Journal of Organizational Change Management

Can enhanced performance management support public sector change?

Fiona Buick Deborah Ann Blackman Michael Edward O'Donnell Janine Louise O'Flynn Damian West

Can enhanced performance management support public sector change?

Fiona Buick
Faculty of Business, Government and Law, University of Canberra, Canberra, Australia
Deborah Ann Blackman and Michael Edward O'Donnell
School of Business, University of New South Wales, Canberra, Australia
Janine Louise O'Flynn
School of Government, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, and
Damian West
Client Engagement Group, Australian Public Service Commission, Canberra, Australia

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to focus on the potential role that performance management could play in enabling employees' adaptability to change and, therefore, successful change implementation.

Design/methodology/approach – This research adopted a qualitative case study research design, focussed on seven case studies within the Australian Public Service (APS). This study utilized documentary analysis, semi-structured individual and group interviews.

Findings – The findings of this research demonstrate that adaptability to change is integral for high performance; however, the constant change faced by many public servants is disruptive. The authors posit that applying a performance framework developed by Blackman *et al.* (2013a, b) to change implementation will help overcome, or at least mitigate, these issues. The authors argue that applying this framework will: enable adaptability to change; and provide an ongoing management function that enables change to occur.

Research limitations/implications – This research has been limited to seven organizations within the APS, yet it does reveal interesting implications in terms of the apparent role of performance management in both developing change capacity and supporting espoused outcomes.

Practical implications – This research identifies the potential role that performance management can play in supporting effective change implementation through enabling employees to cope better with the change through enabling clarity, purpose and alignment with the organizational direction.

The authors would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). The APSC is a key partner in this research, which is a co-production partnership between the APSC and two Australian universities, the University of Canberra and the University of New South Wales, Canberra. The co-production partnership has meant that the APSC has been intimately involved in the establishment of the research design, facilitating academic access to the seven case study organizations, conducting fieldwork, writing practitioner research reports, engaging in team discussions and data analysis, identifying the key themes emerging from this research and writing of academic publications, including this paper, "Can enhanced performance management support public sector change?" The authors would also like to acknowledge the seven case study organizations that provided considerable in-kind support and enabled data collection to occur.

Journal of Organizational Change Management
Vol. 28 No. 2, 2015
pp. 271-289

0953-4814
DOI 10.1108/JOCM-12-2013-0249

Originality/value – The originality of this paper stems from the synthesis of different strands of literature, specifically high performance, performance management and change management, and empirical research in the public sector to provide a new way of looking at performance management as a change enabler.

Keywords Qualitative research, Organizational change, Performance management, Public sector, Adaptability to change, High performance

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

High performance organizations are characterized by an ability to anticipate, respond and adapt to changing circumstances (de Waal, 2010; Pickering, 2008); with employee adaptability to change a critical element of this (Popovich, 1998). However, despite a great deal of research into how to undertake successful change, the majority of change initiatives fail (Grady and Grady, 2013; Higgs and Rowland, 2010). In addition, despite the plethora of research into organizational change antecedents, processes and consequences (for a meta-analysis see Oreg *et al.*, 2011), few studies have examined the impact of performance management on change. The studies that have been undertaken tend to focus on the relationship between performance measurement and change management (Bourne *et al.*, 2003; MacBryde *et al.*, 2012) or how change management processes could affect organizational performance (Agyemang and Ryan, 2013; Parker *et al.*, 2013; Sanger, 2008). There is a dearth of research into how individual performance management can be used as a strategic tool for affecting change management. We will argue that strategically used performance management can play a major role in enabling or impeding change capacity. A performance framework recently developed from data collected in the Australian Public Service (APS) has highlighted key areas for improving implementation which, we suggest, if implemented could underpin more effective change processes or programs. Our primary goal is to suggest that current conceptualizations of the relationships between change management and performance management are incomplete and, potentially, working in the wrong direction.

First we outline the drive for high performance within the public sector. Second, some of the difficulties with change implementation are described to explain why performance management may be a potential enabler of successful change. Third, we describe the framework to be used for analysis and then explain the way that the methods and data analysis process utilized in this research. Fourth, the findings highlight how applying the framework provides a conceptual structure supporting the achievement of change. We conclude that treating change management as a performance management issue may offer new insights into affecting successful change.

The quest for high performance

Enhancement of government performance has been the focus of public administration and management research, policy and reform for many years (de Waal, 2010). The quest for enhanced performance has been underpinned by a crisis of confidence in some governments, with doubts regarding their ability to cope with the changing demands of their domestic and global environments (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Such concerns have led to waves of reform, including the move to New Public Management (NPM) (Hughes, 2003; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). The term NPM is a shorthand expression coined by Hood (1991) and regularly used by scholars and professionals to describe the global reorganization of public sector organizations that occurred throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Aucoin, 1995; Dunleavy and Hood, 1994). This movement was

prevalent in certain Anglo-Saxon countries and international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Hood, 1995). One of the key elements of NPM was a stronger performance orientation, with emphasis on higher labor productivity, establishing explicit standards and measures of performance, and a focus on outcomes rather than inputs (Hood, 1991; Lynn, 1998; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt, 1993).

Since NPM, many of these performance drivers have endured, with declining levels of trust in government, citizen demands for improved services and increased value continuing to drive change in the public sector (Mayne and Zapico-Goñi, 2009), along with the current era of "draconian cuts" ratcheting up the performance imperative (Andrews *et al.*, 2012, p. 39). Recent literature has concentrated on the development of "high performing organizations" (HPOs), with the push to enhance the productive capacity of public sector organizations to deliver desired governmental outcomes (Blackman *et al.*, 2012; Pickering, 2008; Price *et al.*, 2011).

In the literature, HPOs are depicted as comprising a number of core characteristics (for an overview see Blackman *et al.*, 2012). One of the characteristics of HPOs is the ability to anticipate, respond and adapt to changing circumstances (de Waal, 2010; Holbeche, 2003; Pickering, 2008; Popovich, 1998), reflecting that the pace, magnitude and importance of organizational change have increased considerably in recent years (Grady and Grady, 2013). Many organizations are changing what they do and how they do it in order to improve their effectiveness, create more value (for the public sector) and enhance their competitiveness (for the private sector) (Leana and Barry, 2000; LePine *et al.*, 2000). Such changes are focussed on enabling an organization and its functions adapt to, and cope with, a challenging environment (Leana and Barry, 2000; Parry and Proctor-Thomson, 2002). Change is considered to be a "fact of life" for most organizations (Leana and Barry, 2000, p. 753) with the process of change a continuous sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2001).

Difficulties with change implementation

Despite the prevalence of change, the majority of change initiatives are unsuccessful (Grady and Grady, 2013; Higgs and Rowland, 2010). A common reason given for failure is employee resistance to change (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Coram and Burnes, 2001; Trader-Leigh, 2002), which emerges from feelings of uncertainty (Coram and Burnes, 2001). Employees may feel unsure about the reasons for change, the future direction, sustainability and viability of the organization, outcomes of the change effort, employees' job security, future promotion opportunities and what employees' future job responsibilities and functions will be (Andrews *et al.*, 2008). A study by Bordia *et al.* (2004) found that uncertainty regarding job responsibilities had a negative impact on employees' feelings of lack of control, with control also having a negative relationship with psychological strain. Both factors had a powerful impact on employees' ability to deal with and adapt to organizational change. Moreover, when change is imposed upon employees, due to circumstances outside their control, the pressure leads to a sense of powerlessness and stress among employees, resulting in a propensity to withdraw from the stressful environment (Rush *et al.*, 1995).

The engagement literature demonstrates that when employees withdraw, their performance will suffer (Saks, 2006), indicating a potential link between change and performance. Where there are high levels of change, many individuals' performance may deteriorate, thereby actually reducing organizational effectiveness rather than improving it. We suggest that an exploration of the relationship between performance

management and change management may explain why change programs fail, providing guidance to change agents in practice to improve the chance of success.

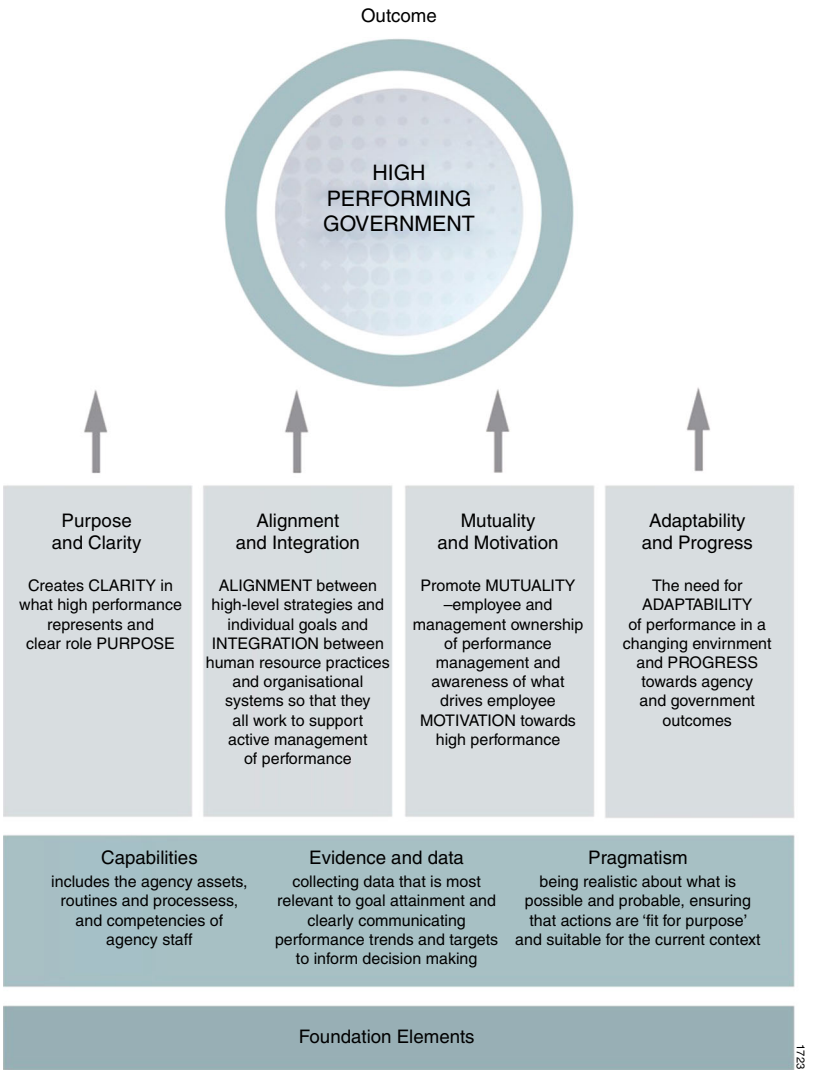
Performance management as an enabler of change

The role of human resource management in the success and failure of organizational change has been acknowledged (Doorewaard and Benschop, 2003). During the NPM era, the shift to an outcomes-based approach led to the utilization of performance management systems as a means to influence employees to behave in ways that supported the attainment of organizational objectives (Walker *et al.*, 2010). However, some argue that performance management impedes change through being inconsistent with the aims and strategies for change, acting as a disincentive for employee behavior change: e.g. encouraging individualistic behavior and thus not supporting the desired teamwork-oriented culture (Gill, 2002).

The challenges associated with performance management are well-known, with claims that it is difficult to undertake, with no "performance-management cookbook" for leaders to "find the recipe that applies to their agency, and follow the instructions" (Behn, 2002, p. 8). Moreover, explanations are lacking as to what performance management is, how to make it work effectively, or how it supports the achievement of high performance (see e.g. Aguinis *et al.*, 2012). What is known, however, is that if an individual performance management system is working well, it enhances organizational performance (Holbeche, 2003), restricts obstructive behaviors and supports desired behaviors (Reid and Hubbell, 2005). Recognizing its potential capacity to influence the behavior of employees leads us to posit that strategically effective performance management could facilitate change implementation.

Recognizing the limitations of current performance management practice, and its generally poor implementation in the Australian context, Blackman *et al.* (2013a, b) studied ways in which it could be used to support the pursuit of high performance in the public sector. A framework was developed comprising four principles and three foundation elements that work together as a system to support high performance (see Figure 1). The framework's main premise is that focussing on high performance leads to employees engaging with the process, greater clarity regarding desired outcomes, and an enhanced possibility of ongoing performance improvements. The performance framework is designed to examine any performance management system with the argument that the principles and foundation elements should work together to increase employee buy-in to the performance management process and achieve high performance (Blackman *et al.*, 2013a, b).

This paper uses the framework to demonstrate how performance management could support change implementation. Similar to the argument that one of the issues associated with performance management is the preoccupation with underperformance, rather than high performance (see Blackman *et al.*, 2013a, b), we argue that an issue with change management is the assumption that employees automatically resist change. Instead, we posit that individual resistance occurs not as an automatic reaction to change, but as a response to poor change management. This paper emphasizes the role of performance management in change implementation at the level of individual employees; this is consistent with the primary paradigm used by performance management researchers (Waldman, 1994). Our interest in the individual stems from recognition that employee adaptability to change is increasingly important for their ability to perform effectively in a continuously changing environment (Pulakos *et al.*, 2000), with the ability to adapt to change identified as a key differentiator between employees



Source: Blackman *et al*. (2013a, b)

Figure 1.
A new framework of performance management

who perform well in a changing environment and those who do not (LePine *et al*., 2000). Consequently, we argue that the focus needs to be on how to utilize performance management to enhance employees' willingness to change, engagement with the change effort and their ability to adapt to change. In this paper we will ask whether reconceptualizing individual change as an outcome of a performance management process will lead to greater chance of success.

Methodology

This research was designed to explore both how performance management could support the achievement of high performance and whether such a focus was likely to

support successful change implementation. The context of this study was the APS which supports the Australian Federal Government. In June 2012 the APS was made up of 101 organizations of which 23 were classified as large (> 1,000 APS employees), 31 as medium (251-1,000 APS employees) and 47 as small (20-250 APS employees) (Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), 2012). These organizations employed 154,307 ongoing staff (permanent) and 14,273 non-ongoing. Of the ongoing employees, 109,472 were employed at the operational level (APS), 42,049 were employed at the middle management level (EL) and 2,786 were employed at the senior management level (Senior Executive Service) (see APSC, 2012).

In order to understand and explore the role of performance management as an enabler of high performance and organizational change, it was important to examine it *in situ* and understand critical contextual factors, social processes and dynamics (Yin, 2014). For this study a qualitative, multiple-case study design was adopted, selecting cases which would enable theoretical replication (Yin, 2014). The sampling frame, which combined purposive and convenience sampling techniques, was designed to ensure that, collectively, the cases represented both the range of agencies to be found across the APS and a spectrum comprising low, medium and high levels of performance management effectiveness. The latter was determined from the annual State of the Service Report (SOSR) (APSC, 2012). The SOSR draws on two sources of data: an Agency survey sent to all APS organizations employing 20 or more staff under the Public Service Act; and an APS Employee Census (APSC, 2012). Findings from the Agency survey identified where a range of performance management measures and mechanisms were in place. This was then contrasted with the Employee Census which identified the individuals' perceptions of performance management implementation within their organization, for example, perceptions about employees' role understanding and feedback effectiveness. High effectiveness was determined where there was congruence: i.e. a coherent process that the employees considered to be working for them. Low effectiveness was determined where the individual performance management system was deemed unhelpful by employees. The purposive sampling involved targeting specific organizations that provided a range of effectiveness types, covering low, medium and high effectiveness. The convenience sampling involved public service organizations that volunteered to participate as a case in the study. In doing so, the case study sample was aimed at predicting contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (Yin, 2014), that is, it was proposed that the differing levels of performance management effectiveness might influence the extent to which performance management enabled high performance and organizational change. The seven case organizations encompassed policy, operational and regulatory functions (see Table I for details).

Table I.
Case studies used in this study

Organization code	Organization size	Organization type	Number of employees
A	Large	Policy	3,000-5,000 employees
B	Large	Policy	3,000-5,000 employees
C	Large	Operational	5,000-7,000 employees
D	Large	Operational	8,000-10,000 employees
E	Medium	Policy	500-1,000 employees
F	Medium	Operational	500-1,000 employees
G	Small	Regulatory	< 100 employees

Data collection methods

In case study research, multiple sources of evidence are collected and data created (Yin, 2014) to gain a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon. This qualitative study utilized documentary analysis and semi-structured individual and group interviews. Two researchers (from a team of five) were present for all interviews, with the pairings changing for each case; this enabled greater understanding and discussion of the data during analysis.

Documentary analysis. Analysis of official internal (organizational) and public documentation enabled an understanding of performance management systems in public service organizations in general and each case in particular. Internal documentation such as reports and performance management documentation were obtained via key participants and public documentation such as government publications and annual reports was obtained from organizational internet sites.

Semi-structured individual interviews. In all, 90 semi-structured key participant interviews were conducted August and November 2012. These were adopted to ensure consistency across interviews and adherence to the areas of interest, while allowing sufficient flexibility for participants to respond (Bryman, 2004). Participants were asked a series of questions to establish the factors that they thought enabled or reduced successful implementation of performance management and what impact this had upon high performance. On average, individual interviews took one hour.

Semi-structured group interviews. In all, 22 semi-structured group interviews were undertaken with 136 participants. Each group comprised between six to eight participants and involved a high degree of homogeneity; participants were from similar hierarchical levels and geographical location within the same case study organization. The two researchers allocated to the case facilitated each group interview, with one taking the lead with questions and the other asking follow-up questions and taking notes regarding group dynamics. On average, group interviews took two hours.

Participant sampling. A stratified purposive sampling technique was adopted, selecting participants from particular subgroups of interest, facilitating comparisons across groups (Patton, 1990). For each case, invitations were sent based on hierarchical level (senior manager, middle manager, operational staff) and geographical location (National Office, selected state and regional offices). The overall sample was 226 participants: see Table II for more details.

Data analysis

All interviews were recorded, transcribed and entered into NVivo. In this study, the data analysis occurred in four phases (see Table III). During phase three, the researcher responsible for coding undertook inductive analysis using a combination of open, axial and selective coding; they immersed themselves in the data to identify emergent patterns, themes and inter-relationships (Patton, 1990).

Phase/level	Operational	Middle manager	Senior manager	Total
Semi-structured interviews	0	48	42	90
Semi-structured group interviews	71	65	0	136
Total participants	71	113	42	226

Table II. Overall participant sample

Phase	Description	Involvement
Phase 1: during data collection	After each block of interviews, the researchers involved in each case study reflected on the key emergent themes and issues, focussing on areas of similarity and differences across participants and any surprising findings	Two researchers involved in each case study
Phase 2: individual case study reports	Once the data were collected and interviews transcribed for each case study, an individual report was written by the two lead researchers. These reports emerged from manual coding of each case study transcript and comprised the key themes evident in each case study, including definitions of high performance, areas of effective practice, areas that required improvement and suggestions for change put forth by participants	Two researchers involved in each case study, with proof reading and discussion by other project team members All team members met on a monthly basis to discuss emergent themes and areas of commonality and differences across the case studies. It was established that similar themes were evident across all case studies, with few areas of divergence
Phase 3: in-depth coding of whole data set	All transcripts were loaded into NVivo and coded inductively. This involved the researcher coding each transcript line by line according to the issues participants identified. These codes were then categorized into smaller clusters of similar codes to depict key themes	All coding was undertaken by one researcher, who revised and recoded as coding progressed and key emergent themes were identified. This enabled coding consistency and reliability
Phase 4: research group discussions	Once the coding was complete, all project team members met for a two-day workshop focussing on data analysis and confirming key themes. Discussions revolved around the NVivo file, which was projected onto a screen. The team worked through each key theme (i.e. codes with dozens of references), confirmed the high degree of consistency and similarity across all case studies and held robust discussions regarding the key ideas. Key ideas were mapped on butcher's paper and confirmed by team members. From this, key issues regarding high performance and change were identified	All project team members over a two-day workshop

Table III.
Phases of data analysis

Open coding involved undertaking a line-by-line analysis of the data, breaking the data down into discrete parts, comparing the data for similarities and differences, and then grouping the data into categories based on this comparison (Strauss and Corbin, 2007). This coding occurred inductively through identifying what emerged from the data itself, rather than assigning pre-conceived categories to participant's responses. Following the open coding process, we undertook axial coding. During this stage of our analysis, we related the categories with subcategories to form more complete explanations about the phenomena under investigation (Strauss and Corbin, 2007). We explored potential relationships between categories to understand how and why performance management impacted high performance and organizational change.

The next stage of our analysis involved selective coding where we identified core categories evident in our data (Strauss and Corbin, 2007); these categories were apparent both within and across the case studies, revealed by the frequency and specificity with which they were mentioned. Significantly, the qualitative research was focussed on the factors enabling or detracting from high performance, including the role of performance management and what would be required to support the achievement of high performance (aspirational). Despite the earlier quantitative analysis which had controlled for possible differences related to current performance, the qualitative research on high performance indicated no identifiable difference between organizations responses overall to the actual research topic based on current efficacy; there were examples of a range of practices (poor to exemplary) identified throughout all case studies. Consequently, aggregated data was used for the analysis linking change management and performance management. The linkages were established primarily through identifying overlaps and relationships within the open coding, in particular where participants suggested how changes to the individual performance management processes or implementation would lead to positive changes at the organizational level.

Findings

At the time of this study, several case study organizations were undergoing continuous change, often initiated by changes to the political agenda (however, this was prior to the current focus on budget reduction). Because "change is constant" (Middle manager, Agency B), organizations had to adjust their operations, revisit their priorities and increase efficiencies where appropriate. Despite recognition that adaptability to change was fundamental to the achievement of outcomes, issues emerged regarding organizational ability to adapt to changing circumstances. These included growing cynicism toward change and general feelings of "change fatigue. People just get tired of the constant changing, changing, changing" (Operational, Agency A). Initially, it appeared that the continuous nature of change was an impediment to successful implementation, however, it emerged that it was the change implementation which led to undesirable outcomes. This paralleled the notion that it is often poor performance management implementation that contributes to poor outcomes, highlighting that performance management implementation might be an interesting way to conceptualize change. We now present each of the principles and foundation elements of the performance framework in Figure 1, presenting possibilities for effective change implementation. As a reflection of the limited space available in an article we use illustrative quotes to demonstrate the data findings.

Performance management as a support mechanism for organizational change

Principles. Principle 1: clarity and purpose. The importance of role clarity and the provision of specific information regarding the change strategy, and what it means for employees' roles, has been highlighted in the literature (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Oreg *et al.*, 2011; Parry, 1999; Trader-Leigh, 2002). Effective change implementation requires employees knowing what is to be achieved and the direction of the change; such clarity reduces employee uncertainty and obtains their buy-in and support of the change (Bordia *et al.*, 2004; Coram and Burnes, 2001; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Trader-Leigh, 2002).

The research revealed that the first step in attaining high performance is for organizations, groups, teams and individuals to clearly define what high performance

means at each of these levels. In terms of change, the definition of high performance would become the desired outcomes identified from the change. Through clearly defining what constitutes high performance, clear role purpose can be established at each of these levels. This is particularly important in times of change, although something that appeared to be sorely missed in many of the case study organizations: "Change doesn't seem to be managed that well in terms of people communicating what the objectives are and having that filtered down to staff so that they know what's expected of them" (Middle manager, Agency G). It was clear that role ambiguity was common, with a lack of prioritization of responsibilities occurring with changing events: "At the same time the government is telling us that we need to implement more […] and provide better [policy] advice […] they're also slashing our budget, thereby compromising our ability to do any of that stuff […] and I'm answering 45 Questions on Notice which include questions about how many office plants and coffee machines you have" (Middle manager, Agency G). Many employees were unclear about what their managers expected of them, or what behaviors would represent high performance. This was particularly apparent in two of the organizations where: "better communicating on priorities" was identified as a key priority for employees (Operational, Agency A). This highlights the importance of performance management; through increasing clarity and a clear role purpose for employees, they understand what their role expectations are, how they can conform to these expectations and what the consequences of their actions are likely to be (e.g. what behaviors are likely to be rewarded or punished) (Kahn *et al.*, 1964). Clarity and purpose could, therefore, enable employee alignment with the organizational change strategy.

Principle 2: alignment and integration. In the organizational change literature, it is argued that the success of organizational change efforts relies on strategic thinking regarding its rationale, progress and impact on employees (Klein, 1996). As organizational change is occurring, individual members attempt to make sense of the change; consequently they need to understand what the change means for them and how they align with what is transpiring (Isabella, 1990). In our research, participants argued that alignment between high-level strategies and group and individual goals was integral for ensuring that employees have a clear "line of sight" between their roles and both the governmental and organizational objectives: "So there's got to be a clear […] high level plan for the team that everybody understands and can see how their work relates to. There has to be clear priorities and the priorities have to be matched to the resources that are available" (Middle manager, Agency D). Alignment was critical for employee motivation, performance and their willingness to adapt to change. It was particularly important for clarifying what the changes were and why they emerged, contributing to the clear articulation of expectations of employee performance.

In many cases, however, alignment was lacking, with inconsistent messaging across multiple levels, resulting in government-wide priorities conflicting with organizational priorities and what individual groups were focussing on: "We've got this very strong message that managing our programs and our contracts differently, to be more citizen-centric […] was a top priority […] And yet, when you go to the branches, it clearly was not the message that they were being given. So I can certainly say that I feel pretty confused about what the priority actually is" (Operational, Agency A). The lack of clear articulation of the changing directions and requirements of groups and employees meant that expectations and performance requirements were unclear: "In the [group] it's very confusing […] we don't know what our priorities are, we don't know what our

agenda is […] [we] still [have] not had any clear direction on what our role is in those discussions or what our role will be in bringing [high-level] reforms" (Operational, Agency A).

Participants often argued that alignment would enable employees to actively and constructively engage with the change process and identify alternative courses of action that were more appropriate for the context: "[It is] much better to have those people understand what the Secretary wants to achieve and then, in their area, they could [state] "well, that rule doesn't make any sense. What we could do is change it to this" and in a really healthy organization, of course, we'd embrace and welcome that" (Senior manager, Agency B). In turn this could enable adaptability to change and the achievement of high performance. The achievement of alignment relied on regular and effective communication between managers and employees, including holding regular meetings and informal discussions to ensure employees were kept informed of changing circumstances and could adjust their behavior accordingly. Alignment can also be achieved through the integration of human resource practices with one another and other management processes. Effective systems are required to support managers and employees to achieve the goals and workplace behaviors expected of them, particularly in times of organizational change.

Principle 3: mutuality and motivation. In the literature, it is often argued that employee willingness to participate in the change is necessary to overcome the potential for failure (Miller *et al.*, 1994) and their buy-in to the process (Choi and Ruona, 2011). Employee buy-in and support depends on their recognition of the benefits of the change (Trader-Leigh, 2002) and having their concerns and fears addressed (Coram and Burnes, 2001). Clearly employee involvement and participation in change efforts is important for enhancing their feelings of personal control over their work and future (Bordia *et al.*, 2004). It helps to enhance employee ownership, commitment to change and encourages feedback which enhances change implementation (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Holbeche, 2003). Increasing employees' sense of control over their work and future is important for change effectiveness because it has been positively related to employees' improved reactions to change (Oreg *et al.*, 2011). A key mechanism for involving employees in the change effort is performance management, particularly when mutuality and employee participation are encouraged.

When mutuality is evident, employees and managers are encouraged to develop joint ownership of the performance management process and the outcomes achieved. This requires managers and employees to actively participate in the development of meaningful performance agreements and in the evaluation of performance outcomes through providing the opportunity for "regular meetings, or opportunities to review, and for people to have input and then, you work with the individuals within the team […] [to understand] what makes each of those individuals tick and where you, like, assign and delegate within those priorities, based on what's going to excite, you know, each of those people and make them feel 'I want to get up and come to work in the morning'" (Middle manager, Agency D). Mutuality also enables employees to adapt to change through maintaining awareness of changing priorities and having the opportunity to provide input into decisions that directly impact them. The efficacy of this approach was particularly evident in one case where senior and middle managers conducted workshops with their employees with "the hypothesis [that] 'OK 1 July 2012, 20% cut in resources' […] 'what are we going to stop doing? What are we going to do differently?' […] So staff were fully engaged in that process about well how are we

going to do that differently?" (Senior manager, Agency A). Participants argued that these workshops led to numerous positive outcomes and encouraged employees to think strategically about the allocation of resources, optimizing efficiencies and prioritizing activities through asking the following questions: "Is there any work that we're doing that we really just don't need to do? Or which we don't think we should be doing? Or can it be done better somewhere else?" (Middle manager, Agency A). Through managers and employees actively working together, mutuality was enhanced, contributing to employees' feelings of being in control of their situation and consequent willingness and ability to adapt to change.

The success in this particular organization was not mirrored in other organizations, however, where decisions regarding change implementation were often made at the senior management level with little opportunity for employees to provide input. Participants from across multiple organizations discussed the dominance of top-down communication and how the lack of genuine consultation contributed to lack of buy-in to the change process: "I think we sometimes aren't very good at […] telling people why […] why do we need to do that and listening to people's views on it and gaining consensus and there's a balance, of course, between the need to direct and the need to bring people along and to have that consensus view, but […] if [managers] aren't understanding why we're doing it […] and aren't on board with the underlying intent of what we're trying to do, then they implement it badly, or resist implementing it […] and it fails" (Senior manager, Agency B). Participants highlighted where their input was sought, but were doubtful whether their contribution actually led to real change: "We were asked for our feedback but I don't know where that went. I think it was a bit tokenistic" (Middle manager, Agency A). This lack of consultation often meant that many employees felt unprepared for the change and as though it was thrust upon them: "What I believe we don't tend to do is communicate what we know to be indicators of change until the change is almost inevitable […] [meaning that] change has come out of the blue" (Middle manager, Agency C) and as a "real shock because there was no pre-warning that that was even on the table" (Operational, Agency G). Essentially, many employees considered that the change was predominantly out of their control, contributing to them feeling helpless.

Principle 4: adaptability and progress. HPOs are characterized by continuous improvement of performance and systems (de Waal, 2010; Holbeche, 2003), whereby organizations increase their ability to adapt and respond to change. In particular, employee adaptability to change is integral for success (LePine *et al.*, 2000; Pulakos *et al.*, 2000). Participants in most case studies emphasized the need for adaptability of performance in a changing environment: "You've got to be flexible and you've got to accept that things are going to change" (Senior manager, Agency D). Adaptability and flexibility were considered to be critical for the achievement of high performance and were, in fact, deemed to be characteristics of a high performing employee. An important factor in the ability to continually improve, and adapt to change, is the continual monitoring of progress against target and goal attainment (de Waal, 2010): "I think that's critical to […] revisit [our goals] as well because it's not going to be the same, what we started with six months ago changes very quickly, so it's about having that ongoing 'how are we tracking?' " (Middle manager, Agency B). To achieve this, organizations should develop systems that support the measurement of progress toward organizational and government goals throughout the performance cycle, not just at the completion of the change.

Foundation elements. Foundation 1: evidence and data. Evidence and data are important for demonstrating the appropriateness of the change; without this, it runs the risk of being perceived as arbitrary (Armenakis and Harris, 2002); employees need to know why the change is advantageous for them. This was mirrored in the performance management data where lack of evidence often underpinned dissatisfaction with ratings and assessment: "you have different managers […] assessing your performance differently, because it's not as objective as it's supposed to be. It's a subjective assessment of 'I think you're doing good; I'll mark you this' [or] 'I think you're not doing good compared to you; I'll mark you this'" (Operational, Agency G). The provision of evidence and data is important, for providing concrete information to refute inevitable misunderstandings, rumors and frustrations that develop (Isabella, 1990; Klein, 1996): "[…] that particular manager gave me a good performance agreement and then, two or three weeks down the track, sort of, crossed out all the ticks that I got […] it was absolutely ridiculous" (Operational, Agency G). To optimize the utilization of performance information, organizations could simultaneously enhance goal clarity, developmental culture and performance information availability (Moynihan *et al.*, 2011) and appeal to managers' sense of public service and altruistic desires to use performance information (Moynihan and Pandey, 2010). Such data can then be used to enable performance improvement though the effective communication of performance trends, targets and attainments; in particular, how the change is tracking.

Foundation 2: pragmatism. The psychological literature demonstrates that a quick way to undermine change is to breach some form of promise (Freese and Schalk, 2011), and yet this often happens because change involves trade-offs. This requires organizations to be pragmatic about how a new initiative will be achieved and how much it will cost both in resources and broken promises (Coram and Burnes, 2001): "When budgets are being cut, when the public service is being downsized to meet budget commitments, you're going to be less effective if you try and do more with less […] And that's been a really critical part of the conversation, within this organization; about how do we […] do [things] better, so that we can manage doing less with less; because we have to" (Senior manager, Agency E). In performance management, for example, if there is no budget for training, to continue to ask what training employees would like to undertake and then inevitably disappoint will reduce trust and engagement. Another aspect is the need for an employee or manager to have ownership of aspects for which they are held accountable or they will become disillusioned by the changes they are expected to make (Ingersoll, 2007). Our research demonstrated that pragmatism is a key element of effective performance management and change implementation, with the importance of organizations acknowledging resource constraints and reprioritizing activities emphasized. This requires organizations to "be realistic about what you're achieving" (Senior manager, Agency C), establish that "priorities have to be matched to the resources that are available" (Middle manager, Agency D) and "accepting that that's the fact that we can't do all of those things to the extent that we would like […] acknowledge the constraints in which we work, and that if we are to be high performing that we are going to need to reprioritize our focus" (Senior manager, Agency G). Change processes need to be "fit for purpose," with contextually appropriate goals and plans that reflect specific requirements or conditions relevant to individual organizations.

Foundation 3: capabilities. Successful institutionalization of change relies on organizations providing support to employees (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

This support involves instituting mechanisms that build employees' efficacy regarding the change; that is, their belief that they are capable of changing. This emphasizes the role of human resource practices, including recruitment and selection, learning and development, and performance management, for facilitating employees' ability to adapt to a changing environment (LePine *et al.*, 2000). The focus on capability development is not isolated to employees, however, as manager and leader competency development is critical for the success of change initiatives: "I might need people to be very, very good contract managers. The next point I might need them to be very, very good relationship managers. And while there's a cross over there are different sort of aspects to that" (Senior manager, Agency A). Of particular note is management capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and ability to resolve and address employee uncertainty regarding the change (Parry, 1999): "We have to have staff who are agile, who are flexible, who can respond to changed circumstances, particularly novel changed circumstances, in a way that enables us to meet the needs of the Minister and to meet the needs of the Department" (Senior manager, Agency B). Our findings, which support those of Oreg *et al.* (2011), suggest that the ability of employees to adapt to change relies on leaders and managers skill in providing clarity and purpose for employees, translating what the change means for individuals and providing the support required for employees to develop the requisite competencies, such as working on different projects which: "allowed people to understand where their skill sets and where they actually can actually learn from each other […] and it's given people chances to work on different types of activities. So it is about multi-skilling, which means that the next time we have a major project, we can actually call on a pool of resources" (Senior manager, Agency A).

Implications and conclusion

In this paper we have suggested that change implementation is a performance management issue, arguing that strategic utilization of the performance management process may better enable effective change implementation. The application of Blackman *et al.*'s (2013a, b) performance framework indicates that consideration of the principles and foundation elements provides organizations with an analytical tool to encourage employee buy-in and readiness to adopt the new ideas and behaviors required for successful change. While we recognize that this research has been limited to seven organizations within the APS, it does reveal interesting implications in terms of the potential role of performance management in both developing change capacity and supporting espoused outcomes. First, this research highlights some of the challenges associated with poor change management in terms of the inadequate preparation of employees and how performance management can be seen as a potential solution to address this. Second, the potential role that performance management can play in supporting effective change implementation has been identified. Good performance management, as identified by the participants, permits an individual to recognize the desired outcomes and behaviors, and the means to achieve them. The performance framework discussed in this paper can support this process through acting as a planning tool for effective change. Performance management can enable employees to cope better with the change through clearly defining what will constitute high performance in the change context; ensuring employees have a clear role purpose and are provided with sufficient mechanisms to adjust this as change occurs; and ensuring employees are aligned with the organizational direction. Third, the importance of

tracking progress as a change function is highlighted, the argument being made that although staging of change is frequently discussed in change models, how this is translated to individual performance is not well developed in the literature. Fourth, our research addresses a gap in the literature demonstrating that there is a relationship between organizational change and individual performance management. Future research could undertake further in-depth empirical research into the impact of different aspects of performance management on change outcomes in different contexts.

References

Aguinis, H., Gottfredson, R.K. and Joo, H. (2012), "Using performance management to win the talent war", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 55 No. 6, pp. 609-616.

Agyemang, G. and Ryan, B. (2013), "Accountability and performance management systems within private and public sector organisational change processes", in Lehman, C.R. (Ed.), *Managing Reality: Accountability and the Miasma of Private and Public Domains (Advances in Public Interest Accounting, Vol. 16)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Hofstra University, New York, NY, pp. 1-38.

Andrews, J., Cameron, H. and Harris, M. (2008), "All change? Managers' experience of organizational change in theory and practice", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 300-314.

Andrews, R., Boyne, G. and Walker, R.M. (2012), "Overspending in public organizations: does strategic management matter?", *International Public Management Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 39-61.

Armenakis, A.A. and Harris, S.G. (2002), "Crafting a change message to create transformational readiness", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 169-183.

Aucoin, P. (1995), *The New Public Management: Canada in Comparative Perspective*, The Institute for Research on Public Policy, Montreal.

Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) (2012), *State of the Service Report 2011-2012*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Behn, R.D. (2002), "The psychological barriers to performance management: or why isn't everyone jumping on the performance-management bandwagon?", *Public Performance and Management Review*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 5-25.

Blackman, D., Buick, F., O'Donnell, M., O'Flynn, J. and West, D. (2012), "Developing high performance: performance management in the Australian Public Service", Crawford School Research Paper No. 12-09, Australian National University, Canberra, 25 June, available at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2130232 (accessed 5 March 2015).

Blackman, D., Buick, F., O'Donnell, M., O'Flynn, J. and West, D. (2013a), "Strengthening the performance framework: towards a high performing Australian Public Service", working paper Australia and New Zealand School of Government Institute for Governance (ANZIG), Canberra, 13 May.

Blackman, D., Buick, F., O'Donnell, M., O'Flynn, J. and West, D. (2013b), "Developing a new framework for high performance", paper presented at the 27th Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference, Hobart, Tasmania, 4-6 December.

Bordia, P., Hobman, E., Jones, E., Gallois, C. and Callan, V.J. (2004), "Uncertainty during organizational change: types, consequences, and management strategies", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 507-532.

Bourne, M., Neely, A., Mills, J. and Platt, K. (2003), "Why some performance measurement initiatives fail: lessons from the change management literature", *International Journal of Business Performance Management*, Vol. 5 Nos. 2/3, pp. 245-269.

Bryman, A. (2004), *Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Choi, M. and Ruona, W.E.A. (2011), "Individual readiness for organizational change and its implications for human resource and organization development", *Human Resource Development Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 46-73.

Coram, R. and Burnes, B. (2001), "Managing organisational change in the public sector: lessons from the privatisation of the property service agency", *The International Journal of Public Sector Management*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 94-110.

de Waal, A.A. (2010), "Achieving high performance in the public sector", *Public Performance and Management Review*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 81-103.

Doorewaard, H. and Benschop, Y. (2003), "HRM and organizational change: an emotional endeavor", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 272-286.

Dunleavy, P. and Hood, C. (1994), "From old public administration to new public management", *Public Money & Management*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 9-16.

Fernandez, S. and Rainey, H.G. (2006), "Managing successful organizational change in the public sector", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 66 No. 2, pp. 168-176.

Freese, C. and Schalk, R. (2011), "The impact of organizational changes on psychological contracts: a longitudinal study", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 404-422.

Gill, R. (2002), "Change management – or change leadership?", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 307-318.

Grady, V.M. and Grady, J.D. (2013), "The relationship of bowlby's attachment theory to the persistent failure of organizational change initiatives", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 206-222.

Higgs, M. and Rowland, D. (2010), "Emperors with clothes on: the role of self-awareness in developing effective change leadership", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 369-385.

Holbeche, L. (2003), *High Performance Organisation Checklist*, Roffey Park Institute, West Sussex.

Hood, C. (1991), "A public management for all seasons?", *Public Administration*, Vol. 69 No. 1, pp. 3-19.

Hood, C. (1995), "The 'new public management' in the 1980s: variations on a theme", *Accounting, Organizations & Society*, Vol. 20 Nos 2/3, pp. 93-109.

Hughes, O.E. (2003), *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction*, 3rd ed., Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire.

Ingersoll, R.M. (2007), "Short on power, long on responsibility", *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 65 No. 1, pp. 20-25.

Isabella, L.A. (1990), "Evolving interpretations as a change unfolds: how managers construe key organizational events", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 7-41.

Kahn, R.L., Wolfe, D.M., Quinn, R.P., Snoek, J.D. and Rosenthal, R.A. (1964), *Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity*, Wiley, New York, NY.

Klein, S.M. (1996), "A management communication strategy for change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 32-46.

Leana, C.R. and Barry, B. (2000), "Stability and change as simultaneous experiences in organizational life", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 753-759.

LePine, J.A., Colquitt, J.A. and Erez, A. (2000), "Adaptability to changing task contexts: effects of general cognitive ability, conscientiousness, and openness to experience", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 53 No. 3, pp. 563-593.

Lynn, L.E. (1998), "The new public management: how to transform a theme into a legacy", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 58 No. 3, pp. 231-237.

MacBryde, J., Paton, S., Grant, N. and Bayliss, M. (2012), "Performance measurement driving change: a case from the defence sector", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 61 No. 5, pp. 462-482.

Mayne, J. and Zapico-Goñi, E. (2009), "Effective performance monitoring: a necessary condition for public sector reform", in Mayne, J. and Zapico-Goñi, E. (Eds), *Monitoring Performance in the Public Sector: Future Directions from International Experience*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, pp. 3-32.

Miller, V.D., Johnson, J.R. and Grau, J. (1994), "Antecedents to willingness to participate in a planned organizational change", *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 59-80.

Moynihan, D.P. and Pandey, S.K. (2010), "The big question for performance management: Why do managers use performance information?", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 849-866.

Moynihan, D.P. Pandey, S.K. and Wright, B.E. (2011), "Setting the table: how transformational leadership fosters performance information use", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 143-164.

Oreg, S., Vakola, M. and Armenakis, A. (2011), "Change recipients' reactions to organizational change: a 60-year review of quantitative studies", *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 47 No. 4, pp. 461-524.

Osborne, D. and Gaebler, T. (1992), *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc., Reading, MA.

Parker, D., Verlinden, A., Nussey, R., Ford, M. and Pathak, R.D. (2013), "Critical evaluation of project-based performance management: change intervention integration", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 407-419.

Parry, K. and Proctor-Thomson, S. (2002), "Leadership, culture and performance: the case of the New Zealand public sector", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 376-399.

Parry, K.W. (1999), "Enhancing adaptability: leadership strategies to accommodate change in local government settings", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 134-156.

Patton, M.Q. (1990), *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Pettigrew, A.M., Woodman, R.W. and Cameron, K.S. (2001), "Studying organizational change and development: challenge for future research", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 4, pp. 697-713.

Pickering, J.W. (2008), "Building high-performance organizations", in Newell, T., Reeher, G. and Ronayne, P. (Eds), *The Trusted Leader: Building the Relationships that Make Government Work*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 127-155.

Pollitt, C. (1993), *Managerialism and the Public Services*, 2nd ed., Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.

Popovich, M.G. (Ed.) (1998), *Creating High-Performance Government Organizations: A Practical Guide for Public Managers*, Jossey-Bass, New York, NY.

Price, M., Mores, W. and Elliotte, H.M. (2011), *Building High Performance Government Through Lean Six Sigma: A Leader's Guide to Creating Speed, Agility, and Efficiency*, McGraw Hill, New York, NY.

Pulakos, E.D., Arad, S., Donovan, M.A. and Plamondon, K.E. (2000), "Adaptability in the workplace: development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 85 No. 4, pp. 612-624.

Reid, J. and Hubbell, V. (2005), "Creating a performance culture", *Ivey Business Journal*, Vol. 69 No. 4, p. 7.

Rush, M.C., Schoel, W.A. and Barnard, S.M. (1995), "Psychological resiliency in the public sector: "hardiness" and pressure for change", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 17-39.

Saks, A.M. (2006), "Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 21 No. 7, pp. 600-619.

Sanger, M.B. (2008), "Getting to the roots of change: performance management and organizational culture", *Public Performance & Management Review*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 621-653.

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (2007), *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed., Sage publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Trader-Leigh, K.E. (2002), "Case study: identifying resistance in managing change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 138-155.

Waldman, D.A. (1994), "Designing performance management systems for total quality implementation", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 31-44.

Walker, R.M., Damanpour, F. and Devece, C.A. (2010), "Management innovation and organizational performance: the mediating effect of performance management", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 367-386.

Yin, R.K. (2014), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

About the authors

Dr Fiona Buick is an Assistant Professor in Management at the University of Canberra. She completed her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Management entitled "Organizational culture as the panacea for joined-up working: the rhetoric and reality gap" at the University of Canberra in 2012. She is currently working on the "Strengthening the performance framework" project, a co-production research project that involves collaboration between two Australian universities and the Australian Public Service Commission. Previously she worked on an Australian Research Council (ARC) project titled "Whole of government: evaluating frameworks for integrating policy development, implementation and delivery of public services". Her particular research focus is on the role of human capital in developing organizational effectiveness within the public sector. Prior to commencing her PhD, Fiona worked as a human resource practitioner in the Australian Public Service (APS) and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), gaining experience in learning and development, strategic human resource management and generalist human resources. Her previous qualifications include a Masters of Human Resource Management, Graduate Diploma in Employment Relations and a Bachelor of Applied Psychology, all from the University of Canberra. Dr Fiona Buick is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: fiona.buick@canberra.edu.au

Deborah Ann Blackman is a Professor of Public Sector Management Strategy at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. Her academic background is in Human Resource Management and Development as well as Management of Change and Organizational Behavior. She researches knowledge transfer in a range of applied, real world contexts. The common theme of her work is developing effective knowledge acquisition and transfer in order to improve organizational effectiveness. Professor Blackman has published extensively in a range of international journals, has recently co-edited a book on *Crossing Boundaries in Public Management and Policy: The International Experience* with Professor Janine O'Flynn and Professor John Halligan, and is a Member of the Editorial board for *Management Learning*. Recent research projects include: a joint collaborative project with the Australian Public Service Commission which is working on Strengthening the Performance Management Framework and an ARC grant considering Whole of Government from which she developed a new diagnostic model to support effective joined-up working.

Michael Edward O'Donnell is a Professor of Human Resource Management in the School of Business at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. Michael has published widely on human resource policies and practices, including performance management, in the Australian Public Service. He is co-author of *Unions and Globalisation: Governments, Management and the State at Work*, Routledge (2012).

Janine Louise O'Flynn is a Professor of Public Management at the School of Social and Political Sciences and the Melbourne School of Government, The University of Melbourne. She recently published *Rethinking Public Service Delivery: Managing with External Providers* (with John Alford; Palgrave 2013) and *Crossing Boundaries in Public Management and Policy: The International Experience* (with Deborah Blackman and John Halligan; Routledge 2014). She is the Deputy Editor of the *Australian Journal of Public Administration* and sits on the editorial boards of *Public Administration*, *Canadian Public Administration*, and *Journal of Management & Organization*. She is a Fellow (Victoria) of the Institute of Public Administration Australia and an elected Member of the Executive Board of the International Research Society for Public Management.

Dr Damian West is the Group Manager, Client Engagement at the APSC. He has oversight of a number of the key reform projects which originate from the report "Ahead of the game: blueprint for the reform of Australian Government administration". This includes streamlining recruitment through enhancements to APS jobs, enhanced recruitment metrics and guidelines. Dr West has a lead role in the performance management and mobility projects. Damian also has responsibility for the Commission's international capability development work program (Indonesia, Africa, PNG, the Pacific), the Commission's regional network, communications and client engagement, and a number of Commission development programs and services. Prior to his current role Damian had a lead role in the project team which completed work on the blueprint for the reform of Australian Government administration. In a previous role Damian implemented several of the people related recommendations from the Gershon Review into ICT. Damian has extensive policy and program delivery experience in the public sector, and has a deep understanding of public sector administration, learning and development, and human resource management. Damian was awarded a PhD in Management from the University of Canberra in September 2012. His thesis focussed on the construct of employee commitment in the Australian Public Service.