

Foreword

Foreword to the 2006 edition

In this monograph, Leo Dobes has produced something unusual in the annals of the literature on government and public administration: namely, a practical, user-friendly guide to the benefits, perils and pitfalls of managing outside consultants.

He writes from years of experience in managing consultants in government. Dr Dobes has not only produced a guide to best practice, but has also included advice on what not to do, and how to rectify shortcomings in the process of using consultants effectively.

The use of consultants by public sector organisations has grown immensely over the past 10 to 15 years. In many respects, public sector organisations are now dependent upon external consultants for services ranging from facilities management to internal auditing and human resource management to the provision of policy advice (and much in between).

In part, the shift towards dependency has been driven by the implementation of market testing and outsourcing regimes. In part, too, it marks a recognition of gaps in the skill sets existing within the traditional public service and public sector operations that increasingly emulate commercial business practices. Critically, it has been argued in some quarters that the present reliance on external providers of consultancy services has led to a commensurate loss of corporate knowledge about public sector organisations' operations.

In this publication, Dr Dobes warns that despite considerable investment in skills development, managers in public sector organisations may still exhibit significant deficiencies in contract and relationship management skills and knowledge. This monograph is written to redress these deficiencies.

Foreword to the 2016 edition

Much has changed during the decade since the first edition of this monograph. The entire resource management framework of the Australian Government has been revamped, and procurement principles and policy with it.

The large number of 'hits' and downloads of the monograph made it imperative to produce an up-to-date version that would assist government officials to undertake procurement activity with a degree of confidence because of a wider understanding than that available from legislative provisions alone.

Professor John Wanna

Sir John Bunting Chair of Public Administration, Director of Research,
Australia and New Zealand School of Government

This text is taken from *Managing Consultants: A practical guide for busy public sector managers*, by Leo Dobes, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.