Gaetjens, the head of Prime Minister and Cabinet is the chair of the Secretaries Board.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And how often do you meet?

PETER WOOLCOTT: Well, traditionally it would meet every month. But what you're seeing now is a rhythm where it's probably meeting three times a week at least by telephone hook-up.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And at the moment typically, how long are those meetings taking place? And are they quick response, like you have to stand things up very quickly?

PETER WOOLCOTT: It depends on the issues, what needs to be discussed, but obviously you're dealing with a whole lot of very busy people and we try to keep these regular hook-ups to about an hour.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And in terms of the way the contribution is made, did different parts of ... secretaries are bringing, say the health secretary is coming with an update, a defence secretary coming with an update. Is that generally the way it works?

PETER WOOLCOTT: It starts off normally with Phillip Gaetjens, the Chair, giving a rundown on what's happened in the cabinet processes, whether it be the Commonwealth Cabinet or the new National Cabinet. And then secretaries will just put in their own comments in

relation to issues that they're working on or things that they're worried about and things that we need to address.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So in terms of the [crosstalk 00:19:53].

PETER WOOLCOTT: They're very practically focused conversations.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Okay. That's an interesting point though, that National Cabinet, that's another layer of governance obviously that's been put in place. How was that decided that that would be an effective way of dealing with this?

PETER WOOLCOTT: It was obviously driven by the Prime Minister and I think it's a remarkable initiative, which is clearly working really well and in terms of being able to make the Commonwealth's job in the way it deals with the States. This has got to be a very joined up operation. It's got to be joined up within the Commonwealth, but then it's got to be joined up between the Commonwealth and the States. And I have to say the National Cabinet process has been, I think, an extraordinarily successful initiative and obviously driven by the Prime Minister.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So in terms of that though, the Secretaries Board, does the governance extend then to connections up to Secretaries Boards if they exist in the various states and territories? Does it join up that way as well?

PETER WOOLCOTT: The health ministers have their connections, so they all work their systems. And also secretaries would have their own individual relationships with key secretaries in the state system as well. But no, there's no formal mechanism or structure so that the Commonwealth Secretaries Board discusses, with say, the New South Wales Secretaries Committee or whatever they call that. It's done much more on an individual and ad hoc basis as needed.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Katherine, you're the chair of the Chief Operating Officers Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Secretaries Board. Can you explain to us what it is and how it works and what sort of work you're involved in?

KATHERINE JONES: It's a very recent phenomenon.

PETER WOOLCOTT: But she's doing an amazing job. Let me interrupt to say that.

KATHERINE JONES: It's pretty extraordinary. Sometimes mechanisms are created just at the right time and it really ...

DAVID PEMBROKE: So it was stood up before this was in place?

KATHERINE JONES: Yes. Just before. It really was part of the government's response to the APS review and an initiative of the Secretaries Board that wanted to continue to drive this one APS approach to operating and looking at opportunities to move away from being very siloed, being very separate in the way that we ran our organisations and the way that we worked across government. So the Secretaries Board established the

Chief Operating Officers Committee and largely the intention was, and it still is in the longer term, that we'd be focused on working collaboratively to implement the operational aspects of the APS reform, the review and the response to that, the Thodey Review and the government response. We had one meeting that was largely focused on reform and at the end of that-

DAVID PEMBROKE: That went well, I hope?

KATHERINE JONES: That went well, that went really well and we were very enthusiastic and we identified all these things that we were going to focus on in the very near future to drive reform. But we did at that meeting acknowledge that we needed to be ready to deal with emerging issues. And little did we know how big an emerging issue was right before us. So we went from a tempo of monthly meetings, then we pretty quickly thought we better make weekly. Then we meant to twice weekly. We are currently meeting every day at 9:30. Several of those meetings go for several hours and we're in really dire circumstances. It's a terrible situation that the country is in, but I have to say the experience of working on this committee, the experience of the way that everyone has come together to seek to come to common positions on the way we respond, has been somewhat pleasant. It's been a fantastic experience. Every member of the committee has been quite extraordinary in the way that they've approached the proposition of trying to have a shared approach and really start to operate in that one APS way that we've talked about but frankly probably haven't landed as well as we should have in the past. So, it's been a good experience so far. Pretty rigorous and we spend a lot of time working through a range of issues but very much trying to reach common ground in the way that we approach things.

PETER WOOLCOTT: If I might just add, just pop in on that because one of main themes that came out of the Thodey Review was a need for much more joined up public service. The idea of one APS and also focus on the needs of Australians and the service we provide to them. And what this crisis is doing is actually driving those reforms in a very real and practical way. And I actually think the reform process, even though it's not being openly discussed and we're not going into lengthy papers and working out how we need to do this, it's actually happening in practise. And that is actually, I think, in what are very grim times, is going to be very beneficial in the future.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, I'm interested in this Chief Operating Officer Committee given that the meetings are so long and they're happening every day, but from the Secretaries Board point of view at the moment, what is your expectation, or what is the expectation of the Secretaries Board that Katherine and her committee will deliver for the Secretaries Board?

PETER WOOLCOTT: Well, what they're doing is they're working essentially on the workforce. How has the workforce positioned to be able to deliver what's needed in terms of services and advice to the Australian people.

- DAVID PEMBROKE: So, this is this movement of people around the APS to the greatest need?
- PETER WOOLCOTT: But that's part of it, but there are many other things they are dealing with as well in terms of leave arrangements or how you handle the health aspects and social distancing. How the system actually works to deliver is what they're focused on. And they're working very closely with the Australian Public Service Commission and they're working very closely with the workforce task force, which has been set up around redeploying people in the system. And Katherine, actually often on Secretaries Board meetings will report as the Chair of the subcommittee to them about developments. But they've all got their representatives on the COO Committee anyway as their senior deputies, so they know exactly what's going on.
- DAVID PEMBROKE: So Katherine, as you say, meeting every day, agendas, several hours worth of discussion. There must be so much to talk about. And I'd love to know the diversity of all of those issues, well some of the issues, that you're talking about.
- KATHERINE JONES: Peter has alluded them and I should clarify, so two days a week we do two hours, the rest of the time it's a half hour check in on the other days. If we were in 10 hours of meetings every day, we wouldn't actually be able to deliver on the things that we're supposed to be doing in our own organisations. But the diversity of the issues that have come up through the course of the last month, they cover every aspect of the way that we run our organisation. So it is about trying to find common approaches around leave arrangements, about what we're doing within our own organisations to make the workplace safe, to think about how we are communicating with our staff and ensuring that we're addressing issues around providing the appropriate support, around staying connected, how we deal with issues like the mental health impacts of COVID-19 and how it's affecting all of us in our personal lives.
- KATHERINE JONES: There's a multitude of other issues, we normally talk about how, given we're in this environment, things that are normally the signposts or the things that govern the cycle of government such as the budget, which has now been moved to October. Parliament's not sitting, or sitting for very short periods to pass key bits of legislation associated with the stimulus. The type of rhythm of our work has changed dramatically as a consequence of this event. So, we all work through a lot of the issues associated with that.
- DAVID PEMBROKE: Now there are quite a few taskforces set up in each of the departments. So once it leaves the Chief Operating Officer Committee, it then goes back into each of the individual departments who then carry out the instructions. Is that pretty much how it works?
- KATHERINE JONES: It is. One of the things we were very conscious of right from the very start was the fact that we couldn't be a little bubble where we were thinking about lots of issues and trying to come to common positions, but not being able to communicate that out. So firstly we feel we're very focused on ensuring that for each department they have a portfolio and there's a range of agencies that are within those portfolios. So

it's our responsibility to ensure that any decisions or information or policies that are established in the committee are disseminated to all agencies across government. But we also develop communication material that can be used within each department so that everyone across the Public Service can get the same level of information about the issues that we're dealing with. So that's been something that was a focus for us right from the very beginning, was to have those communication materials well developed.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Peter's point before, I thought it was an interesting one where he's saying that the crisis has accelerated some of the change in the reform and the improvement. Would you agree with that?

KATHERINE JONES: Very much so. And I think the point that Peter made is really, really true. That if we're in normal circumstances, a lot of these changes to our operating model, these changes to the way that we're working within our organisations, we would have put them through a lot of process. We would have thought about them a lot. We would have had to do a lot of bureaucracy to achieve a small amount of change. The circumstances have enabled us to have really significant shifts. I really do think we're seeing some of the biggest step changes in the way that we operate in the last 30, 40 years. So it's happened because we've had to change.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Which can only be of benefit to the Australian people, which is obviously the ultimate purpose of the APS. Peter, do you have a story or an anecdote of perhaps some outstanding work that you've seen from someone or some sort of demonstration of this new capability over the last, well probably even better, the bush fires as well. Is there a story there that you would have that you could tell that would really bring to life that that mission of APS?

PETER WOOLCOTT: Yeah. So many areas have been doing some extraordinary things. If you talk about things that really step back and say that's an extraordinary piece of work, the ability of treasury and to pull together that package last week, the \$130 billion package and enabling people to keep their jobs, which was going to impact on 6 million employees, that's an extraordinary piece of work and quite revolutionary in its thinking. And through that so quickly, you actually sit back, I mean, I wasn't involved, I had nothing to do with that, but you just sit back and you say, that's really quite something. But just the work you see on a consistent basis from the Health Department in the way they just continue to deal with this crisis in extraordinary way. The way that Brendan Murphy and Carolyn Edwards, who was actually a Deputy Secretary in this area, in the Prime Minister and Cabinet, but out of Health went back to being Acting Secretary. The way they worked together, the way they've reconfigured their department and the way they've managed this issue, and obviously Greg Hunt himself is working extremely closely in that environment.

PETER WOOLCOTT: But that's just something in terms of a consistent pattern of work over now months, is really something. And in my own agency it's a much smaller place. Almost everyone in my agency is now doing things they weren't doing three months ago and they're doing it willingly and they're doing it happily and they're working extremely

hard. And often, as I say, at home and not necessarily in the best of conditions. But I just think the whole Public Service has risen to this, and it's, to me, it's what we do. It's what we're meant to do. And I just think it's been really impressive.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah, great. And Katherine, for you? Is there a story, a moment, a point in time where you just sat back and went, "Wow, that's pretty good, that's pretty special."?

KATHERINE JONES: Well, I'd back in behind Peter in terms of what he's already identified, but I think there's also a range of things that are happening in government now that are really, really interesting about trying to support innovation in business where businesses are having to shift from those stories. They were wine producers and now they're producing hand sanitizer. And I think there's a hundred stories like that out there. And I think it's possibly one of the understated aspects of the public service, is how it works hand in glove with business and it's supporting business. And it does that in a range of ways. And you hear stories in the department of industry and others how their programmes have had to completely pivot to supporting that type of innovation. And it's fantastic and it's probably not the most well publicised aspect of government, but it's a really important part.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, just a final question, a wrap up. What's your message to the Australian public about the APS? What do you want them to know at this time of crisis that the APS is delivering?

KATHERINE JONES: For me, I think the key thing would be to know that the APS, I think, as a collective, has really accepted the responsibility that government has given it in terms of focusing all its considerable energies and efforts towards supporting the health response and the economic stimulus. And when I see graduates respond to being asked to redeploy from my department to Services Australia and their response to me as well, "It's an honour and we will do whatever we need to do to support the broader response." It's very, very impressive. There is a real sense of commitment and mission.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And Peter, for you?

PETER WOOLCOTT: One of the things we've been wrestling with in terms of the Thodey work about reform and the APS is the issue of trusted institutions and government. And what I hope is that the Australian people at the end of this, have a much better understanding of all the things that government does to keep Australians safe and prosperous. And a crisis like this which affects every single Australian, including those in the APS, that when we come out of this, there'll be a real sense of confidence in the Public Service and the ability of the Public Service to rise and deliver on their behalf. And that will enable to have dealt with those trust issues in the institution.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Fantastic. Well that's the purpose of Work with Purpose podcast, is to actually over the next ... Look, I was only discussing this the other day or thinking about this the other day, this should go on forever, basically. We do need to open up the lines of

communication so is that we do understand, so we can just understand the detail of how government is going about its work. So, thank you so much for coming in and getting us kicked off on day one. To you, Peter Woolcott, and to you Katherine Jones, thank you so much for coming in to be our first guests on Work with Purpose. And to you the audience, thank you for coming along today. I think this will be a great podcast. I think we're all going to learn so much and as Peter says, if that education, that knowledge, can better understand how decisions are made, I think we'll all be more confident in going through what is going to be a very, very rough and difficult time. So we do need to pull together, everybody, and we do need to work together. And certainly working in the APS we will be working with purpose. So thanks to you the audience, to coming along today. Thanks to Peter Woolcott, thanks to Katherine Jones and I'll be back at the same time next week with our second guest where the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Water, and Environment, Andrew Metcalfe, will be along to discuss what's going on in his world.

DAVID PEMBROKE: But for the moment it's bye for now.

SPEAKER 4: Work with Purpose is a production of contentgroup in partnership with the Institute for Public Administration Australia and with the support of the Australian Public Service Commission.