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TRANSCRIPT OF PODCAST

WORK WITH PURPOSE

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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Delivered in a partnership between IPAA ACT and contentgroup

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DAVID PEMBROKE: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Work with Purpose, a podcast about the Australian Public Service. My name's David Pembroke. Thanks for joining me. I begin today's podcast by acknowledging the Ngunnawal people on whose lands we broadcast from today. I acknowledge their Elders past, present, and emerging, and acknowledge the contribution that they make to the life of this city and region. Today, a podcast with a difference. Today, we look back on 12 months of Work with Purpose. What we've done, the team at IPAA and at contentgroup have brought together almost a best-of collection of the interviews that we have done since April of last year. I hope you enjoy it.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Striding through a deserted Canberra centre in the early hours of the day after the prime minister closed the Australian borders in March, I had what's turned out to be a pretty good idea. During a national emergency that was COVID-19, it was clear that we would be hearing a lot from our elected political leaders, and that is as it should be. But it made sense that perhaps we should hear more from the men and women who lead the Australian Public Service because it would be them and the 150,000 Australians who they work with who would be designing, implementing, and ultimately evaluating the national response to what was then an unknown and menacing threat. As a rule, public servants don't covet public profiles, and we really don't know a lot about them, but surely, I thought to myself, in this time of crisis, it would be critically important for Australians to not only understand the important work that they were doing, but also to find out more about who are they, where do they come from, what motivates them, and why have they dedicated their professional working lives to the benefit of all Australians.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Well, as luck would have it, our partners, the Institute of Public Administration of Australia or IPAA as it's more commonly known were thinking exactly the same thing. Now without a word of a lie, when I arrived at work that morning, there was a post-it note on my keyboard and it said, "Call Drew. We need more content." Now, the Drew in question is the former CEO of IPAA, Drew Baker. I picked up the phone, I pitched him the idea about the podcast, and he jumped at it. Work with Purpose was born, the name settled in just a few short hours. And a couple of weeks later, we were on air. As we celebrate this first anniversary, it's time to take a walk down memory lane. One of our most revealing interviews was with Dr Brendan Murphy, Australia's Chief Medical Officer at the time, and the now associate secretary of the Department of Health, Caroline Edwards. I asked Dr Murphy about when COVID-19 first came on to his radar.

BRENDAN MURPHY: It was early January when I was on holiday in Rome.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Oh yeah?

BRENDAN MURPHY: Good place to be then, but not now, when we heard of these reports of a novel coronavirus in the city of Wuhan in China. But all the early reports suggested that it was only being transmitted from animals to humans. So, we were at that stage. I remember going on ABC Radio saying we're alert but not alarmed. Then on about the 19th, 20th of January, after a week of

sort of radio silence from China, we suddenly got new information that there was human to human transmission. There were many more cases than we thought, that healthcare workers had been infected, and there were seriously ill people on ventilators. Then our alarm bells started because whilst it was still possible at that stage to contain it in Wuhan, once you have sustained human to human transmission, the chances of containment are very much less, and we really activated all of our processes from that moment on.

BRENDAN MURPHY: Probably one of the most significant things we did was on the 1st of February, and I remember this well, sitting in my house in Melbourne, looking at the data, and I said to my spouse, "We're going to have to shut the borders to China." And I spoke to the health minister and the prime minister, and I can't talk about process, but by that night, the borders were closed. And that probably was one of the most significant things that prevented us getting what happened in Italy, the US, the UK where they had a lot of cases coming from China that spread in the community before they really even knew it. So, we detected all of the early cases that came out of Wuhan. We had the tests. We had the public health tracing, and we isolated them, and at no stage have we had large-scale community transmission.

BRENDAN MURPHY: The National Cabinet was formed, and that was the day that HPPC, the principal committee recommended to government that we needed to introduce major physical distancing measures. And over that coming week, we closed down, not nearly as much as countries like New Zealand. We kept a lot of things going, but we still put a lot of Australians out of work. And I remember driving to work four days after that, driving past a Centrelink office and seeing the queue, and realising the enormity of what we'd done. It was the right thing to do, and we would have had terrible consequences if we hadn't done it. But I think what we did was timed appropriately. There were people clamouring for us to go harder for longer and for earlier. I think we got it about right. But those saying to government, "You need to shut down the entire restaurants, theatre, dining, cinemas, clubs, casinos, all of those sorts of things." All the people who work in those places, that really weighed on me very heavily.

CAROLINE EDWARDS: So, the first thing that happened is there was a long weekend, the Canberra Day weekend which we were all looking forward to having a weekend. And instead of having a weekend, we spent all three days, all of the executive and a lot of the rest of the department working up the \$2.4 billion package that was announced shortly after that, and that was actually fundamental because we started working differently across teams, and people were volunteering, I'll work up that measure, I'll work up the other, and just repurposing. So, that set us up. We had to suspend a lot of the rules and processes that we normally work under. So, that forced us into an environment where we were effectively rules-free, and we had to revert to what is APS core business, exercising judgement, taking care, assessing value for money, making sure things were safe and effective.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, it's principles.

CAROLINE EDWARDS: Principles based.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Principles-based decision-making.

CAROLINE EDWARDS: That's right.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Okay. Now, is that something that stays post the crisis?

CAROLINE EDWARDS: Well, we really determined at health, we've talking about this with the executive to try and maintain all the things out of this crisis that have been best, the breaking down of all the silos, the having people agile to move between jobs, more flexible workplace so people can work a mixture of home and in the office as needed, and trying to make sure that we retain that good decision-making, and when the rules are reimposed, that we find ways to work to streamline and cut through red tape.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah, there was that great line from Greg Hunt where he said things that would normally have taken 10 years have been taking 10 days.

CAROLINE EDWARDS: Well, I think the department's been absolutely incredible and everybody in it that I've dealt with, and really, they've all been completely, completely committed to a single task. It went immediately over that weekend from an ordinary bureaucratic organisation to a 24/7 organisation where everybody did what they had to do. There was no that's my patch. All of that stuff disappeared and people really embraced it. But probably the one thing that I'm most proud of is how in all of this time, through all of this really incredibly stressful time, and things like we were doing contract negotiations in the middle of the night to buy ventilators, that sort of thing, we were really frightened for our country as well, but I can't think of a harsh word that was exchanged amongst the teams, that people were kind with one another and helpful. We had a roster at one stage to try and give people three hours off a week, and people were just jumping up and down to say, "No, so-and-so needs a break, and so-and-so needs a break."

DAVID PEMBROKE: This year, your roles have significantly changed from giving behind closed doors advice to government to being in the living rooms of the public almost daily. How do you approach that aspect of your role?

BRENDAN MURPHY: I found it quite hard. I've found trying to take Saturdays off, and I'd go for a walk around Lake Burley Griffin with my wife, and I've taken to wearing sunglasses and a cap because people-

DAVID PEMBROKE: A fake moustache.

BRENDAN MURPHY: People keep coming up to me, almost invariably, very positive, you're doing a great job, mate, but tell us what's happening, and I'm quite uncomfortable with that. And I was getting my hair cut, and the little girl who was the daughter of the hairdresser came up and said to me, "How did you get out of the television?" which was also pretty nice. So, it's not a natural place for me.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Dr Brendan Murphy.

When you look back now, you would never think that Dr Murphy was ever not comfortable in front of the camera, but perhaps more importantly, his presence and the presence of other senior public servants has confirmed the importance that the leadership of the Public Service must have a public profile. They have a different role to our elected leaders, but they provide that assurance, that independence, and the expertise that is uniquely theirs.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, back to the unfolding story of Australia's response to COVID-19. While Dr Brendan Murphy and Caroline Edwards were leading the response to the health crisis, Kathryn Campbell and Rebecca Skinner were dealing with the impact of the decision to close the borders on the Australian people.

REBECCA SKINNER: Sometimes you may be better off if you just don't know what you're in for. I had spent the summer myself acting both as the associate secretary in Defence and acting as the Secretary of Defence through that bushfire piece when Defence actually was in lockstep and working really closely with Services Australia, and then we rolled into the COVID-19, and I'd been working on the COVID-19 response in Defence. On the big 75 inch TV that plays sport in my lounge room for mainly my husband, he's saying to me, "There's Centrelink queues are on the TV. There's already queues outside. Do you think that's got an impact on you?" he said to me. And I'm thinking to myself, "Just maybe it does."

REBECCA SKINNER: So, what do you do? You get all the people you can around you. They know what's going on. You know that you've got a lot of terrific people, and you find a way to marshal all of that expertise, and you accept all the help that people offer you both, from our portfolio DSS, but across the Commonwealth. And that's sort of how we got started. Okay, just what are we going to do next? What are we going to do next? And just keep a really laser-like focus on what the challenge was, and that's what we did.

DAVID PEMBROKE: How do you manage the pressure as it's starting to build, as the system wobbles, as the phones start to call, as it starts to build up? And I'm sure there's pressure coming into the ministers' offices and the prime minister's office. It's time to solve the problem. How do you manage that?

REBECCA SKINNER: Look, the way I manage it is it was a moment that the leadership team worked as a team, and the best thing to do is acknowledge the pressure and share the pressure so that no one person feels more under pressure than the other. Acknowledge that this is difficult, acknowledge that it's hard, but know that, well, we're the ones are here so we'll just keep focusing on that delivery. Our minister yesterday said that if service is beneath you, then leadership is beyond you. It's a great statement. It certainly does help people's career to have been involved in service. We are Australian public servants. We are servants of the people of Australia. It's been tremendous, and I think it will be very helpful to so many people that as Australian public servants, they will be able to reflect on a time where they actually helped and served Australian citizens directly.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Rebecca Skinner.

And help they certainly did, particularly in service delivery where the mission of serving the Australian people is where the rubber hits the road, that heightened sense of mission of purpose that drove innovation in the way that problems were being solved and solved very quickly. One example of that innovation was in the reform of the short form claim for the important JobSeeker support. Ailsa Borwick from Services Australia led that reform which was recognised with an innovation award at Services Australia.

AILSA BORWICK: Our current claim process for the JobSeeker claim is about 164 questions, and it takes around 55 minutes for someone to do that. So, for us, we were challenged to get that down to a process that could be to be completed within five days and to bring that question set down to about 10 questions.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Wow.

AILSA BORWICK: And the announcements came out on about the 20th of March. We had this fully implemented by the 14th of April.

DAVID PEMBROKE: What questions were you asking yourself that enabled you to go from 164 to 10?

AILSA BORWICK: To 10, yeah. So, for us, we sat there one night, I sat there with my colleague, Brendan, and we went through and sort of went really looking at the legislation and trying to understand what was the minimum viable product, the minimum set of questions that actually helps us determine somebody who is eligible for payment because the integrity of payments is very important to Australians.

DAVID PEMBROKE: That's Ailsa Borwick. But certainly, the integrity of those payments is also very important to the people who are accountable for taxpayers' money. So, while the health department dealt with the health crisis and Services Australia dealt with the people in crisis, it was Treasury who was working out how to pay for it. Secretary of the Treasury, and IPAA ACT President, Dr Steven Kennedy.

STEVEN KENNEDY: The pandemic is just a constant sort of uncertainty, unknown scenarios if you like. My key timing point was I was asked in one of those meetings about a paper I wrote in 2006 about pandemics, the macroeconomic impacts of pandemics. And I remember saying to that person because that person said, "Oh, is that going to guide what we're going to do?" And I said to that person, "I hope not because that paper was about a very serious pandemic," the type of pandemic that's unfolded. And back in February, we were still thinking maybe this will be a SARS-like, maybe this will be contained in China. But it was at that point, I suppose in my mind, I actually went back and read the paper again because I wrote it a long time ago, 2006, and started to think, "If this goes big, if this goes everywhere, what's this going to look like?"

STEVEN KENNEDY: The reason I was very focused on JobSeeker first was the system was there and we could scale it immediately. So, that was the 550 supplement on the COVID side. And I also think that part of... The argument I put at the time was not only does it stabilise the economy, but it stabilises the community because they understand. Effectively, a basic social wage is thrust into the economy. Then as soon as that is done, we begin to think about do we do a wage subsidy over the top, and it's sort of readily apparent that you're going to do something. And then we have thinking through what systems we have at the ATO and how to design. Some people would have wanted us to do a wage subsidy that tracked a person's wage up to a cap which was a mechanism used in other countries, in Canada, for example. But we chose to advise the government and they chose to accept in the end of flat payment-based scheme, partly for speed, ability to align it with the JobSeeker arrangement.

STEVEN KENNEDY: And then the second thing was, apart from the obvious benefits of attaching people to their employer, the JobKeeper piece, was we had to assist Department of Human Services in being able to make this payment to all these people who would no longer be receiving a payment because JobSeeker goes from about 800,000 to 1.6 million, more than 2 million when you include other cases. Their systems were very stretched. So, we had two really powerful systems in the Commonwealth, the tax system and the social security system. We used one and JobKeeper's not just a wage subsidy. It's actually a income payment as well.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Dr Steven Kennedy.

One of the features of the Australian response was that it was a national response, involving not just the federal government, but the governments of all states and territories. Australia responded as a team and aligned its governance accordingly. Katy Haire, a former senior Australian public servant who is now serving in the ACT government reflected on the differences when working in a smaller jurisdiction, and the ability to be able to get things done quickly.

KATY HAIRE: This took my breath away. I couldn't believe you could do this so quickly. Within a couple of days of the decision that we'd shift to online learning, we had five and a half thousand teachers, that's pretty much every single teacher, well, close to every single classroom teacher doing online professional learning to improve their skills so that they would be ready for supporting kids in the online environment.

KATY HAIRE: There's also a really strong sense of immediacy and closeness to where our services are being delivered, and in my case, the education through schools. We've got 88 schools here in the ACT, and I can speak to a representative group of principals, I can speak to about 25% of them on a phone hookup that I can organise in the space of about an hour, and because they feel that sense of closeness to us, they'll make the time to hop on a video chat and give me their advice, and tell me what's going on in their schools. It's so much closer than working in that much bigger system where organising a meeting of principals might take weeks. Obviously, at a time like this, we don't have weeks, and so it's really crucial we're able to make the most of the scale to get in touch with people and get things done.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Katy Haire.

Well, people who were also getting things done, but this time away from Australia, were men and women of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who were working day and night in countries all over the world to get their fellow Australians home to safety. Frances Adamson is the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

FRANCES ADAMSON: I absolutely take my hat off to colleagues here in Canberra who've been working night and day to colleagues around the world because we've still got 70% of APS staff, if you like, in place overseas, serving Australia from a wide variety of departments. I remember early on looking at a map of the world on which was a little star for every cruise ship on which Australians were stranded and somehow affected and needing our help. You know there's a cruise ship, but there are hundreds of the things, thousands at any one time around the world. Where are the Australians? Where are Australians in on COVID-effected ships? What testing arrangements are in place? Where can they land?

FRANCES ADAMSON: And of course, you don't start to do business continuity planning on the day you need it. When you're going through a period of change, you really want input from people who think differently, input from young leaders, emerging leaders, future leaders, leaders of any kind, people who can think differently. And I think what that's done is effectively for like almost... I won't say it's totally collapsed the public service in terms of hierarchy, but it's much more around what you can do, what ideas you can bring to the table, how can we make this work.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, in terms of the recovery, the role of business, and as we move into recovery into what will be a new economy, the role of business to create employment, to generate tax revenues, et cetera, what's your reflections on that, and the role that DFAT will play in the new economy?

FRANCES ADAMSON: Yeah, we can get a certain amount of growth domestically. A population of 25 million's not small, but to really get things going, we need to have those connections to the rest of the world for trade, for investment, for tourism, for international students. And part of the work that we're doing in terms of our policy thinking and advice to government is around the temporary nature of these measures, and how they might be undone when the time is right. What does recovery look like? As the prime minister says, it's about the other side. What does it look like as we continue to help Australians in terms of jobs, in terms of economic growth?

DAVID PEMBROKE: Frances Adamson.

Well, back in Australia, Mike Pezzullo, the secretary of the Department of Home Affairs was reporting for duty. Mobility was an essential characteristic of the APS response. And at the Department of Home Affairs, under the leadership of Mr. Pezzullo, they were only too happy to oblige.

MICHAEL PEZZULLO: The fact that you've got a staff, well, a department in the first incident, and a workforce that's in that department that has got multiple skills, multiple subject matter expertise, multiple, indeed, several strands of quite distinct subject matter expertise and life experience which has then come together into one synthesised body known as the workforce meant that we had both large scale, but we had a reservoir of specialised capability across all of those sectors and more, ones that I haven't even mentioned. And then we were able to wheel that force, that workforce against the problem that we had to face.

MICHAEL PEZZULLO: So, we're able to make ourselves available to our colleagues in health, in industry, and elsewhere saying, "What do you need done? And when do you need it done by?" And of course, when my colleagues say, "Well, what can you deliver?" we say, "Well, we've got a thousand people ready to go. What do you need done?" A, that was helpful to them because the cavalry was able to arrive because these tend to be smaller departments, simply just a function of the way the departments are organised.

MICHAEL PEZZULLO: And we said to our staff then, and we continue to say it now, "Don't worry about the fact that you're not deeply expert in how supermarkets restock their shelves because you've got the general skills of an Australian public servant, first and foremost. Secondly, you're a departmental officer. And then thirdly, you're a visa officer or a customs officer. So, start with the first of those, you're an Australian public servant. You can problem solve. You can work your networks. You can collaborate. You can draw on other connections, both your own personal skills and knowledge plus that of your network, and apply yourself to a problem." So, we had staff from the get-go working on supply chain issues, trucking curfews. Team Australia really came together, said, "Yep, what do you need done?" We said, "We need trucks to be able to go in to restock the back of Coles, Woollies, IGA. And yes, we're on board. It was a great team effort."

DAVID PEMBROKE: What's next? What's the next big challenge? Obviously, you've had your hands on this for a while. What's the future look like for you?

MICHAEL PEZZULLO: The next challenge is the same answer as what I would given you yesterday, and the day before, and Jacob who's here with me today can attest to this. It's as I walk out, there'll be some WhatsApp group or some message group that I'm on, and a minister or a group of ministers or the prime minister himself will say, "I need you to do this." And picking up the themes I just expanded upon, the answer will be, "Yep. I've already thought of that. I've got the organisational team." It's like those... In my trade, we shouldn't call it a heist movie because we're not like... But it's the ethos of an Ocean's team.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah, okay. All right.

MICHAEL PEZZULLO: Now, David, I won't suggest that you or I could be played by either Clooney or Pitt, and we're not into heists because we do law enforcement so we're on the other team, but the idea of mix and matching, and I'm very passionate about this, in case you hadn't picked it up.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Yeah, it's interesting. Yeah, yeah, got it.

MICHAEL PEZZULLO: So, whether it's that sort of ethos that you get in those Ocean's series or similar, you put the team together, you crack through on the task, and then you leave enough capacity when it's become routine and industrialised and those other teams then move on. So, you asked me what's next. It'll be on my phone, I suggest, when I walk out.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Mike Pezzullo.

In the very first episode of Work with Purpose, we spoke to Peter Woolcott, the Australian Public Service Commissioner, and Katherine Jones, who was then a deputy at the Department of Finance, but perhaps most importantly, the head of the Chief Operating Officer's Committee. That committee played such a vital role in supporting the secretary's board to deliver the APS response. But while focused on delivering in the moment, Katherine returned for another podcast, but this time in conversation with Matt McMahon, who is the SES sponsor of IPAA's Future Leaders Committee, and Holly Noble, who is the chair of the Future Leaders Committee, and they were looking to the future as to how the APS could continue to improve.

Katherine Jones.

KATHERINE JONES: How do you contribute to making your organisation an organisation that has a dynamic approach to change, that it's ongoing, that it's not transactional, it's not static, that it's built into the DNA of the organisation, and you've got the capability to constantly refine and improve the way that you organise yourself and the way that you operate? And I think having that longer time horizon is really important and has helped me think a little bit differently about change.

MATT MCMAHON: I think another really keen area, and it was one of the themes which is around maintaining momentum with surge capacity to support greater mobility in more of an agile way. And I think the hackathon participants highlighted issues around we should have an APS-wide process for surge mobility, including criteria that sit around that. How do we know the priorities across government to do that? There's not necessarily a list that everyone just taps into every day. It's more complex than that. So, I think another area was around mobility and secondment architecture and why using secondments has mobility. So, any thoughts on how mobility is really sort of moved perhaps since your first podcast now, but probably more broadly across the APS?

KATHERINE JONES: My starting proposition is one APS. And I think if you start thinking about your role and your contribution as being part of that much broader entity, psychologically, the idea of moving to different parts of it is a much straightforward proposition. And I think the leadership across the breadth of the APS are increasingly thinking in those terms.

HOLLY NOBLE: Something else that you talked about was the commitment of people being really important to underpin effective transformational change. And culture and collaboration is a value that we have as part of our culture. It came up a lot. The group spent quite a lot of time discussing that. There was an interesting point put across that possibly collaboration is often not put forward because there's a competitive slant to things, particularly when budget becomes involved. There was some reflections that culture is often different, depending on which team that you're working in, and it's often transient dependent on which people are in that team at what time. We know as future leaders that there is a role for leadership at all levels, and we all play a role in building a dynamic culture that values collaboration, but it's often difficult to know where to start.

KATHERINE JONES: The way to deliver solutions for the Australian people, it absolutely requires collaboration. And I think if we can have that as the fundamental mindset when people enter the APS, the way to be rewarded in your career, the way to achieve in your career, the way to deliver the best outcomes is through collaboration. I think the COVID experience has taught us that we actually do have the capacity to very quickly pivot and push resources to the highest priority. The challenge for us is how do we ensure we can do that in a non-crisis environment. I certainly think we can. I think we've proven the case that we can respond in difficult circumstances, but I think we can now translate that into a more enduring model.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Katherine Jones. Now, while it has been important to focus on the work of the APS in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's been equally important to learn more about our leaders in the APS as people. They carry huge responsibilities, but like the rest of us, they still put their shoes on one at a time when they get out of bed in the morning. Peter Woolcott told me this wonderful story.

DAVID PEMBROKE: This is just an incredible time for the public service and to do things, but I am interested in you as people, and 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, well, you mentioned my father. In fact, one of the things I've had to do is drive to Sydney, pick him up about 10 days ago, and bring him down to Canberra live with us. I mean, he's 92, lives by himself, all his coffee shops and bars and restaurants are 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 he is my son and his girlfriend and her guinea pigs, and my son's cat and 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: Peter Woolcott. And this great story from Rebecca Skinner.

REBECCA SKINNER: Look, health and wellbeing in a crisis is really important. People can keep going a long time on adrenaline, and it's important to just try and stop and have a bit of a bit of a break. For me, personally, people in Services Australia will know, I walk my dog. She's called Sparkles. I kept up my exercise. That was what was important to me to keep that fitness going and trying to eat well. It is okay just to stop. I also will admit to maybe watching some junk TV at some points in time. I'm not completely going to disclose what sort of junk TV I'll watch.

DAVID PEMBROKE: No names.

REBECCA SKINNER: No, no, no. I'll own up to a dog called Sparkles, but not my junk TV. Just to take that 40 minutes to just watch something stupid on television that's completely unrealistic is useful as well as exercise and sort of eat well.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Rebecca Skinner.

And this reflection by Frances Adamson.

FRANCES ADAMSON: You build resilience through your own experience, and I think managers need to help staff build resilience, too. It's got to be part of a conversation. You want people to grow, to use this opportunity. There's opportunity for tremendous growth at the moment, but you don't want to weigh people down too heavily because then what is otherwise a positive experience becomes a negative. So, I think you have to know yourself, and I would say, this might surprise people a bit, I think it helps to be able to somehow look at yourself in a detached way to just be a bit objective about what are your signs of stress. Are you snapping at people? Have you got sort of aches and pains that you don't normally have? All of those sorts of things. So, you become more resilient if you're looking after yourself.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Frances Adamson.

So, as we look back on an incredible year of change, of challenge, of resilience, of endurance, of innovation, of challenge, it's perhaps right that we give the final words to the Australian Public Service Commissioner, Peter Woolcott.

PETER WOOLCOTT: One of the main themes that came out of Thodey Review were the need for much more joined up public service. So, 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 sort of 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.

PETER WOOLCOTT: We're not working from a playbook. This is on a scale that none of us who are working 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, but it is, as we say, we're feeling our way a bit, I've got to say because it is something that none of us have ever had to do on this scale.

PETER WOOLCOTT: The ability of treasury to pull together that package last week, the \$130 billion package, enabling people to keep their jobs which was going to get 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, and I wasn't involved. I had nothing to do with that, but you just sit back and you say, "That's really quite something." I just think the whole public service has risen to this and 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: Peter Woolcott, and I have to agree. It has been impressive, and it still is impressive. But where to from here? How do the 150,000 Australian public servants continue to deliver, continue to act, continue to respond? How do they continue to learn, and how do they continue to improve and get better at serving the government, the parliament, and the Australian people? Well, that will be the future focus of Work with Purpose, a podcast with no end date. The work of the Australian Public Service is critically important and infinitely fascinating. It is vital that we continue to shine a light on the work of our APS as we look to the future and the great challenges that lie ahead.

DAVID PEMBROKE:

A big thanks to the team at IPAA and the Australian Public Service Commission for making Work with Purpose a reality. Without that support, this program would not happen. And for my team at contentgroup who have worked so diligently and so hard to bring this to you every week for the first part of the year and now every fortnight, a very big thanks to all of them. It's been a privilege to be involved, and we look forward to many more stories about the APS in the years to come. My name is David Pembroke. Thanks for joining me.