

Preface

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This festschrift celebrates the extensive contribution John Wanna has made to the research and practice of politics, policy and public administration.

John has had a close association with the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) since its creation in 2003. In 2004, he was appointed the inaugural Sir John Bunting Professor of Public Administration at The Australian National University (ANU) and ANZSOG's director of research. In this role he has ensured ANZSOG continues to bridge research and practice, guiding our conferences and workshops to address contemporary issues and challenges, drawing on known theoretical frameworks and academic research, while also promoting new research and organising publication of a broad range of material from both academics and practitioners, offering lessons from past and current public administration and policy issues for the future. After 15 years in this role, the ANZSOG series, which John edited for ANU Press, has produced over 50 books that have been downloaded well over 2 million times globally.

John's contribution goes well beyond his work for ANZSOG. He edited the *Australian Journal of Public Administration (AJPA)* for nearly 20 years, ensuring the journal was relevant to practitioners while also meeting exacting academic standards. I first met John in Queensland in the early 90s. He played a central role in Griffith University's impressive team of public administration scholars in the 1990s and 2000s under Pat Weller's leadership. And he has built a well-deserved international reputation comparing Australian practice and developments to those in a wide range of other countries.

As is made clear in this volume, John takes great care to engage actively with practitioners. He listens and observes. But he also appreciates the political context; and he draws on his expert understanding of political and administrative theory to question and critique.

This book has been edited by Andrew Podger, Michael de Percy and Sam Vincent. Andrew has worked with John for over 25 years, first through the Institute of Public Administration Australia and the editorial board of *AJPA*, then, since 2005, at ANU. Andrew was also on ANZSOG's foundation board and helped with the establishment of the Sir John Bunting chair at ANU. Michael completed his PhD under John, one of an impressive cohort of postdocs who have learned the importance of linking research and practice – three have chapters in the book. Sam has supported John in editing many of the books in the ANU Press ANZSOG series. A Walkley Award-winning writer, he has assisted again in the editing of this volume, which is a great testament to John's career and contribution.

The chapters in the book are in four sections, with an introduction to each prepared by the editors.

- The first section focuses on budgeting and financial management, the field in which John is best known internationally. It includes several chapters with an international perspective, plus a chapter by a current Australian practitioner updating developments in financial management in Australia.
- The second section addresses politics, both in Queensland and federally, and examines the changing relationship between politics and the public sector.
- The third section focuses on policy and public administration, exploring broad international trends and developments in China (in which John has become very interested over the last 15 years), and revisiting the role and importance of the state.
- The fourth section reviews aspects of the relationship between research and practice, a relationship that John has fostered throughout his career.

John has now retired from ANZSOG and ANU, having earned Academic Fellow status and 'Emeritus professorial' status at each institution, respectively. I have no doubt he will continue to make a major contribution to public administration research and practice, from now on as an elder statesman.

We at ANZSOG wish him all the best and thank him for his wonderful contribution to the public sector and academia.

This text is taken from *Politics, Policy and Public Administration in Theory and Practice: Essays in Honour of Professor John Wanna*, edited by Andrew Podger, Michael de Percy and Sam Vincent, published 2021 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.