



# Developing Leadership

Who? What? Where?



focusing on the current issues and building capability of people and organisations

## Introduction

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*Developing Leadership—Who? What? Where?* is intended to assist in the promotion of a broader understanding of leadership development issues in the public sector. It seeks to provide readers with a snapshot of current leadership development programs and other initiatives in a variety of Australian Public Service (APS) agencies. The resource was initially developed and co-sponsored by the Department of Defence and the Australian Public Service Commission (then PSMPC) as a result of the Developing Leadership Seminar held in September 2001.

One of the clear messages from the 2001 Developing Leadership Seminar, was the enthusiasm participants' had for case studies of leadership programs and more details about programs referred to during the Seminar. This updated volume will build on that information and provide contact points for those who want additional information.

The Leadership Development Network initiated by the APSC and supported by a number of other agencies, will continue to pursue the aims of the Seminar and to provide opportunities for interested agencies to pursue particular cases in more detail (including comments from those who participated in the programs described).

The 2003 Resource Guide has been updated by the Leadership, Learning and Development Group of the APSC, based on contributions from agencies who participated in the 2001 Developing Leadership Seminar together with other agencies who have expressed an interest in providing information on their current programs.

Other agencies who are interested in participating in this resource are encouraged to contact the Leadership, Learning and Development Group of the APSC on (02) 6271 6560.

Australian Public Service Commission

November 2003

# Australian Communications Authority (ACA)

## ACA Management and Leadership Development Program 2000–2003

The need for a dedicated Management and Leadership Development Program within the ACA was identified as an important priority in the ACA's Human Resources Strategic Plan 2000-2003; People Management in the ACA. The outcomes of the 1998 and 2000 Workplace Diversity Surveys, along with feedback on the Performance Management and Feedback System (PFMS) supported the need for managers in the ACA to further develop their skills and knowledge in leadership and people management. Consequently, the Management & Leadership Development Program was nominated as the major development program in the ACA Human Resources Development Plan 2000-2001.

Work on a paper detailing a Management and Leadership Development Program commenced in October 2000. In December 2000 the paper was presented to the ACA Executive and after some amendments were incorporated, the Management and Leadership Development Program was endorsed by the ACA Executive.

The Program was based on a framework of five key elements relating to leadership and management skills and qualities. This framework had been developed by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) and is titled the Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework.

Four components make up the overall Management & Leadership Development Program:

- Management and leadership seminars
- In House development activities
- External places on management and leadership courses
- An ACA Management/Leadership Network

In January 2001 the ACA sought tenders to deliver:

- the In House development component, and;
- the ACA Management/Leadership Network.

Following shortlisting, three organisations were invited to provide a presentation to the tender evaluation panel. A unanimous decision was made to contract Melbourne based management consultants, The Nous Group. Their proposal provided a pragmatic approach to address the ACA's needs involving top down coaching (commencing with ACA senior management), a series of workshops, guest speaker presentations and the formation of an innovative management/leadership network.

The target group comprised:

- The ACA senior management team (13 members)—SES level
- 60 Managers—mainly EL 1 & 2 level

Senior managers nominated managers for the program with an emphasis on those who were performing supervisory roles.



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A Steering Group was formed comprising eight ACA members and the Project Manager from The Nous Group. The Steering Group chose the title "Leading Edge" for the program after considering several options.

The outcomes sought from Leading Edge were improved management and leadership skills in relation to the Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework. In order to measure this all Leading Edge participants completed a 360 degree feedback questionnaire prior to the commencement of the Leading Edge residential workshops.

In June 2001 ACA's senior management convened for a two day residential workshop to launch formal Leading Edge activities. In late July and August three groups of 20 ACA managers attended three-day Leading Edge residential workshops. Senior management buy-in was gained for these workshops with two senior managers attending each workshop.

Topics covered in the workshops included: understanding personality and team roles; creating a Leading Edge team; giving and receiving feedback; what does the ACA want from its leaders?; and, an ACA Leadership Charter.

To enable application of the themes covered in the workshops in the workplace, participants formed small project groups to address management and leadership challenges the ACA faces. Each project team was assigned senior management mentors to assist with the projects.

At the end of the manager's workshops The Nous Group launched the Leading Edge website, an online resource for participants and a foundation of the Leading Edge networking activities.

In early September senior managers attended a second offsite workshop to further refine and strategically develop Leading Edge for its second phase. A key component of this workshop was the further development and refinement of an ACA Leadership Charter following comments and input from the manager's workshops.

In late October the three groups of managers attended a further three two-day residential workshops where the final version of the ACA Leadership Charter was signed off. These workshops focused on strategic thinking and the strategic challenges the ACA faces. Further work was undertaken by the project teams on their nominated topics prior to the presentation of their results to the ACA Executive in November.

In early December the ACA Executive met for their third and final workshop for 2001. This workshop provided a wrap up of Leading Edge in 2001 and the decision was made to offer the program again in 2002 to remaining EL 1 & 2 staff with the balance made up of staff at the ACA 5 & 6 levels.

Evaluations received on Leading Edge activities for 2001 indicate over 85% of participants rated the workshops as very good or excellent. The program achieved a high profile within the ACA and was something many staff aspired to participate on.



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Leading Edge 2002 followed a similar approach to the 2001 program. Sixty managers ranging from the ACA 6 to EL 2 level were nominated by Executive Managers to participate.

The Nous Group made some changes to the design and content of Leading Edge, the most significant of which was basing the program on the ACA Leadership Charter rather than the APSC Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework.

The program commenced with a 360 degree feedback exercise in February. The 360 degree questionnaire was based on the ACA Leadership Charter. In March three separate three day residential workshops were held in Melbourne. The workshops looked at personal and team behaviour and roles, ACA strategic direction, leadership theory and the role of followers. The 2002 stretching projects were allocated during the workshops with cross functional and cross locational teams of four to five managers working on a variety of topics with relevance to management and leadership issues.

A second round of residential workshops was held in June in the Canberra region. The three workshops were of two-days duration and focused on feedback, coaching, managing knowledge and creating a leading edge team. The project teams continued their work at the workshops and presented their reports and findings to the ACA Executive in July 2002.

Evaluations of the workshops revealed more than 83% of participants rated the program as very good or excellent.



In October 2002 a group of 25 staff at the ACA 5&6 levels participated in the first module of Next Wave Leading Edge. This program was an abridged version of the Leading Edge program (Next Wave comprised two modules with a total duration of four days). The topics that were rated highest on Leading Edge as well as those topics perceived to have the highest impact in the workplace were retained for the Next Wave program.

The group was allocated into five project teams to research and make recommendations on the further development and promotion of the ACA Leadership Charter. A single group presentation was developed during Next Wave Module 2 and presented to past Leading Edge participants at the Leading Edge Workshop days in Melbourne and Canberra in December 2002. The group's findings and an associated paper outlining key recommendations formed an agenda item at the ACA's Human Resource Steering Committee's first meeting for 2003 in February.

The Leading Edge workshop days, facilitated by The Nous Group, were held in Melbourne and Canberra in early December 2002. They were designed as an opportunity for all past participants of Leading Edge to get together and reflect on the learnings from Leading Edge as well as to maintain networking among participants and provide input for the next phase of management and leadership development in the ACA. The workshops were a resounding success with over 90% of past Leading Edge participants attending.

Another group of 25 participants at the ACA 5&6 levels commenced Next Wave in February 2003. Like the 2002 group they also worked on a project, this time based on the Chairman's four key challenges for people management in the ACA.

In March 2003 another group of predominantly EL 1&2 staff commenced Leading Edge. It is anticipated this will be the last Leading Edge program offered as, at conclusion of this program, all ACA staff at the Executive Levels will have participated on Leading Edge.

The Leading Edge residential workshops have been supplemented by the project work described above as well as a series of guest speakers on leadership topics, informal networking opportunities and two major workshop days designed to reinforce and further develop the principles of Leading Edge for all past participants.

At time of writing around half of the ACA's 400 staff has participated in Leading Edge.

Other initiatives in management and leadership development in 2003 include feedback training for all ACA managers and supervisors and a pilot coaching program due to commence in September 2003.

Promotion of the ACA Leadership Charter has continued with the production of mouse mats, large colour posters and information sessions for all staff.

## Contact

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