



Government of South Australia

Department of the Premier
and Cabinet

State of the Service Report 2007-08

Report from the
Commissioner for
Public
Employment

State of the Service Report 2007-08

Commissioner's Overview - the year in brief

The year 2008 has been my fifth and final as Commissioner for Public Employment. It has been a great honour to represent and serve a truly talented and hard working public sector. As Commissioner for Public Employment, I have had the opportunity to examine the South Australian public sector at many levels and through a lot of contact with my counterpart Commissioners, compare it with other State jurisdictions and the Commonwealth. Our own Chief Executives are always eager to know how they rate and I consistently report that our public sector continues to perform at the higher levels when compared with other jurisdictions.

The South Australian public sector meets targets for outcomes and is regarded as a hard-headed, innovative and creative administration by its Australian and New Zealand peers. There are healthy rates of Whistle-blowing and clear indications that suggest we are ethical in our dealings and have fewer incidences of corruption in State Government activity than elsewhere, including all those with expensive anti-corruption bureaucracies. We have low levels of excess employees and our workplace surveys report good morale. That record of quiet achievement, while impressive, is a sound foundation for future development through solid stewardship as it continues to stretch, address and support the targets of South Australia's Strategic Plan.

I draw attention to the following five major influences afoot in our SA public sector:

1. the new Public Sector Bill and its consequences;
2. the South Australian Executive Service and its potential for positive change;
3. the desperate imperative to promote more women into senior roles;
4. the move to work life-balance in workplaces, including more part-time, and
5. the desperate need for some central effort on whole-of-government attraction, youth recruitment, retention, and graduate development and training.

The year has been one of unprecedented Parliamentary interest in the public sector. Apart from receiving the annual State of the Service Report, the Parliament will be asked to consider substantial change to the *Public Sector Management Act 1995*. This activity is welcome as it has been some 15 years since Parliamentary debates were concerned with public sector reform. This Government has made non-legislative decisions on reform and there are massive differences in workplaces and attitudes, and much has changed since then.

Innovations in the proposed legislation are moves away from rules and toward performance management, including easier arrangements for separation of minority poor performers.

Parliamentary activity, such as Estimates Committee hearings, and the activities of the House of Assembly Committee on Work-life Balance and the Legislative Council Finance and Budget Committee, have devoted considerable time to scrutiny of public sector workplaces and agency operations in the way that employees are motivated, managed and developed.

Leadership is making a difference to the achievement of departmental outcomes and not just from the Chief Executive level, but also and especially from the Executive levels. The untapped potential of having Executives work across departmental boundaries and be freed-up to make best use of their combined talents and abilities, is one of the most exciting aspects behind the creation of the South Australian Executive Service (SAES). The SAES is driving their performance in some of the more intractable social problems confronted by Government (such as poverty, child abuse, homelessness) and this is a major step forward. The main reference points for ensuring high performance are the 'key accountabilities' identified in the Performance Agreements for each Chief Executive and the leadership competencies developed for South Australia's Executive levels.

These are as follows:

- Shapes Strategic Thinking and Change;
- Achieves Results;
- Drives Business Excellence;
- Forges Relationships and Engages Others, and
- Exemplifies Personal Drive and Integrity.

The South Australian public sector, as with the rest of the workforce, is in a state of deep change. There is a sustained and unprecedented focus on achievement of refined and challenging targets in South Australia's Strategic Plan. The ageing workforce and the exceptionally tight labour market has placed a high premium on attraction and retention of employees at all levels and ages to address these challenges. For young people, the prospect of a long and fruitful public sector career has never been better. However, the lure of interstate and overseas opportunities is strong. Fortunately, we moved very early to offer attraction and retention benefits and allowances.

The Shared Services review and the transforming work of the Government Reform Commission and its successor, the Public Sector Performance Commission, have reinforced efforts to address these challenges, but it is in agencies under leadership from departmental Executives where the real change takes place. Chief Executive turnover has been manageable and we have used the real attraction of the public service, namely empowering employees, to make a positive difference to people's lives with good effect.

I have highlighted the demographic challenges confronting the South Australian public sector for quite a few years. We are facing a shortage of

talent similar to that experienced when resources were taken away for the war effort in 1939.

Women entering the workforce were the only means of maintaining production at that time and that is again likely to be the case. At this time in history, it is more likely that women will assume higher-level positions in our public sector and indeed right across the workforce as they are the dominant force in the public sector and equally skilled and educated as their male counterparts.

We now compete in a global market for resources and the impact of the mining boom in Western Australia and Queensland is now being repeated in South Australia. By 2013, 50% of the world's workforce will be located in China and India. We cannot rely any more on women returning to the workforce from childcare responsibilities at lower levels to underwrite public sector operations as has been the case for the past 20 years. There will continue to be skill shortages that will have a real impact on public sector outcomes.

The great array of whole-of-government workforce program activity underway in other States and the Commonwealth Government makes me feel confident that it is likely to be an increasing focus in South Australia. The Government will come to appreciate the major restraint that will come from less than optimal performance of its public sector workforce. I anticipate more whole-of-government effort on graduate attraction and development, leadership, management improvement and making our public sector leadership more diverse. Continuing vigilance is required for ethical behaviour and code of conduct reinforcement if we are to retain the high standards of integrity and fairness that I see every day in all aspects of public sector activity and service delivery. The role of the Commissioner for Public Employment will continue to provide significant oversight of the sector through the collection of whole of government workforce information and monitoring of management standards and ethics.

It was pleasing to see the interest of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer in human resource policy changes and greater reliance on those instruments to fine-tune redeployment, superannuation policy and performance management policy.

Conclusion

The public sector landscape for the future continues to be dominated by the continuing Government reform program. The Executive Committee of Cabinet, Economic Development Board and the work of the Social Inclusion Board have supported this.

The public sector remains a place where adaptation to ongoing change is required. This year has seen the completion of the significant movement towards Chief Executives and agencies being completely and fully responsible for the workforce under their care and management. Chief Executives are now vested with more empowerment in relation to workforce than has existed

for 90 years since the first Commissioner for Public Employment was appointed in this State. The public sector is more than a workforce and provides an essential foundation for what the people of this State will soon regard as the essential and desirable requirements of the community in this changing and demanding time.

It is the health of the workplace, which determines the output of the public sector and therefore the outcomes for the community and South Australia's Strategic Plan. This is the essential challenge, which faces the public sector in addressing the twin targets for the public sector under South Australia's Strategic Plan. These two targets relate to productivity and cost effectiveness. These goals have a major impact on the health of the State and in particular, on its competitive nature in the global market place. For that reason, major efforts in the Commissioner for Public Employment's Office are being devoted to the measures that will improve workplace performance and management. Experience suggests that improving workplace management is the best way to address persistent areas of priority such as bullying and harassment, less than adequate management of poor performance and the encouragement of exemplary customer service.

I would like to thank the Premier, the Hon Mike Rann MP and the Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management, the Hon Jay Weatherill MP, for their support and intellectual energy.

And lastly, all those faithful staff who have supported me and worked tirelessly to improve the public sector and support their colleagues - you are simply the best!



Jeff Walsh

Commissioner for Public Employment

Human Resource Management in the South Australian Public Sector

The South Australian Public Sector

The Public Sector *Management Act 1995* (PSM Act) defines the South Australian State Public Sector as 'all public sector agencies and public sector employees and the operations and activities carried on by the agencies and employees'.

The Act further defines a public sector agency as:

- An administrative unit, or
- An agency or instrumentality of the Crown (including a Minister), or
- A body corporate -
 - comprised of persons, or with a governing body comprised of persons, a majority of whom are appointed by the Governor, a minister or an agency or instrumentality of the Crown, or
 - subject to control or direction by a minister, or
 - declared under the Act to be a public sector agency.

Public sector agencies in South Australia are established under a range of mechanisms. Part 2 of the PSM Act sets out the general public sector aims, standards and duties for all public sector agencies, managers and employees. These reflect government and community expectations about how Chief Executives will manage their agencies and their employees, and about how those employees will carry out their work.

The PSM Act also enables the Governor to establish, alter or abolish a certain type of public sector agency called an administrative unit. Each administrative unit has a Chief Executive, who appoints executives and non-executive employees under the Act. Together, all the administrative units are often collectively referred to as the public service, though legally the public service comprises employees appointed pursuant to the PSM Act who are employed within these administrative units.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting – The role of the Commissioner for Public Employment

The PSM Act specifies that a key role of the Commissioner for Public Employment (CPE) is to monitor and review personnel management and industrial relations practices across the broader public sector. These functions are detailed in Section 22 (1)(c) and Section 25 Part 5 of the PSM Act.

The Act also prescribes that the Commissioner must present an annual report to his Minister on the personnel management and industrial relations in the public service. This report is presented for this purpose. It assesses the performance of the public sector against the personnel management standards outlined in Part 2 of the Act.

The proposed new Public Sector Bill expands the scope of the Commissioner for Public Employment's reporting responsibilities both in functionality (broader than human resource reporting) and scale (from Service to Sector). A new reporting framework will be developed to support this changed functionality and scope. It is unlikely however that the framework will be finalised and implemented until the new legislation is introduced. In the interim, human resource reporting requirements have been minimised.

Summary of Monitoring and Reporting Changes

The Senior Management Council, Management Advisory Committee (MAC) on internal reporting recommended the establishment of a working group to review Public Sector Human Resource monitoring and reporting requirements. The Commissioner for Public Employment chaired the working group, which examined the nature and extent of human resource reporting in the Public Sector that supports legislative, ministerial, agency and workforce planning requirements.

The scope of reports considered by the working group encompassed the following collections:

Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangements (VFWA)

The six monthly data collection ceased in 2007 and data on voluntary flexible working arrangements is collected from a number of other sources.

State of the Service Collection and Delegations Monitoring Tool (DMT)

The material previously collected under the Organisational Review Tool has been revised to more clearly indicate alignment to the new Bill and the responsibilities of the CPE. The new report is entitled 'State of the Service' collection.

The Delegations Monitoring Tool has been suspended however the legislative requirement to collect data on Section 22(1)(d) appointments and some other delegations remains (from the PSM Act and Regulations). This data has been collected through a supplementary collection.

Workplace Perspectives Survey

Options for the content and structure of the bi-annual employee survey, due to be run again in October 2008, are still under consideration, however it is unlikely that a survey will be conducted in 2008.

Commissioner's Standards and Use of Delegated Powers

Chief Executives' use of delegated powers - Appointments made under Section 22(1)(d) of the PSM Act

Agencies were required to provide data to the CPE on the use of Section 22(1)(d) of the PSM Act, namely where the Chief Executive or appropriate delegate has determined that merit based selection processes are not required for appointment to executive positions, non-executive ongoing or 1 – 5 year contract positions, under the PSM Act.

The most frequent use of Section 22(1)(d) is when an employee on a temporary contract has had their contract converted to either an ongoing or 1 – 5 year contract, which was used in 366 instances. Previously this involved a merit-based selection process.

Other uses of Section 22(1)(d), specified by agencies, indicate that the delegation is being used in line with its intended purpose, and no instances of abuse have been identified.

Excess employees (including non-PSM Act employees)

Agencies reported that a total of 387 employees had been declared excess by their agencies as at 30 June 2008 compared with 266 as at 30 June 2007. 227 employees were newly identified as excess during 2007-08. Of the excess employees as at 30 June 2008, 193 were classified as 'active', which meant that agencies were actively seeking placements for them. 110 were on long-term placements; the majority of them (86) on funded placements.

Commissioner's Standards

The Commissioner's Standards support the effective implementation of public sector workforce policies and the personnel management standards of the PSM Act, and the protection of key conditions of employment. The standards include relevant delegations, directions and determination of the Commissioner for Public Employment under the PSM Act.

Public Sector Workforce Division (PSWD) commenced its annual review of Standard 3 in September 2007. A part of this review was to seek feedback from the agencies and relevant unions about any amendments that may be needed.

The major changes made as a result of this review were as follows:

- CS3.1 - Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangements - was amended to promote and improve the awareness of the provisions available in agencies.

- CS3.2 – Remuneration, Allowances and Reimbursements - was amended to increase payments to employees in accordance with CPI movements and an accommodation survey.
- CS3.3 – Employment Relations – the reporting requirements and information required from agencies in relation to industrial disputes was amended to reflect the requirements of the Australian Bureau of Statistics and to meet the reporting requirements of SA Strategic Plan Target T1.4.
- CS3.4 – Leave - was amended to explain long service leave of less than seven days and to clarify the obligations of Chief Executives when receiving applications for Defence Services Leave.

Workforce: Sustainable, Responsive and Adaptable

Expressions of Interest of the Notice of Vacancies

The Office for Youth A-Teams, with support from the Government Reform Commission, last year gave consideration to issues relating to public sector recruitment and retention. A report entitled 'SA Public Sector – One Generation Away from Extinction' was produced and one of the recommendations made was that expressions of interest be advertised across government rather than within agencies. Cabinet approved this recommendation in August 2007.

Changes have been made to the Notice of Vacancies to enable agencies to lodge vacancies being filled through Expression of Interest, which they wish to open up to applicants from across the public sector. This initiative will promote mobility and flexibility, provide better access to development opportunities and may reduce the time and process associated with merit-based selection processes.

Career Start SA

The Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology manages the recruitment of all youth trainees, apprentices and cadets into the public sector and local government through the CareerStart SA Program, administered by the Employment Programs Directorate.

The Program supports the Government's commitment to providing entry-level training opportunities for young people and people from groups recognised as disadvantaged in the labour market. It has a strong focus on providing opportunities in targeted industry sectors and regional areas, ensuring greater potential for sustainable career paths for South Australians whilst assisting growth industries with long-term workforce planning.

It is the only approved public sector program that allows all state public sector agencies to recruit trainees, cadets and apprentices into government. As such any state public sector agency seeking to recruit a new trainee, cadet or apprentice must do so through the program.

Transition to Retirement

The Transition to Retirement (TTR) superannuation arrangements are part of a suite of flexible initiatives aimed at retaining experienced public sector employees.

Legislation to provide access to these arrangements for SA public sector employees was passed by State Parliament on Wednesday, 5 March 2008 and Public Sector agencies could implement the arrangement on or after 1 July 2008. This legislation means that employees may be able to access a portion of their accrued superannuation if they are over the age of 55 and have approval from their agency to enter into a TTR arrangement.

Customer Service

SASP Target 1.7 – Performance in the Public Sector – Customer and Client Satisfaction with Government Services

In 2006, South Australia's Strategic Plan was reviewed and a revised Strategic Plan was released in 2007. Some targets were added to the strategic plan in the revision. Objective 1: Growing Prosperity, gained T1.7 Performance in the public sector – customer and client satisfaction with government services. The specific aim of the target is to increase South Australian's satisfaction with government services by 10% by 2010. Increased performance in the provision of public services is considered an important contribution to economic growth generally, higher rates of job creation and higher living standards.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has lead responsibility for achieving this target, however, it is the collective effort of all agencies that will ultimately lead to an improvement in South Australian's satisfaction with government services.

While the people of South Australia have received a high standard of service, this target is designed to achieve excellence in service delivery and to increase the level of responsiveness of individual agencies to the ongoing and changing needs of the community. Many agencies have developed and implemented methods for community engagement in the nature of service provision and these have included focus groups, community forums and surveys. Agencies are responding to the information they have received, and continue to receive.

An example of an initiative that is a response to the identified need of the community is the establishment by The Department for Families and Communities (DFC) of a 'Connected Customer Service Centre' in the Limestone Coast, with similar facilities to follow. These centres consolidate the services provided by DFC and other agencies and enable customers to access a variety of services from the one location.

The SA public sector has adopted the 8 core questions of the Canadian Common Measurement Tool to measure levels of satisfaction with services

and the progress of the target. These 8 core questions have been shown to be the key drivers of customer satisfaction. Agencies are continuing to incorporate these questions into their customer satisfaction surveys. Additionally, Cabinet Office conducted a Household Survey in May 2008. The survey was conducted across the state and included 6000 residents. The 8 core questions were included in the Household Survey and results showed that there is a high level of satisfaction, with 82.9% of South Australian's expressing satisfaction with government services.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer is embarking on the major 'Ask Just Once' Initiative, which will have significant impact on South Australian's interactions with government services. This initiative sits under T1.8 Performance in the public sector - government decision-making: become, by 2010, the best-performing jurisdiction in Australia in timeliness and transparency of decisions, which impact the business community (and maintain that rating). It is likely to have a significantly positive affect on the experience of citizens as it aims to provide a single website access point for the public and businesses to access government services and information.

Attraction and Retention

Agencies focused on a range of issues relevant to the maintenance and renewal of the workforce. They identified major challenges in the area of workforce planning, particularly attracting and retaining employees with critical skills and high value employees, retaining younger and older workers. Ten out of nineteen administrative units identified some form of retention issue as one of their top three challenges.

Agencies have implemented a range of strategies to deal with issues of workforce planning, succession planning, and employee attraction and retention. They have implemented a range of strategies to attract and retain workers with skills critical to their business, such as advertisements targeting diversity in applicants, identifying career paths for employees, developing partnerships with external and other government organisations, and revision of work-life balance provisions.

There is also recognition of the importance of data analysis in assisting workforce planning, and the attraction and retention of employees. A number of agencies have undertaken or will undertake workforce profiling projects to identify specific areas of focus. Similarly a number of agencies analyse the exit interviews of employees to identify issues, critical to the retention of quality employees, for remedial action.

The success of strategies implemented by agencies is assessed in a variety of ways. Monitoring of workforce statistics is a key mechanism for measuring improvements. This can include monitoring of turnover rates for specific age groups, length of service, diversity indicators, sick leave rates, and graduate retention. Employee surveys and other forms of employee feedback are also used as a general measure of the success of these strategies. Other ways of measuring success are achieved through individual program evaluation and

the measurement of key performance indicators, such as the uptake of work-life balance provisions.

Agencies reported a range of barriers to successfully implementing these strategies. These included the issue of skill shortages for certain professions and the ability to source high quality candidates in a competitive job market. Whilst some agencies have revised their work-life balance policies and options to provide greater flexibility to employees, they reported that it remains a challenge to ensure that managers are supportive of work-life balance provisions and allow the utilisation of the full range of options by their staff.

Agency Focus

The Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure has developed and implemented strategies that enable it to work with others, within and outside of the public sector, to promote DTEI, publicise the skills needed, share resources and collaborate on recruitment initiatives. Partners include Engineers Australia; Secondary and Tertiary Education Sectors including the Department of Education and Children's Services; national and international recruitment agencies; Department for Trade and Economic Development; Austroads and other State Road Authorities; and Local Community Partnerships.

To complement the above strategies, there are further initiatives to increase the awareness of DTEI as an employer within targeted areas of the community, for example, through participation at University and Career Fairs; distribution of promotional material; and sponsorship of events and activities.

DTEI recruitment processes and procedures are being reviewed to support the achievement of workforce planning goals. Some particular initiatives include the use of existing government, community and industry partners to recruit employees (eg Aboriginal Networks); "Careers @ DTEI" website; and streamlining of recruitment and selection processes.

Workforce Planning in the SA Public Sector

Between 2004 and 2007 the State Government (through the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology and the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment) was an industry partner to the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project *Demographic change, ageing and the workforce: an integrated model to inform workforce development and planning in Australia*. The project also involved South Australia's three public universities. The project developed a conceptual framework to strategically inform workforce development, and developed workforce-planning tools to assist workplaces to respond to the challenges of demographic change and ageing. As part of the project, a set of case studies of workforce planning and development initiatives was compiled, including a number within the public sector:

- A Framework to support workforce development in the early childhood sector
- Workforce planning and development in the mental health services sector
- South Australian Wine Industry Workforce Development Strategy
- Workforce Plan for the SA Department for Transport Energy and Infrastructure
- Home and Community Care (HACC) Workforce Planning Project
- Better data, better decisions: Workforce Planning in Local Government - A collective Case Study of Four Australian Councils
- Transport Storage and Logistics Industry Workforce Planning Project
- DFEEST Workforce Development Platform, South Australia, 2005 and 2006.

As part of the State Government's Skills Reform Process, a Whole of Government Planning Group was formed in late 2007, and a workshop comprising key State Government agencies was held in September 2008. Agencies completed a template, which collected information on major trends impacting on the public sector workforce, and the priority occupations and skills for each agency over the next five years. A number of agencies indicated that they had, or were developing, detailed workforce plans. The information collected will be used to advise the Training and Skills Commission in the development of the 5 Year Skills and Workforce Development Plan for South Australia, and to inform agencies of issues and strategies across the sector.

2007 Premier's Awards 'Showcasing excellence in the public sector'

The inaugural 2007 Premier's Awards held in November 2007 were closely aligned to the six objectives of South Australia's Strategic Plan, and recognised those who have provided innovation, improved the quality of services to customers, brought about lasting improvements, and built partnerships with people and groups in the wider community.

The 2008 Premier's Awards – Showcasing Excellence in the Public Sector are again closely aligned to the six objectives of South Australia's Strategic Plan. Stage one of the 2008 awards attracted a total of 66 Expressions of Interest and the breadth and scope of the initiatives submitted for consideration was impressive.

Public Sector Week

The Premier of South Australia, the Hon Mike Rann, announced in December 2006 the establishment of Public Sector Week (PSW) as a new initiative, to be run annually and commencing in November 2007.

The stated objectives of Public Sector Week are to:

- 1) raise the profile of services delivered by the South Australian Public Sector to the community by showcasing a diverse range of services, initiatives and innovations, and
- 2) build a positive outlook and pride amongst public servants for the work they do by recognising and rewarding excellence and innovation.

Responsibility was given to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to develop and manage the initiative. The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) was engaged to develop and manage various aspects of this event.

The activities, promoted as Inside Out 07, was a week-long event designed to capture the attention of both the community and public sector employees, and to engage the public sector agencies in demonstrating their services. In particular the objectives and implementation of South Australia's Strategic Plan were highlighted.

Agencies across the public sector conducted tours and open days at various metropolitan and regional locations to 'open up' government facilities to the public. The aim was to make available to the public an exclusive 'behind the scenes' view of operations. The tours also provided, especially for graduates and school leavers, an insight into the diverse range of career opportunities within the public sector.

Each Agency was involved in its own unique approach to "Building more positive cultures" within their environment. Volunteering SA held "Lunch and Learn Seminars" around opportunities for those interested in volunteering, and the Department of Treasury and Finance held workshops on Superannuation which proved to be very popular. Other agencies held functions such as morning teas to allow senior management to acknowledge and recognise the great work produced by staff.

A philanthropic endeavour was realised with a great generosity of spirit from 58 public sector employees volunteering to support a new project called 'Common Ground' which assists people with a history of homelessness and low income groups, to move into affordable housing. Staff volunteered their time to pack 'Home Starter Packs' or to assemble flat-packed beds donated by IKEA, which were all placed in the housing units. Everyone acknowledged their sense of satisfaction and achievement in being able to help others less fortunate than themselves, with some commencing regular volunteer work within their own community as a consequence.

The success of Public Sector Week 2007 highlights the positive contribution that the public services make to the community as well as fosters the pride, innovation and creativity held by public sector employees in the way they approach their work. Public sector Week will be held again in November 2008 with a similar program but with a strong emphasis on Service Innovation

Trials. These trials will allow agencies to explore and implement an idea for the improvement of service to the community during the week.

Public Sector Week was held in conjunction with the Premier's Awards Ceremony in November 2007. The objective of Public Sector Week was to raise the profile of the public sector in the community and to build a positive culture within the sector. It also showcased and supported the creation of a sustainable, responsive and adaptable public sector.

Service Innovation Trials are an exciting part of the activities of Public Sector Week 2008. These trials are a unique opportunity for an agency to road test an idea for a new service or to make an improvement to an existing service.

Graduate Register

The online Graduate Register <http://www.graduate.sa.gov.au>, has undergone a number of changes, to improve the ease with which candidates and departments alike can use the system. An advertising campaign was conducted during March 2008, and by May 2008, 398 new graduates with various qualifications registered for possible employment within the South Australian public sector.

A new set of Job Tools for the Graduate Register was developed in collaboration with the Government Accounting and Reporting (GAR) section of the Department of Treasury and Finance. The aim was to convert and streamline the entire GAR Graduate Development Program recruitment process online. The Job Tools are planned for release to other South Australian Government Departments during 2008.

Workforce: Principled and Accountable

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for SA Public Sector Employees (2005) is issued under Part 2, Section 6 of the PSM Act and applies to all public sector employees. The code provides a strong foundation for the public service as a principled and accountable workforce. It is structured around the principles of integrity, respect and accountability, and provides examples of how these principles can be translated into practice.

All agencies provide new employees with a copy of the Code of Conduct and in most cases this occurs during induction. Additionally, some agencies provide training in the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is made continually available to employees in various ways, for instance some agencies have placed the Code of Conduct on agency intranets. Some agencies also report that expected behaviours continue to be communicated through their performance management processes.

Most agencies reported having a grievance and whistleblower policy that identify a mechanism for employees to report grievances or breaches of ethical conduct. Some agencies have implemented policies that deal with fraud, ethical conduct (covering a broad range of ethical issues), conflicts of interest, and misconduct.

Agency Focus

The Department for Families and Communities has an accredited induction program that includes Code of Conduct training for all new employees. The 'Respectful Treatment at Work' policy and Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures have been implemented across the Department to manage all grievances. Standardised and customised education programs on Respectful Treatment at Work are offered across the Department. The program covers both Respectful Treatment at Work and Code of Conduct and employee/employer obligations. Additionally, a series of One Page Fact Sheets on Respectful Treatment at work have been developed and promulgated. Regular information updates are also provided on the topic of Respectful Treatment at Work via the Department's Intranet and the Chief Executive's Connect newsletter.

Bullying and Harassment

The Code of Conduct's definition of *Respect* specifically includes a responsibility to "prevent bullying or other forms of harassment in or outside the workplace". Instances of bullying and harassment, therefore, contravene the Code of Conduct, as does inaction by those who knowingly allow bullying or harassment to continue unreported.

Bullying and harassment is addressed by most agencies as part of an overarching workplace conduct policy. Some agencies do have specific bullying and/or harassment policies in place. Eight agencies have contact officers who deal with bullying and harassment, and regular training is provided to contact officers. Other strategies for minimising bullying and harassment employed by agencies include, providing publications and information regarding bullying and harassment, training for staff and managers, analysis of complaints and workers compensation statistics to identify areas for immediate interventions.

Almost all agencies monitor complaints to gauge whether the number of bullying and harassment claims has decreased. In general, monitoring occurs at the HR department level. A variety of other indicators are also monitored, such as the nature of workers compensation claims, complaints lodged with the Equal Opportunity Commission, and Employee Assistance Program reports.

Investigation of breaches

Commissioner's Standard 4 – Managed Performance - gives agency Chief Executives the delegation to investigate matters in connection with conduct or discipline under section 25 of the PSM Act. It was reported by agencies that a total of 173 preliminary investigations were initiated between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008.

Agency Chief Executives also have the delegation under section 25 of the PSM Act to conduct disciplinary inquiries under Division 8, Part 8 of the PSM Act. Agencies reported that a total of 59 disciplinary inquiries were invoked between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008.

Disciplinary Appeals

There were four appeals filed during the reporting period, including one from the Department for Correctional Services; one from the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure and two from the Department for Families and Communities.

Of these appeals, two appellants withdrew and two appeals were resolved through voluntary conciliation. Further details can be obtained from the Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal Annual Report. (*This report is not published but a copy can be obtained from the Tribunal Secretary*).

Workforce: Efficient and Productive

Reward and recognition

The development of an efficient and productive workforce can be enhanced by a workplace culture that recognises good performance and rewards high performance. Most agencies state that good performance is recognised through their performance management/development processes. A number of agencies have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, internal awards to recognise individual and workgroup achievements.

Agency Focus

In The Department for Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, *the WALLABY Awards* (quarterly & annual Awards) play an important role in recognising staff who have taken initiative and demonstrated commitment to achieving DWLBC' key business outcomes while reflecting the corporate values of the department. A monthly newsletter, *On the Wallaby*, also showcases achievement of work groups/employees.

Managing Performance

Ensuring managers have the skills to address poor performance in a timely manner is another key component to ensuring an efficient and productive public sector workforce.

Most agencies either have a policy or are developing a policy to deal with underperforming employees. Managers are supported in the addressing of underperformance by receiving training to deal with underperforming employees and through the use of Employee Assistance Programs. Some agencies also provide additional assistance through online information, tool kits and checklists, and support through HR including account management arrangements. Additionally, some agencies have implemented case management of individual employees who are underperforming conducted by human resources.

The monitoring of underperforming employees is important to ensure an efficient and productive workplace, and that underperforming employees are managed in accordance with appropriate policies and procedures. In general, improvements on performance and productivity as a result of these strategies are not measured directly, however, improvements are noted in various other ways. For instance, the clarification of the performance requirements and expectations through the performance review process was noted by some agencies as a means of improving the relationship between managers and employees, by building a culture of trust. One agency stated that this culture of trust has a beneficial effect on performance.

Some agencies have gained feedback through staff surveys or other types of feedback from both managers and employees. Where this has occurred, it is generally noted that perceptions of performance management have improved and that staff feel that something is being done about managing performance.

Lifting performance was an aim that was incorporated in much of the work impacting on the workforce including the establishment of The South Australian Executive Service, the promotion of more flexible work practices and the improvements to recruitment. Specific work was undertaken on managing performance through the Good Practice Guide and by a review of departmental processes for managing underperformance.

The Government Reform Commission (GRC) was invited by Chief Executives to specifically examine what improvements could be made to the processes for managing performance. The GRC undertook consultation with agencies about the issues faced and it was made clear that managing performance was very well established in a policy framework through the role and powers of the Commissioner for Public Employment. The authority for managing performance had been progressively delegated to Chief Executives and agencies had policies, and in most cases, formal procedures in place. However, managing performance had become overly bureaucratic. Despite the policy frameworks, managing performance had become a process and

had lost the common sense purpose of ensuring that staff understand their role and tasks together with the provision of feedback guidance, support and career development.

What was found was a number of myths about the performance management process. Rather than add further guidelines policies and procedures the Good Practice Guide format was used to present managing performance as a day-to-day business task that managers perform.

The Guide recognised that managers need assistance to manage performance and it provides useful advice on how to do this well. The Guide was designed as a practical resource to help managers with a full range of performance management activities – providing feedback, planning development, recognising performance and improving performance – for both day-to-day management and for performance reviews.

Agency Focus

Primary Industries and Resources South Australia has implemented a 'Performance Management and Development' framework system and practices that support greater understanding of expectations of performance and development between managers and staff. Performance management and development responsibilities are built into Executive performance agreements. A consistent and fair approach to Performance Improvement is being developed and applied across PIRSA. The Performance Improvement process includes guidelines and tools and is undertaken using a case management approach. A specialised and individual case management approach is provided by Corporate HR to support managers in dealing with performance and behavioural issues. Through this approach managers are provided with leadership, advice and support that builds their understanding and capability in case management.

Oxygen

Oxygen www.oxygen.sa.gov.au is an Australia-first initiative for public sector organisations. It is a website that was developed by young professionals (35 years and under) to connect and have a voice. Oxygen is a 'virtual village' in which young professionals are able to share information, opportunities, voice opinions, participate in discussions and make connections with peers.

Oxygen taps into the trends of social networking and work-life integration and attempts to encourage innovative thinking through its informal management structure and philosophy of open participation and personal responsibility.

Oxygen is achieving its objectives of making the public sector a more inviting and engaging place for young professionals to work, and allowing young people working for the public sector in regional and remote South Australia to connect with fellow young professionals.

In April 2008, The Premier launched a new partnership between Carnegie Mellon Heinz School Australia and Oxygen. Carnegie Mellon has agreed to support Oxygen on many levels, including providing opportunities for SA public servants to access the expertise of university students in project work, and collaboration on special events.

Workplace: Fair and Equitable

Diversity within the workplace

South Australia's Strategic Plan sets targets for the employment of people with disabilities in the public sector (Target 6.22); the employment of women in executive positions in the public sector (Target 6.23); and Aboriginal employment in the public sector (Target 6.24). These targets provide a quantifiable framework for work underway within agencies to develop a diverse workforce.

Aboriginal employment

The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division (AARD), within the Department of Premier and Cabinet is the lead agency for Strategic Plan Target 6.24. This target aims to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the SA Public Sector, spread across all classifications and agencies, to 2% by 2010 and maintain or better those levels through to 2014.

Relative to the wider public sector, Aboriginal employees are more likely to be employed in the lower levels of the remuneration structure, however there has been a slight increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees undertaking executive roles across the State public sector.

A number of State public sector agencies have developed Aboriginal employment strategies with the aim being to increase the number of Aboriginal employees in their agencies. Strategies include strengthening career development initiatives to increase the number of Aboriginal employees in the higher classification levels.

The majority of agencies reported that they use the Aboriginal Employment Register to assist in recruiting Aboriginal employees, whilst a number of agencies have developed an Aboriginal Employment Strategy/Program. These specific strategies may include targeted advertising and recruitment efforts directed at Aboriginal people, scholarships for Aboriginal students and provision of work experience within the agency, and scholarship funding for Aboriginal employees.

Agency Focus

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has developed an Aboriginal Employment Plan identifying a range of strategies to attract and recruit Aboriginal employees. DPC has implemented the Nunga Workplace Network for Aboriginal employees with a priority being the identification of barriers regarding development and retention of Aboriginal employees. A targeted Traineeship Program has resulted in the recruitment of two Aboriginal Trainees. A DPC Aboriginal Leadership Program Scholarship has also been implemented in 2008.

Indigenous Scholarship Program

The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of Department of Premier and Cabinet took over coordination of this program in 2007. The Program was established to provide Aboriginal students with ongoing employment on successful completion of their studies and workplace assessment. A total of 14 students entered the program and as of June 2008, 3 scholars remain.

Cultural Inclusion Framework for SA

The Cultural Inclusion Framework is a guide to assist State public sector agencies deliver culturally inclusive programs to Aboriginal people in South Australia. The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of Department of the Premier and Cabinet has lead responsibility for reporting on agency progress on their implementation of the Framework. To support the reporting process they have developed an across agency reporting template for the 2008/2009 year.

Employment of people with a disability

The Office for Disability and Client Services within the Department for Families and Communities has the lead role for the development of the whole of government strategy whose target is to “Double the number of people with disabilities employed in the Public Sector by 2014”. The Office for Disability and Client Services undertakes this work in collaboration with the cross-Government reference Group “Promoting Independence”.

Most agencies reported accessing the Disability Register as part of their recruitment process. Additionally, in some agencies, training is provided to those serving on selection panels to ensure that there is no discrimination in the selection process, particularly in relation to people with a disability. Training is also provided more generally to staff in relation to disability awareness.

It is important that the public sector workforce reflects the diversity of the population that it aims to serve. The South Australian Government is facing

the same challenges as the rest of the Australian workforce, an ageing population coupled with skill shortages and a sustained period of tightening labour supply. Evidence suggests that people with a disability have the capacity to be employed within a wide variety of jobs and many have the qualifications and skills to meet the demands of the workforce. With increasing competition among employers for qualified workers, people with a disability are a potential talent pool that the SA Public Sector could readily access. Furthermore, the employment of people with disabilities not only recognises the innate human rights provided for under national and international law but also provides the opportunity for the South Australian Public Sector to have a diverse, skilled and vigorous workforce that is representative of the South Australian community.

In order to achieve the target outcomes a range of innovative employment strategies needs to be developed enabling existing perceptions regarding disability to be explored and false assumptions and negative attitudes to be dispelled. Debunking the myths and promoting the benefits of employing people with a disability will be a prime feature of the methodology and will be supplemented with comprehensive information relating to the subsidies and support schemes available.

One critical aspect of meeting this target has been to agree on a definition of disability. This has occurred and the definition provided by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) will be used as the benchmark standard.

In the past there has been an under representation of public sector employees with a disability. This has been partly due to a genuine lack of recognition of the skills and abilities that many individuals with disabilities have.

There is now a growing awareness that matching the skills and abilities of individuals (including individuals with disabilities) to the inherent requirements of the job supports the recruitment of effective and valuable employees. In fact there is considerable research both here in Australia and internationally, that employees with a disability have fewer sick days, are loyal and generally have higher retention rates.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

Multicultural SA is the lead agency for a new target in South Australia's Strategic Plan to: increase the percentage of South Australians who accept cultural diversity as a positive influence in the community. This target will be measured as part of a larger household survey of a sample of the South Australian public.

To ensure services are culturally sensitive and appropriate, Multicultural SA prepared an annual whole of government Access and Equity Report on programs, services and emerging issues of significance for clients from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The report focuses on policy

and planning, program and service delivery and staffing and cultural awareness training.

To support diversity and to improve services by being more customer focussed, Multicultural SA organised a Multicultural Forum to learn from the experience of Canada about the settlement and attraction of new migrants and the building of harmonious and prosperous communities. About 150 stakeholders who have a key role to play in ensuring we successfully achieve the State Government population and multicultural targets attended.

South Australia's Strategic Plan contains a target to increase the number of women on Government boards and committees. To support equal participation of women, Multicultural SA organised a Women's Leadership Course for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Thirteen women from backgrounds including Afghan; Indigenous; Italian; Iraqi, Peruvian; Sudanese and Vietnamese attended a graduation ceremony organised by Multicultural SA and involving the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Minister for the Status of Women.

Fair and equitable treatment for all

The majority of agencies reported that their agency has strong policies on fairness and equity and treating others with respect. In most cases, these are supported by cultural awareness training and disability awareness training, particularly in relation to Aboriginal employees and employees with a disability.

Other strategies used by agencies include, conducting lunch time seminars on cultural awareness, engaging Aboriginal people to assist managers to deal with complex employment issues, establishing employee assistance programs specifically for Aboriginal people, and using Aboriginal advocates to assist Aboriginal employees with employment issues.

Recruitment and Promotion decisions are fair

Agencies strongly encourage the training of staff who participate in recruitment selection panels as a means of ensuring that recruitment and promotion decisions are fair. One agency has made training mandatory and requires that an executive director approve selection panel composition. Agencies also reported using guidelines and policies focused on the merit principle, whilst two agencies reported promoting the use of the GRC good practice guide on recruitment and selection.

Agency Focus

The Department for Environment and Heritage has comprehensive policies covering filling vacancies, appointment and assignment, selection and recruitment. No person can participate on a Selection Panel unless they have attended selection training and an Executive Director has approved their participation on the Panel. All selection decisions are documented and signed off by an appropriate delegate.

Selection and Recruitment training forms part of the agency's Management Essentials Development Program. Human Resource Account Managers are available to advise managers and selection panels on recruitment and selection issues. Job design is reviewed prior to advertising a vacancy to ensure that there are no discriminatory clauses that would discourage applicants from applying and being treated fairly.

Most agencies reported that they monitor grievances and complaints to ensure that recruitment and promotion decisions are fair. In one agency, complaints are monitored on a monthly basis. Other ways in which the success of these strategies are gauged include, analysing exit interview data, conducting staff surveys and gaining employee feedback. One agency also monitors gender related patterns to ensure gender equity in selection processes, particularly at the executive level.

Remuneration Reviews

A total of 11 review applications were received, representing 32 employees. These included one application from the Attorney General's Department, one from the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, two from the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA, one from the Department for Families and Communities, two from the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology and four from the Department for Correctional Services. Of these, five were dismissed, four were withdrawn and two fell outside the jurisdiction of the Remuneration Review Panel.

Promotion Appeals

A total of 10 promotion appeals were received, with one held over from 2006-07. The agencies and their number of appeals were as follows: one from the Department of Treasury and Finance, one from the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA, one from the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, two from the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, three from the Department for Families and Communities, two from the Attorney General's Department and one from the Department for Correctional Services.

Of these, three were withdrawn, two were successfully conciliated, two were dismissed, two were held over until the 2008-09 financial year and two fell outside the jurisdiction of the Appeals Tribunal. Further details can be obtained from the Promotion and Grievance Appeals Tribunal Annual Report.

Grievance Appeals

There were a total of 21 Grievance Appeals received. The following agencies were represented including three from the Attorney General's Department, eight from the Department for Correctional Services, one from the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA, three from the Department for Environment and Heritage, two from the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, three from the Department for Families and Communities and one from the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

Of these, four were withdrawn, three were successfully conciliated, six were dismissed, one was upheld, one was held over until the 2008-09 financial year and six fell outside the jurisdiction of the Appeals Tribunal. Further details can be obtained from the Promotion and Grievance Appeals Tribunal Annual Report.

The management of grievances and complaints form key indicators for the monitoring of fair and equitable treatment of employees by agencies. Grievances formally raised between July 2007 to June 2008 included: 30 regarding bullying and harassment, 8 in relation to promotion and advancement, 6 grievances in relation to request that breach the code of conduct, and 6 in relation to selection processes.

Workplace: Enabling Performance and Development

Performance Management Reviews

Performance management reviews are fundamental for workplaces in the public service to enable performance and development. The importance of performance management is well recognised by agencies, with some agencies reporting the percentage of performance management reviews that have been conducted with employees to their Chief Executive or the executive leadership group. One agency has their performance review responsibilities built into their executive contracts.

Performance reviews are also promoted through a variety of mechanism across agencies, including, online/intranet support, training for managers, and direction from the Chief Executive or executive group.

A number of agencies conduct staff surveys to gain feedback on the performance management process. The numbers of employees who have undergone performance management are recorded and the proportion reported on a regular basis. Additionally, KPIs, goals and targets are also used to assess the effectiveness of the performance management process.

A variety of barriers to managers to conducting performance management were reported by agencies, including the skills and capacity of the managers. Agencies stated that the perceptions of both staff and managers can also impact on the successful implementation of performance management. For instance, there may be issues of staff accepting performance management as adding value to their work or how performance management can benefit their work. In contrast managers, may perceive difficulty or have some discomfort in addressing performance within a public sector environment. Some agencies also reported technological barriers, such as the lack of an online performance management tool.

Chief Executive Performance Agreements

In 2004, the Government introduced the concept of 'dual accountability' into public sector management legislation, thereby formalising the obligation of agency chief executives to deliver on whole of government responsibilities, and not just agency specific objectives. In 2005, the Executive Committee of Cabinet was created in part to assess the performance of Chief Executives in progressing South Australia's Strategic Plan Targets for which they are assigned responsibility.

The main reference points are the 'key accountabilities' identified in the performance agreements for each Chief Executive and the leadership competencies developed for SA's Executive levels, which are:

- Shapes strategic thinking and change
- Achieves results
- Drives business excellence
- Forges relationships and engages others
- Exemplifies personal drive and integrity

South Australian Executive Service

The South Australian Executive Service (SAES) was established in July 2007 to provide the public sector with a high-performing leadership team with a shared sense of purpose and focus on whole of government results. Since then Chief Executives have invited relevant executives to the Executive Service and all new PSM Act executives are recruited as SAES members. The SAES applies only to executives employed under the PSM Act at present. All members of the SAES must meet five core leadership competencies.

Management of SAES development was transferred to the Public Sector Performance Commission (PSPC) on 1 July 2008. PSPC will seek to revitalise development of the SAES to create a cohort of exceptional leaders who receive targeted, relevant and timely performance management and development opportunities, coupled with enhanced career pathways.

Graduate Development Program

The SA Public Sector Graduate Development Program incorporates much of the core knowledge, skills and abilities required to be an effective public sector employee. The program is based on participants gaining seven nationally accredited units of competency from the Public Sector Training Package.

Reform activities

Work of the Government Reform Commission

In June 2006 the Honourable Mike Rann, Premier of South Australia and the Honourable Jay Weatherill, the Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management announced the formation of the Government Reform Commission (GRC). The Government Reform Commission was established for 18 months to focus on reform in the areas of:

- streamlining decision making processes
- building a greater service culture
- lifting public sector performance, building new skills and rewarding excellence
- achieving greater flexibility and mobility of people and functions across the public sector.

The GRC concluded in late 2007 having paved the way for continuing reform.

Public Sector Performance Commission

The Public Sector Performance Commission became operational on 1 July 2008 with a role to provide cohesion to fully realise the Government's reform and service improvement agenda. The Commission works collaboratively with agencies to achieve the Government's performance improvement agenda and to showcase best practice and incubate innovation.

The overarching goal for the Commissioner is to help create an environment in the public sector that is more conducive to implementing South Australia's Strategic Plan. Achieving the more ambitious Plan targets requires, among other things: greater responsiveness, leaderships, innovation, holistic approaches, open dialogue with stakeholders, strong evaluation mechanisms, efficient decision-making structures and systems, good quality information and advice, and the highest standards of service delivery.

Shared Services SA

The Shared Services Reform Office (SSRO) was established to investigate the most appropriate approach and model for a shared services organisation. In terms of the shared services reform in the South Australian Government this related to the functional areas of HR, ICT, procurement and finance.

The SSRO has drawn on both internal and external skills and expertise to assist in the development of the model and approach, which was approved by Cabinet on 15 October 2007. SSRO became Shared Services SA on 12 November 2007.

Shared Services SA aims to implement corporate and business services to be shared by all departments of the South Australian Public Sector. These services will be in the areas of Finance, Human Resources (HR), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Procurement. The sharing of these services will deliver efficiency improvements, cost reductions and quality of service benefits to individual clients and the Government.

Shared Services SA has commenced implementation of the shared services in consultation with agencies and will continue to work closely with agency management, staff and unions through the transition process.

Planning is underway to effect the transition of transactional recruitment functions into Shared Service SA. It is anticipated that this will simplify and standardise the recruitment experience into and within Government and will strengthen the notion of one government and contribute to the *Ask Just Once* strategy.

Consideration is being given to supporting the across government recruitment process with suitable enabling technology. Work is progressing through an across government working group to ascertain the feasibility of implementing an e-recruitment platform as part of future streamlined recruitment arrangements. Should this approach be adopted, it is expected that it will significantly improve the recruitment experience for both internal and external candidates. Together with an updated online jobs portal, it will also support the government's goal of presenting as an employer of choice.

Women in Executive positions

South Australia's Strategic Plan Target 6.23 is to have women comprising half of the public sector employees at executive level (including chief executives) by 2014. This Target has been revised in recognition that women apply for PSM Act executive positions at a ratio of only one woman for every three men who apply. Research conducted by the Commissioner for Public Employment's Office in 2006 sheds some light on the reasons for the reluctance of women in the SA public sector to apply for executive positions. It would seem that much work needs to be done to create an executive culture that is attractive to women and to change the perceptions held by women that the cost of involvement is greater than the benefits.

Some agencies have already achieved this target and their challenge will be to maintain female representation at the executive levels over time. Other agencies will need to introduce strategies to develop and support the movement of more women into executive positions.

Most agencies have a specific strategy to increase the number of women in executive positions. These strategies often include providing training and development opportunities for women, targeted participation of selected women in executive leadership meetings or forums, establishing family friendly policies and promotion of Flexible Work Arrangements, as well as mentoring programs specifically for women. Additionally some agency programs specifically target women in the executive 'feeder group' for development opportunities.

Agency Focus

The Attorney General's Department has implemented three specific Leadership Development Programs for women in the groups of ASO1-3, ASO7-MAS3 and Indigenous Women ASO2-05. All programs are nationally accredited and develop skills and confidence in preparation for career progression. A fourth program for ASO4-6 women will be delivered in the 08-09 financial year. An annual training program for women entitled 'Introduction to the Role of Board Member' was delivered in 2007-08. An additional program for women, addressing Financial Management on Boards was delivered also this year.

A variety of measures are used to monitor the success of these strategies, but commonly include evaluation of specific development programs, monitoring the number of women participating in the programs, and monitoring the number of women in executive positions. Climate survey data is also used by some agencies to monitor the success of these strategies.

Workplace: Healthy and Safe

Creating and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment is a key priority for the government and is reflected in South Australia's Strategic Plan Target 2.11 - Greater Safety at Work. Agencies offer a variety of initiatives designed to assist employees to achieve a healthy lifestyle. These include the provision of free flu vaccinations for staff, gym membership subsidies and sponsorship for staff to participate in the activities such as the Corporate Cup and other sporting activities. Quit smoking programs have also been implemented by a number of agencies.

Agency Focus

The Environment Protection Authority has implemented a 'TravelSmart Workforce Plan' (TWP), which includes the following initiatives:

- Establishment of an EPA Bicycle User Group (BUG)
- Introduction of the Adelaide Metro Workplace
- A "Travel A K the Green Way" business travel competition
- The 10,000 Step Program
- 'Tips on sustainable Transport' on the EPA Intranet
- The provision of additional bicycle parks
- Participation in 'Ride to Work Day' and 'Walk to Work Day'

In general, most agencies provide Employee Assistance Programs as a mechanism to promote psychological health for employees. Staff consultation and information provision are generally used by agencies to assist with workplace change. Additionally, change management training is provided to managers or change management experts are engaged by some agencies.

In relation to work pressure, some agencies encourage the use of flexible work arrangements. A number of agencies also reported using the performance development process to discuss issues of work pressure.

The implementation of policies is often used by agencies to outline and guide acceptable behaviour between co-workers. Specific learning and training programs are provided to employees in some agencies to ensure they are able to handle customer/client relationships. These can include training on how to deal with aggressive customers.

Safety in the public sector

Cabinet approved the 'Safety in the Public Sector 2007-2010' Strategy on 26 March 2007 as the successor to the Workplace Safety Management Strategy 2004-2006. The framework is based on four elements:

- Sustainable commitment
- Financial accountability
- Integrated risk management
- Rigorous evaluation.

The framework seeks to promote Injury Prevention through the following objectives:

- Embed the Premier's Zero Harm Vision and 100% Return to Work.
- Provide a context for accountability and leadership in safety performance.
- Provide the means by which the South Australian public sector can build a resilient workplace safety culture that integrates safety into core business practice and performance across government.
- Ensure Ministerial and chief executive reporting to Cabinet and Parliament of portfolio/agency safety performance is aligned with South Australia's Strategic Plan.
- Provide support and encouragement for agencies to integrate positive safety performance within their core business.
- Support the Government's reform agenda.
- Assure South Australian public sector safety achievement strives for world's best practice.

Quarterly reports of results against Strategy targets are provided to Cabinet and to Portfolios on key work injury outcomes and trends. This data is used to identify and plan strategic injury prevention and management interventions.

Flexible Work Practices

The South Australian labour market will experience a contraction of available staff over the next ten years due to the steady decline in the working age population. This will expose the public sector to significant competition for labour and flexible work arrangements offer public sector managers an opportunity to utilise current arrangements to attract and retain staff. Despite a range of very attractive provisions available to employees and management, the take up of flexible work arrangements in the public sector remains low, concentrated on the utilisation of flexitime.

The revised South Australia Strategic Plan target released in January 2007 includes a new target T2012 “Improve the quality of life of all South Australian through the maintenance of a healthy work life balance”. An onus exists for State Government employment practices to demonstrate best practice in the availability of flexible work arrangements and the trial and evaluation of work life balance initiatives. Initiatives introduced in the last twelve months have included long service leave provision to enable leave to be taken in single days and changes to superannuation, enabling older workers aged over 55 years to draw down on their superannuation under a transition to retirement contract, thereby reducing their working hours without a loss of income. There is a strong interest from public sector staff in further initiatives and while individual departments have announced some progressive initiatives their usage and evaluation remains patchy.

An examination of the reasons employees leave the public sector reveals that lack of flexible work arrangements and issues balancing work and family remain one of the top four reasons staff leave the public sector. Management training to implement flexible work arrangements and support for the reorganisation of work to facilitate their acceptance and utilisation remains an ongoing challenge for the public sector.