

Governments Fail Boomers Test

The Australian Risk Policy Institute (ARPI) claims that successive Federal, State and Territory governments have failed to adequately anticipate and plan for the impact of the post-baby boomer period across the public sector in Australia – creating a significant risk to public administration and the delivery of government programs in Australia.

The Institute's informed opinion suggests examples include:

- Leadership and management standards at all levels have dropped – senior executives now widely micro-manage normal middle management responsibilities thus reducing their strategic input – resulting from a lack of trust, training, qualifications and experience
- Leaders and managers are regularly being appointed and promoted beyond their level of ability, knowledge and experience
- Performance management has become perfunctory and passive – rather than driving performance - and lacks real accountability
- Delegation is largely a thing of the past – either being withdrawn upwards or managers are 'acting under dictation'
- Culture is generally unhealthy with widespread workplace bullying – organisational stress has steadily increased in recent years – personal leave records confirm this
- Communication, connection and empathy skills in senior leaders and managers are consistently regarded by staff as inadequate
- Culture prints continually show lower trust in leaders
- Personal development is not treated seriously nor consistently
- Skills in policy development and implementation have significantly diminished and become a matter of leadership concern
- Governance is not getting the attention it needs in the public interest – enterprise or integrated risk management is often actually opposed for fear of exposure or reducing the 'power' of business units
- Crisis management and spin - the promise to improve when exposed -have become an art – even cases of fraud are 'quietly managed'
- Senior rotations and frequent moves mean the emphasis is on short-term deliverables and band-aid fixes at the expense of sustainable solutions and staff well-being – leaving the next raft of executives to attempt to fix those problems – with the offenders moving on and avoiding blame or accountability
- The competence and accountability of Audit and Risk Committees have been strongly questioned – when was the last time an Auditor General embarrassed a government agency or minister?
- The competence and accountability of Audit and/or Risk Committees have been strongly questioned - there is little or no oversight of the work of these committees in the public sector, with committees generally reviewing their own performance, reportedly with little or no input from State Auditor-Generals or the Australian National Audit Office."

The Institute urges all governments to adopt a strategic risk policy approach to identify 'causes' and 'consequences' – and to develop real and sustainable solutions – and then take decisive action. Decisions are not action. To do nothing means simply to wait for generational recovery in 10 years time or more and in the meantime endure lower productivity and poor governance.

The Institute offers to make available to any Government, at no cost, a senior risk policy professional to join in a discussion about examining and prioritising these problems and developing solutions. The Institute challenges any doubters to conduct transparent and open-question, externally-managed Culture Prints in their organisations and to publish the findings.