

SPEAKING POINTS

Ms Renée Leon PSM

Secretary of the Department of Employment

2015 Innovation Month

Presentation of draft framework and prizes

Theatre, 50 Marcus Clarke Street

3pm, Wednesday, 29 July 2015

Acknowledgements

- Dr Amantha Imber, keynote speaker

I acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the country on which we meet.

I recognise their continued connection to the land.

And I pay my respects to their elders – past and present – and to any Indigenous people among us today.

Thank you Jo, and good afternoon, everyone.

I am delighted to join you today to celebrate an exciting Innovation Month.

This year's Innovation theme of *Dream, Dare, Do* reminds us:

- to think about what's possible
- to have the courage to do things differently
- to put fresh ideas into practice, and
- to take calculated risks and learn from our mistakes.

Innovation Month this year is about creativity, courage and successfully applying ideas — whether they are big or small, short or long-term.

I was pleased to see many people embracing the innovation buzz including the blog, the post-it note and online idea collection, the young social entrepreneurs seminar, the “intrapreneurship” challenge workshops, the Innovation Happy Hour, and the ThinkCamp.

This month has been an opportunity to reflect on how we can improve our work, through mechanisms such as co-design and increased collaboration to design better policy, deliver better services and build a great workplace.

The draft Innovation Framework, which I am looking forward to receiving shortly, will be the potting mix from which a thousand flowers will bloom.

While innovation is already embedded in our work, the Innovation Framework will provide concrete systems and initiatives to affirm and enhance a culture of innovation in our Department.

I am keen that all employees think consciously and reflectively about how we can increase innovative approaches in our work, and that we develop a reputation for valuing innovation as an essential element of how we work.

As a Department, we already have a strong reputation for delivery.

Programmes, policies and services — we are very good at delivering each of these.

And when people ask us for advice, we are well-respected for the assistance and expertise that we provide and share.

I would like us to build on this excellent platform and become recognised as a thought leader in our areas of expertise, being of course, employment, workplace relations, but also public administration.

Our Department and our portfolio agencies are central to the social and economic policy agenda of the Government and the nation's economic and social wellbeing.

We have the opportunity to be a thought leader in this crucial space.

To become a thought leader, to be the organisation that is recognised as the go-to place or the repository of expertise, we need to innovate.

We need to think and act in a joined up way with other agencies and external stakeholders.

We need to think creatively about how we collaborate with others and what we can offer to the government, private, academic and community sectors.

We need to be forward looking, knowing what is ahead of us and what we should be readying ourselves to address.

We need to be bold, to put ourselves in the shoes of our collaborators and clients, and we need to take measured risks.

Innovation is also essential to having a great workplace, and the Innovation Framework will be important in our progress as an organisation where people come to work happy, enthusiastic and excited to be contributing to achieving the goals of the Department.

The culture of innovation has to permeate throughout our workplaces including how we work, and how we think about our work.

The Innovation Framework is our jumpstarter for a new way of thinking and working.

In practice, that means:

- the framework affirms and builds on the existing culture of innovation
- it offers concrete systems and initiatives to embed and advance innovative thinking
- innovation is not stifled by hierarchical decision-making and processes
- people with an idea have a place to go and may be able to work on and develop that or another idea.

Above all, we need “No” to not be the first answer when someone shares an idea about how we might improve.

We also need to embrace the idea of failure as a learning process.

“Fail fast and fail often” is a valuable approach where we might test ideas on a small scale, and if they work then roll them out more broadly.

Last week, I joined the people at the ThinkCamp who were working on the design of the Innovation Framework.

There were some great ideas flying about the room, and much enthusiasm and momentum developing for embedding innovation in everything we do.

The process and the discussions were open, fresh and exciting and that’s the culture I would like us to think about in taking our Framework forward.

So I am very pleased to receive the draft Innovation Framework, and after some final consultation, launching the final Framework which will guide us on our innovation journey.

Thanks and congratulations to everyone who has taken part in Innovation Month and the development of the Innovation Framework, ably supported by the Policy Innovation team.

Let's keep the Innovation momentum going!

ENDS