

Delivering 'joined-up' government

Achieving the integrated approach to offshore crisis management

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... very few countries think about policy interconnectedness in a strategic fashion. Indeed, very few countries could be said to do 'joined-up' government at all well as there is a recurring lack of coordination between the strategic, military and economic institutions across nations. While it may be hard for any country to achieve this outcome, and perhaps harder still for democracies, history suggests that those which do can have a disproportionate influence at key times in history.

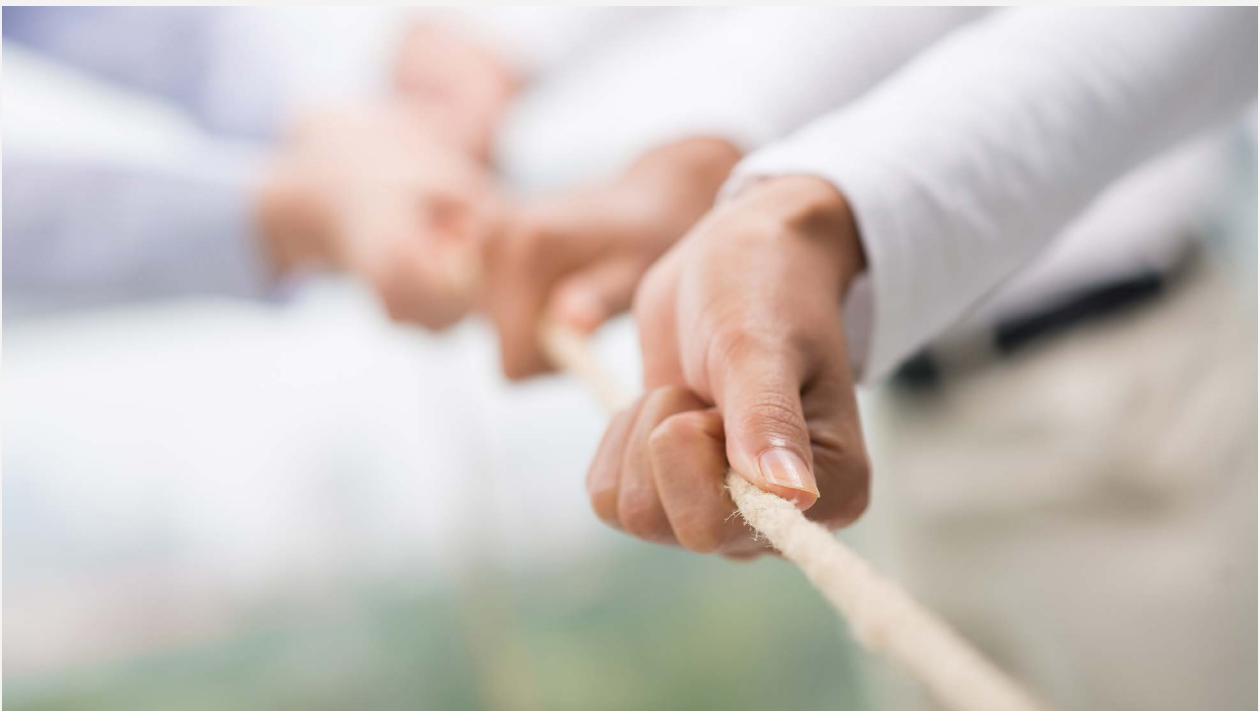
—Dr Martin Parkinson PSM

Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet¹

The only sustainable change is change that is understood and then accepted.

—Mr Peter Varghese AO

Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade²



Teamwork © iStock.com/DragonImages

Adjusting government practice to prepare for 'known unknowns'

Dr Parkinson's call to improve 'joined-up' government articulates a principle that is the foundation of effective and efficient public administration. Increasingly, the ability of government to achieve effects that are more than the sum of their parts will determine whether Australia influences its strategic environment or is merely captive to it. To deliver this level of effectiveness, Australian Government agencies must deliberately evolve to achieve higher levels of whole-of-government preparedness. We must adapt how we conceive of public service and public service careers if we're to achieve the interconnectedness to enable government to prevail in the new world disorder.

This level of interconnectedness requires more than a rhetorical commitment to change. It requires the adoption of transformative approaches to recruitment, professional development, leadership and management. Military and police forces have always invested heavily in achieving high levels of operational readiness. We know that not to do so risks failure. However, now that a coordinated civilian–military–police response is the norm for short-notice offshore deployments, civilians can't afford to be any less ready.

Offshore crisis response requires a higher level of multiagency interconnectedness than ever before.

Offshore crisis response requires a higher level of multiagency interconnectedness than ever before. However, the reality of drinking from the Information Age firehose makes it extremely difficult to achieve the degree of networking that we recognise as the ideal. It's not impossible, but traditional hierarchical models of command and control no longer meet the requirements of a world in which unanticipated disasters and protracted crises coexist and overlap. To deal with the protean challenges of contemporary crisis management, we need to abandon workplace standards and practices that sufficed in Industrial Age 'analogue' organisations and learn to apply best-practice digital economy leadership and management techniques.

This level of interconnectedness goes beyond merely learning to work better together. The British Government has adopted the 'integrated approach' as a step that goes beyond what's been tried before. The UK Stabilisation Unit, which is a joint program of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development and the Department of Defence, summarised the approach as follows:

Integration is forming a single multi-disciplinary and multi-departmental team to take on a task. The task may be planning, it may be designing a programme or it may be delivering a project. When asked to work together government departments generally look to liaise or coordinate, to retain their own teams whilst negotiating with other departments. Experience from the field has shown in the complex, fast moving and highly pressurised environment of conflict this does not work. The transactional costs are too high.³

It won't be easy to achieve this level of connectivity—government bureaucracies are inherently resistant to change—but the lessons of effective civilian–military–policing integration derived from nearly two decades of constant operations indicate that Australia is well placed to provide a global lead. The high educational standards of our personnel, our strong operational record and the scalable nature of our offshore crisis capabilities suggest that, if any country is able to achieve an integrated approach to effective offshore operations, it's Australia.

Simply put, Australia's crisis response capabilities are big enough to be effective but small enough to be efficient. The challenge that government faces is in maintaining a level of preparedness among all of its personnel to enable a joined-up response from the outset of a crisis. Too often in the past, our response to international crises was uneven as different arms of government responded in uncoordinated ways. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that different government departments and agencies inevitably

maintain different levels of preparedness for offshore responses. Contemporary crises arise at short notice. International crises require greater levels of readiness from a more diverse ‘team of teams’ than in the past.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can generally work out when a crisis commenced and how individuals and ‘the system’ responded. But for strategic and operational leaders and their policy advisers, the world just isn’t like that. You rarely know when a new crisis is starting. The preconditions for future potential conflict and natural disasters are with us now. We may be partially moving into some new humanitarian threat and still be blithely unaware of it.

Donald Rumsfeld captured the fog and friction inherent in government crisis management perfectly when he stated that:

there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don’t know we don’t know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones.⁴

Secretary Rumsfeld received widespread criticism for what was seen as a tortuous abuse of the English language. But for those preparing for the next crisis, it perfectly captured their dilemma.

A useful analogy for the business of making ready for the unpredictable is that of a systemic aircraft crisis—when a smoothly operating system starts to go wrong, with potentially disastrous consequences. We should take note of the advice of Captain Chesley Sullenberger, the pilot of US Airways Flight 1549, which he landed on New York’s Hudson River in 2009:

One way of looking at this might be that for 42 years, I’ve been making small, regular deposits in this bank of experience, education and training. And on January 15 the balance was sufficient so that I could make a very large withdrawal.⁵

We can no longer expect that civilians will have the time or the breadth of experience to learn on the job, or establish the necessary working relationships after a crisis has broken out. We need to build up our national bank of experience, education and training against the likelihood that someday Australia will need to make a large withdrawal.

As the operational tempo has increased over the past two decades, Western democracies have been heavily reliant on the intelligence, flexibility and commitment of civilian planners, crisis responders and diplomats. But these constant demands and the impact of workplace churn have stretched our human capital to the point that civilian capacity is the weakest link in our crisis response frameworks. Henry Kissinger’s observation about the degree of preparation required for senior appointments rings true, as the demands of adaptive leadership require the delegation of policy and decision-making to ever more junior personnel. Kissinger suggested that:

It is an illusion to think that leaders gain in profundity while they gain experience ... the convictions that leaders have formed before reaching high office are the intellectual capital that they will consume as long as they continue in office. There is little time for leaders to reflect. They are locked in an endless battle in which the urgent constantly gains on the important.⁶

To privilege the ‘important’, government needs to inoculate its staff against the attractions of just ‘working’ a crisis rather than seeking to resolve it.

Our world has changed and the business of national security preparedness has too. The warning times that we previously enjoyed in the strategic deadlock of the later Cold War have been replaced by the fluidity of the Information Age, where a truck driven by a mentally ill zealot acting outside a traditional command structure can become an instrument of mass casualty terrorism.

Adaptable people are the foundation of adaptive systems

National security in a globalised Information Age world is experiencing pressures similar to those experienced in the digital economy. Accordingly, we require government officers and officials who are more than just effective managers. We require national security professionals with a common appreciation of the challenges facing government, shared experience of cross-agency

cooperation and a 'joined-up' perspective on government as a career. These are the people who can work beyond their own departmental silos to deliver the 'integrated approach'.

There are analogies between the public and the private sectors in dealing with the increased complexity of our digitised environment. Contemporary professional leadership scholarship provides practical pointers for the public service as it sets about creating a national security community that's ready for the strategic shocks and attrition of concurrent and accelerating crises. This paper articulates how we can apply that learning to the business of building joined-up interagency capability.

If Australian Government departments and agencies are to achieve cohesion, they must learn an adaptive approach to crisis response. That requires a systematic approach to building common awareness through lessons analysis and dissemination, as well as preparedness founded on interagency familiarity. It's also important that in adapting to change we don't lose the institutional strengths inherent in our government institutions.

Where once our involvement in war was relatively short (four to five years per world war!) and extremely bloody, now conflict can last decades, exacting a steady attritional cost in blood and treasure. Both man-made and natural disasters, particularly those affecting higher density littoral populations, are of a greater magnitude than in the past. Often, natural disasters occur on top of conflict, making the business of improving human security very difficult. We find it impossible to define what victory, or even success, looks like.

To regain a degree of control in response to the rapid pace of change, we need to learn how to let go of controls that no longer assist in resolving issues. A notable redundant legacy is the rigid command and control structures that suited the requirements of Industrial Age warfare, but that are of less use when dealing with loosely networked adversaries. At the same time, we need to invest in higher levels of preparedness, so that we're more able to respond rapidly and effectively to unexpected events. We also need to develop levels of shared consciousness across government to enable the right people to take charge when they need to. Those people will often not be the senior leaders. As short-notice contingencies transition into protracted crises, our responses need to be sufficiently nuanced to adapt to changing circumstances.

An adaptive, learning system of government will recognise what we have long protested: 'People are our greatest asset'. Our administrative settings need to be away from centralised authority and decision-making, towards systems of governance in which people understand national priorities, appreciate their role in achieving those objectives and feel trusted to do the right thing.

This objective isn't a utopian ideal, but our models of recruitment, organisation, professional development and knowledge sharing are currently unequal to the task. Achieving the effectiveness and efficiencies required of Information Age government requires far greater investment in preparedness. We can no longer rely on 'just-in-time' ad hoc responses. That's how offshore operations with initially limited objectives become decade-long commitments. Australian Government institutions must:

- apply leadership that adapts to the fact that power and knowledge are ever more diffuse
- decentralise decision-making
- devolve authority
- integrate learning cycles in core functions
- develop a higher level of institutional resilience than we could ever have imagined possible.

The old rules of centralised planning and public administration no longer apply. We require joined-up government that meets the requirements of a complex age. We need to trust—and we need to reconceptualise what leadership looks like when traditional hierarchies are an anachronism.

Capturing the lessons of recent experience

To be adaptive, you need to know what's going on. Individual departments and agencies generally have a very good appreciation of what's going well and what needs to be improved. So far in Australia, we haven't had a strong culture of rapidly identifying and assessing how government works together and sharing those lessons across institutions. This situation is changing. The Australian Civil–Military Centre (ACMC) was established by the National Security Committee of Cabinet in 2008 with a mandate that included 'carrying out research, capturing lessons learned ... [to] develop an effective civil–military capacity for conflict prevention and disaster management overseas'.

Work to date has included writing or commissioning reports identifying lessons from Australian peace support operations in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands, the whole-of-government effort in Afghanistan and major exercise programs such as Exercise Talisman Sabre. It has included conducting quick impact assessments of coordinated national responses to man-made and natural disasters and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.⁷ No single analytical model is used: different events require different approaches. The challenge is not in evaluation and assessment but in ensuring that the lessons learned are recognised and accepted by stakeholders. To achieve this, the ACMC is developing an interagency preparedness model that delivers:

- research and a 'lessons capability' to undertake real-time observation, information collection and analysis during a crisis or exercise
- the ability to undertake lessons-focused research following a whole-of-government response to a conflict or disaster overseas
- a whole-of-government collective approach to the identification, evaluation, dissemination and implementation of civil–military–police lessons, insights, findings and recommendations.

Accepting the need for whole-of-government lessons is non-negotiable.

Any organisation tasked to provide support to other organisations is likely to face a certain amount of suspicion or miscomprehension. That isn't surprising—people are busy and senior leaders are accustomed to all sorts of snake-oil salesmen making claims on their attention—but accepting the need for whole-of-government lessons is non-negotiable if we're to achieve the level of policy interconnectedness and joined-up capability we require. Where once leaders focused on developing learning organisations in their own workplaces, now officials need to see themselves as part of a system of government that learns together.

A complex world needs foxes, not hedgehogs

In an address on the challenges of preparing young people to deal with a world without strategic certainty, American strategist John Lewis Gaddis lamented that 'we're good at educating hedgehogs, who know one big thing and much less adept at training foxes, who know lots of little things and have the agility to cope with them.'⁸

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the challenges that crisis response and management place on government departments and agencies today. New international tensions are re-raising the spectre of inter-state conflict. Political and religious violence involving non-state actors and their self-recruiting supporters has escaped war zones and is likely to erupt anywhere in the world. The concentration of populations in large cities and coastal areas means that mass casualties caused by natural disasters or disease represent greater human risk than ever in our history.

Greg Elliott, my colleague at the ACMC, recently framed this rather well to me, and I hope that he won't mind my paraphrasing his observations:

Is there something bigger here? Do we lack an ideological system (as distinct from a process) for framing crises and shaping national responses? Once international relations concepts provided constructs (realism, liberalism, constructivism) that framed interventions around national interest or multilateral approaches. States dealt with fascism and communism within well understood (if contested) frameworks, but seem to struggle with globalised discontent.

We define the problem: complexity; an adaptive, networked enemy; protracted crises; interminable endstates; fluidity; disorder.

Are we as clear about the solution?

I think Greg is correct. We do spend a lot of effort on admiring the problem, but rather less in seeking joined-up solutions to the problems already facing government. There's broad acceptance of the fact that the demands on government in the Information Age are proving infinitely more complex than those we faced only a generation ago in the Industrial Age. Yet government structures and the preparation of officials continue to be defined by the organisational models and strategic modes of thought of a bygone era.

In his 2015 book *Leadership for a fractured world*, Professor Dean Williams demonstrates that the global interconnectedness achieved by technology has not addressed the fact that humans are driven fundamentally by tribal impulses. Our postmodern societies, he argues, haven't been accompanied by equally postmodern problem-solving solutions. Instead, the complexity of our world requires leaders who can 'cross boundaries to mobilize diverse groups to participate in the work of multidimensional problem solving and change—professional, structural, cultural, religious, geographic, economic, class and ethnic boundaries, to name but a few.'⁹

In popular management theory, this is how organisations will flourish—by becoming agile and adaptable. And, in fact, this is exactly the approach that's been adopted by Daesh, Al-Qaeda in Iraq and Jemaah Islamiyah.

It isn't how we react in Australia, or indeed anywhere else in the Western democratic world. If anything, we seem to be entrenching the authority of senior leaders and expecting ever more of them. Perhaps more worrying, we appear to expect very little of so many of the people we recruit into government. We appear to have forgotten that not only are wars fought by the young (and relatively inexperienced), but that in previous conflicts the victors were generally those who trusted and invested in more adaptive (and often very young) leaders. Modern conflict is less and less likely to be waged by the big battalions.

There's still a strong sense that much of the business of government can be 'learned on the job'. That simply isn't true.

Like many older government employees, I'm constantly delighted to see how enthusiastic, talented and intelligent so many recruits to government are. At the same time, I'm often shocked at how little we do to prepare them for the shocks of offshore deployments or the responsibility of providing advice that may cost people their lives. As the fans of the classic *Yes Minister* television series know, once upon a time it was defensible for the future Sir Humphrey Applebys to have founded their careers on a good classics degree at a sound university. It's still a matter of pride for many senior public servants to point out that their academic training falls in areas totally disconnected from their professional specialisation. There's still a strong sense that much of the business of government can be 'learned on the job'. That simply isn't true.

The 2009 report, *Reform of Australian Government administration: building the world's best public service*, looked at many reasons why the public service underperforms. The authors noted a lack of diversity, outdated information technology, failure to recruit from other sectors, uneven remuneration across government, and stove-piping. They recognised that many 'high priority public policy challenges do not fit neatly within one ministerial portfolio or a single agency's set of responsibilities' and that consequently

departments and agencies needed to work together ‘across boundaries’.¹⁰ The one thing they didn’t discuss, other than reporting bare statistics of educational standards, was what public servants were capable of.

If the public service is to be a profession, it needs to come to terms with its responsibilities to its members. It must recruit staff with relevant knowledge and skills and it needs to commit to ensuring that the professionals who exercise those skills are competent and their skills remain current. The commonly accepted Australian definition of ‘profession’ provides a few pointers:

A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards. This group positions itself as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and is recognised by the public as such. A profession is also prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.¹¹

In the national security community, there’s no commonly recognised body of learning.¹² There should be, and a starting point is the critical analysis and common appreciation of the lessons derived from current operations.

Engaging with those lessons is the foundation of a robust national strategic capability. Facing the problem of educating strategists at Yale, John Lewis Gaddis wrote that:

strategy is an ecological discipline, in that it requires the ability to see how all of the parts of a problem relate to one another, and therefore to the whole thing. It requires specialization to some extent—the mastery of certain parts—but it also demands generalization, for without that skill there can be no sense of how an entire system works, where it’s been, and where it’s going.¹³

We in Australia fall a long way from that ideal. Indeed, we consistently undervalue expertise. As the former Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Professor Peter Shergold, found in his 2015 report, *Learning from failure*:

The APS needs to build a stronger cohort of skilled and experienced program and project managers rather than relying on the ‘accidental’ practitioners who are often selected when no-one with greater ability is available. Some experts already work in the APS, but their experience and qualifications are still not sufficiently recognised and their professional status and career development rarely receive the attention they deserve.¹⁴

In short, we’re still behaving like hedgehogs in an era when we need foxes.

How we apply popular management theory to the Slough of Despond

This miry Slough is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, and therefore is it called the Slough of Despond: for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place; and this is the reason of the badness of this ground.¹⁵

Every generation struggles with the social, political and technological challenges of its time. John Bunyan’s description of moral depression in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, written in late Restoration England, matches more modern concerns with the seemingly intractable state of contemporary affairs. It’s perhaps characteristic of our species that we think our own problems are worse than any that have gone before. Two world wars and a Cold War promising global nuclear annihilation were followed by a brief period of optimism, hailed as the ‘end of history’ by some. We hoped to enjoy a peace dividend and witness a flowering of liberal democracy worldwide, accompanied by progressively spreading affluence. Instead, what we’ve ended up with is the Slough of Despond.

It seems that neither national governments nor the international community can see any way past this era of pessimism. And yet the fault lines causing our current predicament are widely known.

Today, government needs to deal with a world that’s simultaneously extraordinarily interconnected and riven by irreconcilable fractures.

It's becoming commonplace to argue that traditional bureaucratic structures are ill-suited for the Information Age.¹⁶ Information is power, and in only a few years the information resources that were locked up in a few great libraries, intelligence centres and supercomputers have become available to anyone with a mobile phone. Senior leaders can't pretend that they have access to more information, or even better information. We can forget the CNN effect. Crowdsourcing means that news is delivered by Twitter feeds and that the media and governments can only respond, not drive the news cycle. As the events of the Arab Spring in early 2011 demonstrated, mass popular movements have a momentum of their own and can unleash forces that their instigators never intended.

Which brings us to perhaps the most depressing development of our time—the emergence of loosely networked global terrorist movements. These organisations, such as Daesh, use global interconnectedness to morph and undermine the presumptions that underlie the organisations of our states.

The news isn't all bad. After bruising experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Arab Spring and the emergence of a fully global terrorist campaign, we've learned that democratic systems can adapt, but need to do so more rapidly. To do so, we need to develop higher levels of preparedness and shared consciousness across government. We're already embarked on lifting the individual and collective capability of government agencies. We need to do much more to build transparent strategic learning systems to empower our people at all levels.

This is no academic exercise. In the sphere of civil–military–policing coordination for offshore operations, it's the mission of the ACMC. The task of the centre is to support the development of national civil–military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas. We have already seen how the 'lessons capability' can promote government resilience. In practice, the ACMC works with stakeholders from across government to improve our national operational culture. We assert that success in conflict and disaster management is reliant on civilian, military and police personnel planning collaboratively, resourcing appropriately and responding quickly using a coordinated approach. We can achieve that coordinated approach only if we dispense with our preoccupation with centralising authority and power and apply 'systems leadership'. This approach has been popularised by retired General Stanley McChrystal in his 2015 bestseller, *Team of teams: new rules of engagement for a complex world*.¹⁷ McChrystal is critical of the inherent inflexibility in hierarchical and uncoordinated organisations and argues for leadership based on:

- establishing trust and common purpose
- emphasising purpose over process
- seeking radical transparency
- building strong connections between teams.

He concludes that 'The speed and interdependence of the modern environment create complexity. Coupling shared consciousness and empowered execution creates an adaptable organization able to react to complex problems.'¹⁸

Practical actions to strengthen joined-up government

The first practical action is to commit to sustaining a little-known initiative that has arisen from the implementation of the Department of Defence's First Principles Review. Reporting in 2015, the review team found that there needed to be greater consultation between Defence and central agencies in order to support the relationship between 'strategy, funding and capability decisions'. To redress this weakness in the system, the departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Finance have taken up positions on critical Defence committees.¹⁹ While building interagency capability through standing and ad hoc interdepartmental committee arrangements is hardly new in government, the idea that central agencies should play an ongoing role in internal departmental processes is.

Anyone who has spent any time in government knows that committee arrangements are extremely fragile and are affected by decisions of the government of the day, interdepartmental relationships and often the personalities of senior leaders. The application of the ‘integrated approach’ in Defence’s strategic capability management is an innovation that has passed largely unnoticed. It’s a development that needs to be recognised, maintained and, if necessary, protected.

The second action is to enhance public understanding of what public service insiders call ‘machinery of government’. To most people, the way government departments and agencies interact to achieve policy outcomes and deliver government programs is a very dry topic. It shouldn’t be—it’s where we gain the value from the taxes we pay. Being able to operate the machinery of government is in fact the very currency of power. It needs to be taught, and not only in specialist public-sector training programs, such as the National Security College and the Australian Defence College and at the Australian Public Service Commission. The broader university sector usually deals with the issue only in passing. Most public servants (and their private-sector colleagues) start their careers with a good understanding of the theoretical principles underpinning our system of government, but only the haziest idea of how it fits together in practice.

John Lewis Gaddis’s observation about the challenges that America faces in producing strategists able to work across government rings doubly true in Australia. The US has a number of schools of government that use robust case study approaches to teach integrated policy to students and officials. Harvard’s Kennedy School, Yale, Georgetown and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins are foremost in this field. Here we have the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), which draws on the collective talent of a number of universities to provide executive-level education to public-sector managers.

The opportunity exists to use the existing ANZSOG structure to greatly enhance the understanding of machinery of government among undergraduate students in all disciplines. ASPI has a role to play here too, particularly now that it has expanded its research base to cover more than just traditional military and foreign policy issues. Australia’s advantage is that it’s small enough to implement the integrated approach well, but large enough to have sufficient operational capabilities to be able to make a difference. But we need to expand the pool of citizens who are able to play an active part in supporting joined-up government. By making machinery-of-government studies an integral part of the national curriculum, within a matter of years a sound appreciation of the integrated approach would filter, not only into government, but into government’s relations with the private sector and civil society.

The third action that needs to be taken is to build a lessons-learned capability into the whole of government. This capability is currently poorly understood, because different agencies do it differently. Approaches vary from official histories to computer databases, spreadsheets and quick impact studies. In the first instance, an effective national lessons-learned capability needs to be accessible. Someone needs to be responsible for ‘telling the story’ of what happened and working with all the stakeholders involved to agree on what worked and what didn’t. It isn’t an audit; nor is it an exercise in ascribing blame. To be done well, lessons analysis needs to be conducted as an honest self-assessment. It is perhaps the first draft of history, but in an age of crisis we need that draft now. We can’t afford to wait for the birth of future historians who can claim the objectivity derived from distance.

The fourth practical action is to accept that it’s too late to build integrated capacity and personal relationships once a crisis has begun. We live in an era of perpetual crisis. Our public-sector staff need more opportunities to improve their understanding of their roles and responsibilities and test their preparedness. We can only do this through inclusive whole-of-government exercises that prepare military, police and civilians alike to deal with the full range of crisis scenarios. In exercises mistakes can be made, lessons can be learned—no careers are harmed and no-one gets killed. In contemporary operations, it’s too late to start building the interagency team when the crisis has commenced and lives are in the balance.

Conclusion

Delivering joined-up government in a connected, complex era requires more than just tinkering with the existing system. We must guide our system of government to build the levels of coordination necessary to create a ‘Team Australia’ approach. And before you snigger at the bumper-sticker, check your prejudices at the door. Our future system of government is going to have to learn

more from the adaptive strategies of team sports than from the Taylorite principles of industrial efficiency that shaped mass production and bureaucratic hierarchies in the Industrial Age.²⁰ Fast moving and complex crises require champion teams who know each other's moves and who can work together in a synergistic, not hierarchical, manner.

I can't claim any particular originality here. The excellent professional development programs run by the Australian Public Service Commission for senior executives use as foundational texts the *Harvard Business Review* articles of Ronald Heifetz and Donald Laurie. Their argument is easily summarised:

Solutions to adaptive challenges reside not in the executive suite but in the collective intelligence of employees at all levels, who need to use one another as resources, often across boundaries, and learn their way to those solutions.²¹

Or, as McChrystal described his efforts to devise a 'team of teams' that could deal with the decentralized network that was Al-Qaeda in Iraq: 'We decentralized until it made us uncomfortable, and it was right there—on the brink of instability—that we found our sweet spot.'²²

Senior leaders in government are very aware of the leadership and management theory. The evidence demonstrates that the key to achieving joined-up government lies in building confidence through professionalisation, delegating until it hurts and learning to trust the value of the collective intelligence of our high-quality workforce. We need to implement our rhetoric.

Notes

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- 2 Peter Varghese, 'Parting reflections', speech to the Institute of Public Administration Australia, 9 June 2016, [online](#).
- 3 UK Stabilisation Unit, *The integrated approach is essential*, November 2010, [online](#).
- 4 Department of Defense, 'News briefing: Secretary Rumsfeld and General Myers', 12 February 2002, [online](#).
- 5 Katie Couric, 'Capt. Sully worried about airline industry', *CBS*, 10 February 2009, [online](#).
- 6 Henry A Kissinger, *White House years*, Little Brown, Boston, 1979, 54.
- 7 See, for example, John Gordon IV, Jason H. Campbell, *Organising for peace operations: lessons learned from Bougainville, East Timor, and the Solomon Islands*, RAND Corporation, 2016; APMC, *Partnering for peace: Australia's peacekeeping and peacebuilding experiences in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste*, 2012; EAS *Rapid Disaster Response: Search and Rescue Lessons Learned Seminar*, 2015; Quick Impact Workshop – 'Early considerations on civil–military responses to emerging diseases (Ebola as a case study)', February 2015; Quick Impact Workshop – 'Post Tropical Cyclone Pam roundtable with civil society', June 2015; Jane Parfitt, *Disaster response: lessons from Christchurch*, 2012; *Sharing knowledge, driving change—report from the 8th International Lessons Learned Conference*, 2012. These documents and others can be found [online](#) at the APMC website.
- 8 John Lewis Gaddis, 'What is grand strategy?', prepared as the Karl Von Der Heyden Distinguished Lecture, Duke University, 26 February 2009, [online](#).
- 9 Dean Williams, *Leadership for a fractured world: how to cross boundaries, build bridges and lead change*, Berrett-Koehler, Oakland, California, 2015, introduction to Chapter 3 (Kindle edition).
- 10 Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration, *Reform of Australian Government administration: building the world's best public service*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, October 2009.
- 11 Definition from Professions Australia website, [online](#).
- 12 A positive step in the right direction has been the establishment of the National Security College at the Australian National University. It combines executive development and academic graduate programs to educate leaders and managers drawn from both state and federal governments. Given time, resources and support, it should be able to develop a canon of

- leadership learning. This approach also underpins the recently released British Government Civil Service Workforce Plan, which has instituted a flagship Leadership Academy to deliver 'Civil Service leaders who have a breadth of experience and depth of expertise with professional career anchors, enabling them to lead with authenticity and confidence.' United Kingdom, *Civil Service Workforce Plan 2016–2020*, 12 July 2016, 16.
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 - 14 Peter Shergold, *Learning from failure: why large government policy initiatives have gone so badly wrong in the past and how the chances of success in the future can be improved*, Australian Public Service Commission, Canberra, 2015, vii.
 - 15 John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1965, 46.
 - 16 See Mark H Moore, 'Networked government: survey of rationales, forms and techniques', in *Unlocking the power of networks: keys to high-performance government*, Stephen Goldsmith, Donald F Kettl (eds), Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2009, 190.
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 - 18 McChrystal, *Team of teams*, 245.
 - 19 *First Principles Review: creating one Defence*, Department of Defence, 1 April 2015, 29–30, [online](#).
 - 20 McChrystal, *Team of Teams*, 33–52.
 - 21 Ronald A Heifetz, Donald L. Laurie, 'The work of leadership', *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1997, 124–134 at 124.
 - 22 McChrystal, *Team of teams*, 214.

Important disclaimer

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