

## Message from the Chair

*Katherine*

Katherine Jones PSM is the Chair of the Chief Operating Officers Committee, and Associate Secretary at the Department of Defence.

As we sharpen our focus on the road to recovery, we know we need to continue to operate in different ways, making the best use of technology and collaboration platforms to deliver our work. At the COO Committee meeting this week, we heard from the CIO working group and the cross-service collaboration on common, simple to use platforms that will help drive our collaboration. Over the past months we've seen incredible commitment across the APS in response to this extraordinary time. This has required broad collaboration and 'out of the box thinking' to address and resolve issues that we've not had to face before. At the core of our success has been our ability to innovate and adapt our approach to deliver the right outcomes for the Australian community. Innovation can be system wide or specific to one activity, one team. It is something all of us should undertake and promote. So, as we kick off Innovation Month, I encourage you all to consider how you can improve, change and innovate in your work.

## Innovation Month 2020 online delivering differently

Innovation Month is back in July, and it's totally online for the first time ever!

After many challenging months and a lot of hard work getting through COVID-19, it's time for some inspiring and positive stories. And that's what [Innovation Month](#) is all about.

This year's theme is 'delivering differently', reflecting the outcomes-focused government response to the pandemic. It also reflects the experimental nature of the month in 2020, with all events coming to you digitally, making it even easier to get involved.

'It's an awesome opportunity to show off the cool and creative stuff our government gets up to. Across the month of July we get to collaborate with government at all levels, and with the private, academic and not-for-profit sectors too. Check out the program of events to see what we've organised this year!' says Alex Cleary from the Public Sector Innovation Network.

Innovation Month is four weeks of activities dedicated to showcasing and celebrating creativity, thinking differently and trying new approaches in the public sector.

All Innovation Month events are free to attend, hosted by government and non-government organisations all around Australia. Check out the [event schedule](#) to register for the exciting activities on offer.

Innovation Month is delivered by the [Public Sector Innovation Network](#), the Australian government network helping public servants understand and apply innovation in their daily work.



## Women's Network going virtual

In late June, the Women's Network in the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources adapted to social distancing by hosting a live virtual panel. The event was streamed to the whole department across all the state and territory offices and also enabled individuals to dial in through their personal devices from wherever they were working.

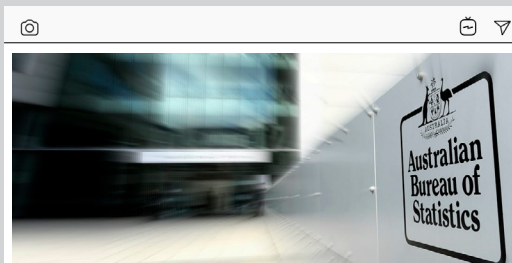
Women's Network Associate Chair Virginia Cook, and GM of the department's Communications Branch, said the event was a fantastic way to connect with people while ensuring appropriate social distancing measures were followed.

'Our champion, Deputy Secretary Elizabeth Kelly, and our co-chairs Dr Amber Beavis and Kate Crowhurst, were among those on the panel. The panel shared their personal and professional experiences of working during COVID-19. Amber ensured a lively session through sharing the comments and questions streaming through [slido.com](#) from those who were listening. Although it was virtual it was an extremely intimate discussion, with staff from as far away as our Darwin office involved.'

Graduate Vicki Taylor said it was so reassuring to hear 'that our senior leaders could be so open and honest about their own anxieties and the unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative, from the experience.'

## APS Socials

#Workwithpurpose



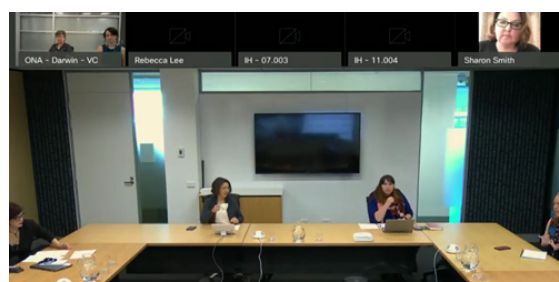
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The Australian Public Service Commissioner, Mr Peter Woolcott AO, announced that Australian Statistician, and head of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Dr David Gruen, will lead development of the Australian Public Service's data profession. [#publicservice](#) [#data](#) [#federalgovernment](#)



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Have you listened to an episode of Work with Purpose yet? Why not start with this episode, featuring 'Team Health' Professor Brendan Murphy, former Chief Medical Officer and Caroline Edwards, the acting Secretary of the Department of Health, in a remarkable discussion that covers their personal and professional experiences and insights during the COVID-19 crisis. [#workwithpurpose](#)



The Women's Network intends to do more WebEx events including brown paper bag lunches on the career stories of women across the department and also seminars on finance and superannuation.

**New dates announced – National NAIDOC Week 2020 celebrations will be held from 8-15 November. #AlwaysWasAlwaysWillBe #NAIDOC2020**



## In brief:

### What you need to know this tax time

It's tax time again which means you'll soon be logging into myGov or throwing receipts at your tax agent – but before you lodge, check out the ATO's Tax Time Essentials page.

It answers some of the most common questions people ask at tax time and has everything you need to know about recent tax and super changes, including how to work out your working from home deduction using the ATO's temporary 'shortcut' method if you've been working from home due to COVID-19 restrictions. You can also check out the ATO's work-related expenses guide for public servants which outlines what deductions you can and can't claim.

As Karen Foat from the ATO reminds us, "to make lodging your tax return easier, the ATO can automatically include (pre-fill) your income and other information into your return for you. This information comes from organisations such as employers, banks, health funds and other government agencies."

This means it's important to wait for your employer to mark your statement as 'tax ready'. Most information is sent to the ATO by late July. If you usually do your own return, the ATO will send you a message through your myGov account when that information is available.

If you lodge your return before this information is included for you, it is important that you include all your income in your return. If you submit incorrect information, it may delay processing your return or you may need to repay amounts later. More information can be found on the [ATO's website](#).

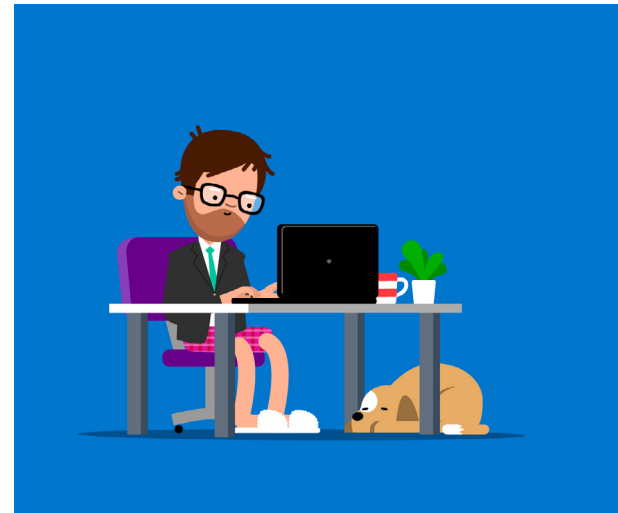
## Finding new ways to listen

You could be forgiven if you'd never heard of the JobSeeker Payment prior to COVID-19. That's because the payment and the online claim were new, rolling up seven existing payments, including Newstart Allowance, into one. It all went live on 20 March, just days before the lockdown began. So how do you come to grips with what people are saying about their experience making a claim? And how can you iron out the pain points quickly, before the next thousand people run into a problem and need to call?

The *Voice of the Customer* team in Services Australia can tell you: try speech analytics.

It's a relatively new tool in the Services Australia's toolkit, but through the COVID-19 crisis it's quickly proved essential. The technology transforms call recordings into text, so a database of millions of calls can be filtered based on language, keywords and phrasing. That rich data can be gleaned for insights into what customers are seeking, enabling ICT and service delivery teams to get to work immediately on clearing the most common roadblocks away.

It's a powerful tool in itself, but it's even more effective in tandem with the other tools the specialists in the *Voice of the Customer* team can deploy, including web analytics that map the way people are interacting with the online systems, and behavioural insights that help us to understand how humans process information. It's a whole new way for the APS to listen—and for citizens to be heard.



## Useful Links and Resources

- Want to know more about all the features of GovTEAMS – [watch this](#) to help you get the most from it!
- Data literacy is a critical skill required across the APS both now and into the future. [APSLearn](#) has a free 5 part series to help you develop your data literacy.
- Read the Prime Minister's recent [speech](#) and [Q&A](#) on the government's investment in infrastructure and the deregulation agenda, as part of the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia's State of the Nation Conference.

All important information for APS staff is available from the [APSC COVID-19 portal](#).

## We want to hear from you!

We'd love to share your stories in upcoming editions. If you have a story about how your department or agency is adapting where and how you work, please get in touch.

Email us at: [CooCommittee@pmc.gov.au](mailto:CooCommittee@pmc.gov.au)

