INTEGRITY MATTERS

INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Message from the CEO

I am delighted to have taken up the position of CEO of the Integrity Commission following Richard Bingham's retirement in early April. On behalf of the Commission and the Board, I would like to thank Richard for his leadership of the Commission and his legacy of significant achievement and progress. I am committed to continuing the Commission's work promoting transparency and accountability in Government, and enhancing community trust and confidence in the public sector.

This edition of Integrity Matters focusses on communication, at both an individual and organisational level. Communicating effectively when working remotely can have its challenges, but clear and regular communication is vital. It builds an organisation's resilience to misconduct risks as it increases transparency and keeps us accountable.

Throughout the recent challenges, there has been a strong focus on communication, ensuring that public officers were informed and supported, enabling them to continue to deliver essential services to our community.

As the restrictions around COVID-19 ease, we thought it would be a good time to reflect on the importance of communication and to provide some insights that you may find useful.

Michael Easton, Chief Executive Officer

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Your communication matters

In the age of COVID-19, the health and wellbeing of a community in lockdown is more dependent than ever on the public sector to provide essential goods and services. Teams and organisations are made of individuals, and working effectively as a distributed workforce comes down to staying connected. The cornerstone of this is routine communication.

While our organisations can support us to connect, we all need to take individual responsibility for communicating effectively. Routine communication brings individual pieces of the puzzle together for big-picture outcomes, but is also critical for building trust and unity, identifying risks, and fixing them. Defining risks as a team informs and supports us to generate solutions. This can certainly be more challenging in the digital space. Communication expert Helen Morris-Brown identifies three principles that can help when connecting online:

1. Do what you said you'd do
2. Treat written text as a conversation in the same way as face-to-face:
    - acknowledge people, otherwise how do they know you're listening?
    - be inclusive
    - be open
    - be yourself
3. Be generous with sincere, genuine compliments

While it can be challenging, it is important that we communicate any concerns with colleagues and/ or managers. This benefits our team, the organisation and the community.

Here are a couple of entertaining TEDx talks with real-life examples and practical tools for successful communication:

Helen Morris-Brown: **The psychology of communicating effectively in a digital world**

Chris White: **3 ways to create a work culture that brings out the best in employees**

Discussing risks to increase resilience

COVID-19 has changed the way we operate, with staff working from home; policies being developed and updated to meet current needs; and urgent staffing and purchasing decisions being made. These unique circumstances have exposed public officers to new risks, and, in some cases, heightened existing pressures.

The best tool we have to increase the risk resilience of staff and decision makers is to raise and discuss these risks as a team. Managers can raise awareness of specific issues, lead team discussions to brainstorm where risks might emerge in ongoing work, and collaborate on how to increase risk resilience.

Some of the risks to be aware of currently are:

Misuse of information

Particularly with working from home – inclusive of a greater reliance on online service delivery, and the mix of personal and government devices and systems being used – there are opportunities for sensitive and private information to make its way online and into the public.

Managers can clarify expectations around information management, including organisational processes.

Public value

With increased urgency around new policy decisions, recruitment and purchasing, it is important to maintain a 'Best Effort' approach to ensure equity and value for the Tasmanian public.

Staff should be encouraged to raise any concerns with policy or processes. It may be also appropriate to create a makeshift 'expert panel', or to ask questions and record doubts to raise accountability and increase risk resilience.

Cyber security

There has recently been a significant increase in novel phishing and email spoof attempts against public officers relating to the COVID-19 response. 'Phishing' could involve an apparently trustworthy email with a direction to click on a link, and may refer to government spending, decision making, new compliance measures, or

various government stimulus and employment payments.

Have a team conversation to identify specific cyber security risks:

- Why might someone want to target a member of your team?
- What information or resources does your team have that someone could want?
- How might they attempt to gain access to this information?