The role of Governments, Cabinet and the Public Service

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Snapshot of the SA Government

- The government manages the State Budget of over $10 billion
- There are 15 Ministers sharing 45 portfolios
- 13 main Departments
- 86,885 public sector employees (72,141 FTEs) as at June 2004 which represented 12.1% of persons employed in SA
- 58% (41,962.4 FTEs) employed in Administrative Units, 42% (30,178.6 FTEs) in other public sector organisations eg Statutory bodies
What do Governments do?
The role of Ministers

- Premier assigns responsibilities
- Responsible to Parliament for portfolio areas assigned by the Premier
“In the ordinary course of administering a recognised part of the government of the state...”

- Direct & control statutory bodies & public corporations
- Obtain, retain and publish information
- Make delegated legislation
- Direct and control statutory bodies and public corporations
- Make contracts
- Make payments
- Buy and sell goods
- Lease land
- Build works
The Role of Cabinet

- What is Cabinet?
  - Cabinet is the central decision making body of government
  - Cabinet considers the political, policy and administrative implications of a proposal and settles a government position
The Role of the Public Service

- Public servants are part of the executive arm of government

- The work of public servants is driven by the policy priorities of the government of the day
Policy-making

- Nine features of policy making
  - Forward looking
  - Outward looking
  - Innovative, flexible, creative
  - Evidence based
  - Inclusive
  - Joined up
  - Evaluation
  - Review
  - Learns lessons
“Good process cannot guarantee good policy but it does encourage rigour and prevent elementary mistakes.”

The Policy Development Process

- There are various different models of a good policy process
- The *policy cycle* approach is probably the most useful
  - Policy develops through a standard sequence of tasks
  - The cycle approach stresses that government is a process
The Australian Policy Cycle

Identifying Issues

- The problem?
Policy Analysis

- How important is this problem?
- How much time and effort should be expended in seeking a solution?
- What is the best approach?
Policy Instruments

- There are four main policy instruments
  - Advocacy
  - Money
  - Government action
  - Law
Consultation

- A tool used to test the policy with the wider community and key stakeholders

- Information
- Consultation
- Partnerships
- Delegation
Coordination

- Government processes to minimise policy conflicts
  - Consultation
  - Cabinet process
Decision

- Cabinet’s decision is the pivot of the public policy cycle

- Of the vast range of policy development activity being carried out across government, around 12 are presented to Cabinet each week for discussion and a decision.
A good policy development process is of little value if the policy is not implemented.

Consider the implementation needs early to foresee any possible pitfalls.
Evaluation

- The systematic and objective assessment of a government program

- The effectiveness of the policy is reviewed and a new cycle of analysis begins