

Transcript

2015 Secretary's Achievement Awards Ceremony

Wednesday 28 October 2015

50 Marcus Clarke Street Theatre

Secretary

Thank you Paul and good morning everyone.

Before I start, I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay respect to their elders, past, present and future. I would also like to extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are present or watching the live stream.

I am delighted to be presenting the Secretary's Achievement Awards for the second time. A special hello to all the people outside National Office taking part in this event.

I am truly impressed with the achievements of the Department this year, and proud of the contribution every employee has made towards our many successes.

We made a strong start the previous year when we established the portfolio and defined our vision, culture and ways of working. This year we have built firmly on that foundation.

One of the most recent examples is the transition from our support of former Ministers Abetz and Hartsuyker to supporting Minister Cash, which we are achieving very smoothly. Many people and teams responded rapidly and effectively in what I regard as a demonstration of a highly agile organisation.

Other significant milestones this year have included the implementation of jobactive, which was a massively complex and lengthy project carried out in the full glare of client and media scrutiny, again very successfully.

Our workplace relations colleagues have made significant progress with a complex agenda, including the recent passage of the Fair Work Amendment Bill 2014 through the Senate implementing improvements to the Fair Work Laws.

The cluster has worked closely with Comcare and government agencies to reform the Commonwealth workers' compensation scheme.

These reforms, which include the first substantial reform of the scheme legislation in 30 years, are aimed at preventing workplace injuries and helping injured workers get back to work more quickly.

There have also been numerous improvements to the successful Australian Government Building and Construction WHS Accreditation Scheme with changes well received by industry and also reducing red tape.

These are just a few examples of recent achievements. There is evidence across all areas of the Department that we continue to increase our capability as an organisation, including our ability to innovate.

I am optimistic the recently launched Innovation Framework will help us to formalise and improve the way we build innovation into our everyday work.

We also received strongly positive results from the Australian Public Service Commission's Capability Review of our Department. The review team commended the expertise and commitment of our employees, our reputation as a strong procurement and contract manager, our commitment to evidence-based policy, and our determined focus on programme delivery.

While this is a great result, the point of the review is to help us to improve for the future and so it does offer advice on areas to improve our performance. That's why we are now looking at how we can be more proactive in contributing to whole-of-government policy development.

I also want us to become more active as a thought leader in the social and economic policy space in which we operate. And we need to be creating a workforce for the future, both for the nation, and within our Department.

I, and the Executive, will be having more to say about these matters in the future.

An important aspect of progressing down these paths of improvement is to recognise and celebrate the successes of individuals and teams in the Department. By recognising high achievement, we inspire and encourage everyone in the organisation to excel.

The many individuals and teams who have delivered outstanding achievements exemplify the behaviours we value in the delivery of our business and have contributed to the achievement of our vision.

Everyone in the Department should understand clearly that your work is noticed and appreciated by myself and the Executive, whether you have been nominated for an award or not.

I am pleased we received 61 nominations this year which is an impressive 22 per cent increase on last year. These are for awards in the priority areas of our Strategic Plan of delivery, innovation, collaboration and people, as well as special recognition in the categories of Disability in Employment, and making Indigenous Business Our Business.

The 61 nominations from across the organisation were made up of 13 individual and 48 team nominations. I am encouraged there were 12 nominations for individuals and teams working in the Shared Services Centre, which is such an important enabler and contributor towards the achievements of the Department.

I thank the many people who took the extra time to nominate individuals and teams. Your nominations are in themselves significant recognition of the value of the work of the people and teams nominated.

The overall standard of nominations was again uniformly high and impressive. It was a tough call to choose among the excellent nominations, but a pleasure to have this problem because it demonstrates how high the general standard of our work really is.

So congratulations to everyone nominated and I look forward to presenting the awards in a moment.