

QG Breakfast Series

6 August 2019 event - transcript

Event close

Sandra Lerch, Acting Executive Director, Workforce Futures and Inclusion, Public Service Commission

MC: So finally I just want to introduce Sandra Lerch from the Public Service Commission who will close out the event for us today. So thanks everybody.

SANDRA: Thank you kindly. I too would like to acknowledge the traditional owners on the land on which we meet and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Firstly, I'd like to thank Queensland Health for hosting this event and for facilitating insights into the future of work. Hopefully you will all leave this morning with some reflections and some actions on how you will contribute to the way we work into the future and the Queensland Public Sector.

Now after listening to this morning's discussions there's no denying that we need to adapt to meet the demands of the future. With increasing global talent shortages and changing workforce expectations we must get better at finding the right strategic talent acquisition solutions into the future. At the PSC we're continuing to build on our strong employer brand called Be Here for Queensland with values that resonate for both current and future employees and that differentiate us from our competitors in areas such as flexibility, choice and career development.

We're working very hard to understand the opportunities for leveraging technology as a means of delivering services and products through a blended workforce. So there's no denying that technology is changing the way we work. We're shifting from what we know as dull, dirty and dangerous work to more meaningful, more human and higher value work. We know that automation is already present in our workforces and that it will only accelerate in the coming years so we must be strategic and purposeful in the way we respond to this change and disruption. We need to understand the implications and plan for those challenges.

So we've had a really broad-ranging discussion this morning and for me some of the key take aways related to the fact that technology is not new. We've seen this sort of disruption before, and we can take some comfort and some confidence that we have the skills and adaptability to manage that change effectively. We can also know that change is, technological change is an opportunity and that we need to humanise technology and be resilient and curious in our approach to that. Thirdly, we need to navigate the ambiguity of this new environment. We need to be proactive in making changes to the way we approach learning, to the way we approach flexible work, to the way we approach strategic workforce planning. And of course all of these actions require collaboration. Collaboration with industry and business, with the education and training sector, and first and foremost collaboration within and across government. The extent to which we collaborate and work together will mean we have a



greater efficiency in the future but also be more successful in leveraging the opportunities that exist.

So Deloitte recently observed that nearly three in every four jobs today require us to use our heads rather than our hands. And that figure is growing. They also noted that occupations are changing faster than we can train for them. And this means we need to look at new skills, soft skills, the human skills and the skills that are necessary to adapt and innovate continuously. We know that focusing on developing leaders at all levels helps drive success in this dynamic environment. And to that end the PSE has been working very closely with agencies and we have developed a framework that helps guide this development for the Queensland Public Sector. The leadership competencies for Queensland map out the skill sets that will guide our workforce towards delivering the best outcomes for the community that we serve. And through this framework we are enabling a high performing, innovative, and future-focused public sector that's capable of making a positive difference for all Queenslanders.

PSE has also been leading a number of reviews of the public sector workforce. Chief amongst this is the Coaldrake Review into the future of the workforce. And our work now focuses on implementing those recommendations which very much focus on the future of work. The PSE has also partnered with CSIRO's Data 61 Group to explore the impacts of automation on the Queensland Public Sector. So watch this space for more information on that report.

So technology presents amazing opportunities for us and we can innovate and augment our work, but it cannot replace what we as humans essentially offer. It's what the people of Queensland expect from us and it's ultimately what separates us from technology, our ability to empathise, to adapt, and to contextualise, and to make judgments in that context.

I'm sure you'll agree from what you've heard today there is a rapid change which will undoubtedly alter the way that we deliver our public purpose work. I guess my question for you to take back to your workplace is how will you grasp future opportunities to change the way you deliver services to the people of Queensland?

I want to thank you again to our speakers and our panellists for your attendance this morning and we hope to see you again at the next breakfast event which is scheduled for October. So thank you.