

## **Comments on the Consultation Draft Report of the Independent Review of the *PGPA Act 2013* and Rule**

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There is much to commend in the report. There are numerous important and insightful observations about the condition of the system, and creative recommendations. Of note are the serious attempts at grappling with intractable problems.

It is also apparent that the Australian syndrome involves issues that extends beyond the remit and focus of this Review. In this regard the emphasis on leadership and an enhanced role for the Secretaries Board are of critical importance.

Several of the comments and generalisations below derive from analysis in the forthcoming book: J. Halligan, *Reforming Public Management and Governance: Impact & Lessons from Anglophone Countries*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2018.

### **Results and outcomes**

An observation in the book is that Anglophone countries are following their own pathways, except the other three (Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom) have some form of results and priorities focus. Australia comes across as an outlier in this respect. The Review's recommendations regarding priorities and objectives are therefore of great importance.

The Review associates 'outcomes' with New Zealand but you will find that the use of this word has been questioned for upwards of a decade by key leaders. This is both a reaction against the rigidities and formalistic requirements for performance management under its output model and the usual difficulties with making progress with an outcomes focus. Results have been officially compared to intermediate outcomes.

There is no mention of the newish Canadian results agenda or the UK's single department plans (which have apparently made some recent progress).

Over the last decade New Zealand has not been subject to top-down efficiency and cut-back agendas, which are silo reinforcing (and centralising), and there has been scope for creative thinking and experimentation with approaches to results that engage the government and the public.

### **Risk, regulation and collaboration**

There are explicit links between major themes - risk, regulation burden and cross-government cooperation - and the failure to make much progress.

There are strong indications that the Australian public service is more prone to risk and over-regulation than other Anglophone countries.