A brief report on the AusAID funded Australia-Africa Extractive Industry Governance Professional Fellowship Programme at the University of Sydney

A three month AusAID funded Extractive Industry Governance fellowship course under the auspices of the Australia Africa Fellowship programme took place at the University of Sydney from 24th July to 24th October, 2008. The programme was attended by five senior government officials from ministries responsible for minerals and energy in Kenya (Moses Masibo), Malawi (Charles Kaphwiyo), Mozambique (Candido Rangeiro), Tanzania (Salim S. Salim) and Zambia (Chilandila Mbewe), in alphabetical order.

The programme aims at strengthening capacities in Extractive Industry Governance and is divided into three parts consisting of tuition, a research project and visits to some Australian institutions and mining companies. The tuition component has three courses consisting of Issues Management (a regular post graduate course) and two tailored courses in Public Policy and Mining Taxation.

The entire programme is managed by the University of Sydney’s Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) and is hosted by the Graduate School of Government in the Faculty of Economics and Business, where the fellows have computer facilities and Internet access for research purposes, and the Faculty of Law.

In spite of late arrival by some of the participants occasioned by delays in obtaining visas, the programme was delivered on time. There is a general consensus among the participants that the programme is a good initiative since it promotes sharing of experiences in extractive industry governance. The fact that the tuition part of the programme covers the key areas of issues management, public policy and mining taxation implies that the participants have the opportunity to improve their capacities in developing and managing policies in extractive industry governance.

A reception to officially welcome the Fellows was held on 15th August 2008. The reception was also attended by international post graduate students under other AusAID funded programmes. In their vote of thanks for the reception, the participants expressed their appreciation for the programme and hoped that it will lead to the creation of linkages in extractive industry governance among African countries. They observed that a number of Australian companies were involved in mining and mineral exploration in various parts of Africa. They, therefore, hoped that the initiative will enhance multilateral and bilateral collaboration in the mining sector and further strengthen the already warm relationship between Australia and Africa.

Moses N. Masibo
Chief Superintending Geologist
Mines and Geological Department
Kenya

African fellows mine knowledge
The Premier’s Development Award was established to engage graduates of the Graduate School of Government (GSS) and Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) in career development opportunities with the Performance Review Unit, in NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Seven students from ANZSOG and GSG were awarded the inaugural NSW Premier’s Development Award this year. Branka Vukojevic, Pamela Hansford and Philip Fowler from the Graduate Diploma in Public Administration; and Penny Spoelder, Susan Priivald, Paul McKnight and Dora Demos from the Executive Masters in Public Administration.

Peter Connelly said “the Scheme recognises outstanding achievement and provides a two way benefit: recipients gain a practical career development experience within a central agency and significant review and public sector reform processes engage the skills of talented public sector leaders who have been exposed to the latest academic thinking about key public sector issues”.

The award is based on Unit of Study Evaluation (USE) feedback which provides evaluative data on the overall quality of the teaching in the Unit of Study as perceived by students.

The award mirrors the University and National Learning and Teaching Performance Fund key indicators of teaching performance. The award is determined on the USE items: Good Teaching, Generic Skills or Graduate Attributes and Overall Satisfaction.

Citations are awarded to those unit coordinators/teaching teams who achieved the upper % agreement benchmark on these three USE items. In classes of 20 or more students, there must be 90% agreement across the respondents.

The NSW Premier’s Development Award was established in 2007 to recognise achievement and outstanding performance across core academic units and the Work Based Project in the ANZSOG and GSG programs through the University of Sydney.

Dean’s citation for teaching

GSG’s first semester units of study both have been awarded citations for teaching award:

Policy in Practice coordinated by Geoff Gallop and Richard Mills

Public Sector Leadership coordinated by Stephen Mills

Citations are awarded to those unit coordinators/teaching teams who achieved the upper % agreement benchmark on these three USE items. In classes of 20 or more students, there must be 90% agreement across the respondents.
In July of this year Professor Gallop was guest speaker at Pfizer Neuroscience Research Grants Awards Dinner. This is from the speech he gave that night.

You would all know that I was involved in Western Australian state politics for twenty years – from 1986 to 2006. It provided me with an enormous range of experiences – from opposition to government and from the backbench to the ministry and eventually to the leadership of my party. Just as importantly it took me right across the State and into the global community which is so important to an export state like WA. The range of issues you deal with as an MP is extraordinary – from the electorate battling the bureaucracy, to the local group campaigning for better facilities, to the neighbourhood complaining about anti-social behaviour, to the lobby groups protecting a privilege, and to the multinational company negotiating a major investment.

It’s all there – social work, advocacy, the legislative process, policy development, and project management. There’s the politics of the constituency, the politics of the party, the politics of the parliament and the politics of the state.

In many ways it is social science in action – thinking, deciding, doing, responding and reflecting. Hopefully you learn as you go along. Now that I am freed from the obvious constraints of the practitioner I am able to engage more fully in that last link in the action equation: reflecting. Let me share with you some of my observations from a life in politics that I trust will be relevant to you all, no matter what your commitments and chosen careers.

I want to leave you with four ideas:

You matter, you are not just a means to an end

Accept responsibility, leaders are needed in all spheres of life

Seek out complexity and avoid simplicity

The Light on the Hill matters, always keep it burning

The first point is crucial and has to be made given what we know about professionals in Australia today. Research conducted by beyondblue and Beaton Consulting last year has revealed higher than average depression scores amongst the professions – with the legal profession being the worst. (3)

It also revealed a significant use of alcohol and other non-prescriptive drugs to manage the feelings of sadness and depression. These findings are revealing and concerning, particularly when coupled with the discovery that there was a lack of understanding about the nature of depression and how to deal with it. For example, over half the sample indicated that it would be helpful to encourage someone with depression to take time off for a holiday. In the absence of a proper treatment regime all this does is give the mind more time to stalk its victim.

No matter how intelligent or successful we are we need to know about ourselves and what keeps us in (or out of) balance. What makes us anxious? How do we deal with conflict? How do we cope with stress? Each of us has an inheritance. Each of us has a personality. However, in our society we live with the illusion that freedom exists as a given rather than as a capacity that needs to be nurtured and developed. I urge you to reflect upon the subtle but important distinction between autonomy and independence. Freedom from external constraint is not the same as the freedom to act according to our most cherished values. (4)

Concern for the former as opposed to the latter brings to the surface issues we may prefer to see repressed. It exposes the limits of our apparent freedom and calls to account some of the illusions under which we live.

Knowing more about ourselves gives us a chance of taking some control. From a work and career point of view it means being serious about our values as well as our strengths and weaknesses. This is a point that was always stressed by the late management guru Peter Drucker. Organisations, he noted, have to have values. But do people. To be effective in an organisation, one’s own values must be compatible with the organisation’s values. This is not just an operational, it is also an ethical issue. (5)

From a deeper, more personal point of view it means providing time for reflection and building some form of meditation practice into our day-to-day routines. As Leonardo Da Vinci wrote Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgement. (6)

In the attitudes and values we take to life and work, both individually and collectively, we show ourselves to be too little concerned with well-being. This is economically wasteful, socially destructive and personally harmful.

The second point I wish to make concerns our wider responsibilities. In all spheres of life we need leaders, those who take an interest in the common good questions. The context may be family and work or community and government. Whatever it is decisions have to be made, priorities set and actions taken. Someone has to be willing to take a lead even in a system of democratic accountability. However, as soon as someone raises their head above parapet they are a
target. They expose themselves to scrutiny, ridicule and attack. They take risks, the sort of risks that must be taken if we are to progress.

Leadership may be offered in the way we structure our community debates or about public policy in general. It may be about the research agenda we choose for our institution. Whatever the case, rarely will it surface without a contrary or alternative point of view. It may be controversial.

A number of implications can be drawn from this observation.

The first is that culture matters. Whatever the context we need room for leaders and processes that allow leaders to emerge. Organisations that provide for the former but not the latter inevitably decline and decay.

The second is that politics matters. Politics is that area of life where we make things happen. A world without people skilled in agenda setting, negotiation, compromise and alliance building would be a scary place indeed. These are activities we denigrate at our peril.

There is never a shortage of people with the comprehensive doctrine that explains and connects everything, except its own ability to deliver. We need our prophets but so too do we need our practitioners. All too often I have seen good ideas fail because of inadequate concern for how they are to be implemented.

Linked to this case for leadership and politics is my third proposition for consideration: Seek out complexity and avoid simplicity.

It should be no surprise that we often find ourselves searching for the simple solution. It provides clarity but at what cost?

Much better, I would argue, that we search for the points of conflict and contradiction as it is usually in that zone that we will find the lasting solutions. Indeed the very concept of sustainability is a case in point.

Any public policy agenda that pursues economic growth without concern for our community and for our environment is bound to come unstuck. Why not accept that people need employment, a fair society and a healthy environment and seek solutions that meet this complex set of demands? (7)

Indeed I would argue that Ross Garnaut has hit the nail on the head with the description of climate change as a diabolical problem. This is because it is an issue that goes to the heart of the way we live and work. Moving to a low carbon economy has enormous economic and social implications. Accepting the complexity of climate change is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for finding a solution that is feasible and achievable.

How often, however, do we see abstraction as a first and last point of inquiry? This ignores the fact that everything exists in a matrix of interrelatedness. Intellectual inquiry needs to be interdisciplinary and practical solutions multidimensional if they are to be effective. This is certainly the case in health where we face an epidemic of chronic and complex illness.

Finally I wish to remind you all of the Light on the Hill, the point of it all. We all need our guiding light whether it is sourced in philosophy or religion. To my mind it is best described as the maximization of human happiness and the minimization of human suffering, individually and collectively. Interestingly the World Health Organisation did a pretty good job with their definition of health which came into force back in 1948:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

It is complex – dealing with body, mind and relationships – and it deals not just with disease and infirmity but also with well-being.

As difficult as it is to interpret and apply I have no doubt that the wellbeing agenda is the way forward, both for individuals and the communities in which they live. We need to ask: What are the implications of moving from a wealth-producing to a health-creating society? From such a question an enormous range of research proposals flow. However, making well being the starting point for governments, for the caring and healing progressions and for people themselves is not easy. It requires individuals to confront their demons, carers to customise and personalise their care and governments to challenge the values and interests associated with the consumer society. It is the greatest challenge of all for, as Stephen Batchelor as observed:

How much of our life is spent in avoiding what we really are? Yet in a quiet corner of ourselves, do we not secretly recognise the deceptive strategies of such avoidance? How often do we find ourselves happily indulging in some trivial pursuit, even though a deeper awareness is whispering to us of its futility? (8)

References

1 Beyond the Blame Game: Accountability and performance benchmarks for the next Australian Health Care Agreements (April 2008), pp. 40, 17
2 Towards Managing Mental Illness in the Legal Profession, Tristan Jepson Memorial Lecture (Sydney, 2006)
3 Annual Professions Survey (April 2007)
5 Management Challenges for the Twenty-First Century (Harper Business, 1999), p. 178
7 “The quality of life”, pp. 213-6
8 Flight: An Existential Conception of Buddhism (Wheel Publications, 1984), p.1
Gaby Ramia: The Debate on Public Value: Where From and Where to From Here?

In 1995 Mark Moore from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government published his germinal book, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. At its heart the concept of public value prescribes that public administration in practice - and more importantly public sector managers and leaders – should focus less on competition and instead facilitate co-operation and collaboration among public sector agencies and departments, and between the public, corporate and non-profit sectors. Rather than continue the relentless push for cost-cutting, user-pays services and management according to commercial criteria, public value in theory calls for collective and society-wide deliberation on the best means to provide services and the most appropriate ways to define the objectives and results of public sector activities. Instead of necessarily seeking the separation of purchasers and providers of services to create greatest budgetary savings through output-focused contracts, and in lieu of corporatisation and privatisation, public value should inspire strategic integration of agencies within whole-of-government forums and in inter-sectoral networks.

Given that Moore’s analysis was first published in 1995, there was a considerable delay in the uptake of public value approaches among both practitioners and scholars of public administration. This is mainly because until recently we were in the era of ‘new public management’ (NPM), which embraced and fostered the kind of commercialisation trends mentioned above. When viewed retrospectively in its totality, NPM had as its central focus the principle that the public sector should be managed using methods fundamentally similar to those used in the private sector.

However, with most commentators declaring an end to the more excessive elements of NPM, we are now in the midst of a heated but timely debate on how useful the post-NPM settlement is or could be. Within the academy and in politics and the public service, questions are being asked about how public managers might advance the cause of public value creation. A further set of questions, deeper questions, are being asked about who public managers actually are at this stage of public administration history, if their role is or should extend to being the arbiters of public value, and what kind of relationships they may have with other parts of the public service and the world of policy makers and politicians.

The questions do not stop there. In recent issues of Australia’s premier scholarly journal in this area, the *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, a rugged debate has taken place between John Alford of the Australia New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and Janine O’Flynn of the Australian National University (ANU) on one side, and Rod Rhodes and John Wanna also from the ANU on the other (see vol. 66, no. 3, no. 4 and vol. 67, no. 3). This debate has its immediate roots in a special issue of the same journal published in 2004 (vol. 63, no. 4), edited by Bob Smith, Eve Anderson and Julian Teicher of Monash University. The issue featured a series of articles based on papers presented at a conference specifically dealing with Moore’s concept of public value.

Lest this should be conceived as a uniquely Australian exchange of ideas, contributions can also be found from well known international scholars, including Gerry Stoker from the UK (American Review of Public Administration vol. 36, no. 1) and Guy Peters from the US (Public Money and Management vol. 28, no. 4). Add to these other authoritative British voices such as John Benington from Warwick University in a discussion paper and Gavin Kelly, Geoff Mulgan and Stephen Muers from the British Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit in a paper titled ‘Creating Public Value’, and throw in a more recent reiteration of public value theory from Mark Moore himself with Sanjeev Khagram in a Harvard working paper. The analytical ground of public value is fertile.

All of these commentators agree that we are in a new period which can be labelled post-NPM. At the same time, while almost all of them find some limitations to the contemporary application of public value, Rhodes and Wanna stand out distinctly as the only truly critical voices. They argue that while public value is a concept which is well worth debating, and though Moore’s work is ‘seminal’, they are strongly sceptical of its applicability in Westminster systems of government; variations of which exist in the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Rhodes and Wanna can see the potential for widespread application in the US, which has an executive sitting outside the parliament and with relatively independent public managers and officials who can more easily garner support in collaboration with wider interests and stakeholders. Westminster countries, on the other hand, cannot easily adopt public value approaches, principally because they have dominant hierarchies of control, more defined roles for ministers, and authorising environments dominated by party politics and two-party contestation.

In addition, among other key limitations in the application of public value, they argue that public managers in Moore’s framework are ascribed the simultaneously over-privileged and yet unprotected role of ‘Platonic guardians’. By this they mean elite officials who in the work of philosopher Plato are given the status of intellectual arbiters.
of societal good. Finally, Rhodes and Wanna argue that public value assumes benign bureaucratic organisations, the primacy of management, and the superiority of private sector over public sector experience. All in all, public value can only truly be realised in countries such as Australia in operational circumstance characterised by incremental, low-risk change, prompting strategies which are mainly emergent rather than forward-looking or adventurous. When public managers overstep this role they risk becoming Platonic guardians; which is not a role to be given to managers and certainly not managers alone. As a concept to organise public affairs, therefore, Rhodes and Wanna argue that public value has severe limitations.

Regardless of the side an observer may take in the public value debate, however, other questions need to be asked before one can be convinced either way, or before one can move forward in the genuine creation of public value. Society as a whole must be the prime consideration. To be sure, Rhodes and Wanna are right to query whether political systems in countries like Australia have the strategic capabilities to deliver public value in the ways promised by those who adhere to the concept. In uncertain times like these, however, surely we cannot and should not focus public administration debate solely on the institutional structures of rich, developed countries. Questions ought to be raised also about the potential for public value – and other, allied concepts – to solve what public policy analysts call ‘wicked problems’. As the Australian Public Service Commission reminds us in its 2007 report on *Tackling Wicked Problems*, these are dilemmas for which there is no widely accepted policy or management solution and/or which lends itself to more complexity than can be commonly understood. Climate change, poverty and inequality, and potential public health crises such as those raised by avian flu are key examples.

For what it is worth, Benington from Warwick University argues that in today’s ‘risk society’ – using Ulrich Beck’s famous phrase from the book of the same title - public value provides ways out of our great contemporary problems. Moore himself had showed greater restraint than his colleague Benington, using examples from refuse collection and policing among others. In a recent interview Moore outlines the difference between the NPM and public value approaches by reference to community drug rehabilitation programmes. His comments are worth quoting:

*I began my career doing evaluations of publicly supported drug treatment programmes. Had I done the evaluations according to customer analysis, I would have asked the addicts if they liked the programme, and they would have said yes - so much, they kept coming back for more.*

*I could have filed a report that said we were doing a good job providing public goods and services because the customers liked it, and kept coming back for more - the market test in the private sector.*

*But if I handed that report to a public accountability body, acting for society as a whole, they would have said that is not what “we” had in mind.*

*What “we” had in mind when we taxed to produce money for this drug treatment programme, was that addicts would stop using drugs, stop committing crime, get a job, and take care of their family. In that moment they would be specifying the social outcome that the collective had in mind, for the individual clients of the programme. (See: [http://www.management-issues.com/2007/11/5/mentors/mark-h._moore-on-public-value.asp](http://www.management-issues.com/2007/11/5/mentors/mark-h._moore-on-public-value.asp]*)

Without entering into the merits of the policy objectives which Moore speaks of, and going back to his original and most authoritative formulation in 1995, in the general case for public value he argued:

*In a society that celebrates private consumption more than the achievement of collective goals, values individual liberty greatly, and sees private entrepreneurship as a far more important engine of social and economic development than governmental effort, the resources required by public managers are only grudgingly surrendered. So, it is not enough to say that public managers create results that are valued; they must be able to show that the results obtained are worth the cost of private consumption and unrestrained liberty forgone in producing the desirable results. Only then can we be sure that some public value has been created (p. 29).*

If it were conceded, consistent with Rhodes and Wanna, that perhaps public value is not easily transported to national contexts outside the US, what happens in countries which not only have different constitutions to the US, but are significantly poorer and have less international political power? In short, if the concept of public value is to be truly useful, should we not stretch it beyond the US and Westminster countries? Is it not incumbent upon us, if we truly wish to create public value, to extend its benefits beyond questions of climate change – imperative as this is - and in combination into the broader dilemmas faced by the world’s developing countries? In doing so, we would certainly need to apply Moore’s framework and the arguments of his supporters to the social policies of our own governments. We would do so in the hope that such analysis may be beneficial both to our own socially excluded populations and those of poorer nations. In essence, it can be argued that if public value is to be put to its most useful applications, it should be both internationalised and extended to questions, not only of national public policy, but social policy. After all, that is where society’s goals are analysed first and where the collective which Moore speaks of has its main voice.

Of course, whether public value is up to the task is not certain. What is certain is that it is worth our trying; particularly since so many policy and public management experiments have been formulated.
Dr Gaby Ramia joined the Graduate School of Government in June this year as the new Senior Lecturer - a newly created position within the school. In his first week Gaby found himself assessing Work Based Project presentations and in his first semester was co-ordinator of the Graduate Diploma core unit, Strategic Administration.

Gaby is a policy academic with research and teaching experience across public policy and management and social policy. He previously held positions in the Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney where he was a Research Fellow, and at Monash University where he was Senior Lecturer and Director of the Graduate Program in Public Policy and Management.

Gaby has taught in a wide range of policy-related areas, including international public policy, public policy, international business, strategic management, economics and employment relations.

He believes that teaching in the GSG is “a different kettle of fish to teaching in other universities”.

Gaby says, “it provides a greater challenge, for the class teacher as much as for the students, who are typically high-level senior or experienced public servants from Australia and overseas”.

“Our teaching puts their experience into broader and more general strategic contexts. This improves their career chances and helps them to be more effective practitioners. As a lecturer, for Gaby, its about testing his academic and research interests against the experience of real-world practitioners, across the entire range of public sector activities”.

Gaby has research interests across policy issues at the international, cross-national comparative and Australian levels. He recently completed a collaborative study on social security in China and is currently completing a project with colleagues at Melbourne and Monash Universities on the global education market and the social and economic security of international students. Both studies were funded by Australian Research Council, the latter a Linkage project with the Shanghai Bureau of Labour and Social Security. He has other, ongoing research interests on: international social policy and the role of international NGOs and transnational corporations; contractualism, public management and employment services; and the relationship between industrial relations regulation and social policies.

He is the author or co-author of numerous scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals of international and national significance and with Terry Carney is co-author of From Rights to Management: Contract, Public Management and Employment Services (published by Kluwer).
Join the Alumni and Practitioners’ Network

GSG continues to support all former ANZSOG and GSG students through the Alumni and Practitioners’ Network. The Network is a lifelong community that connects students, mentors and teaching staff throughout the government, industry and education sectors.

Through this network students and alumni have had the opportunity to take part, not only in the university’s continuing contribution to public debate, but also with member and partner associations engaged in conferences, lectures and presentations in all aspect of government interest.

Alumni have recently been invited to The Future of Australian Governance a Q&A with Bob Hawke, Bob Carr, Miriam Lyons, (Executive Director, Centre for Policy Development) and Geoff Gallop held in The Great Hall hosted by Sydney University Young Labor Society. Afterwards students had the opportunity to mingle with the two guests with refreshments.

Alumni and students from Community Services were invited to Neglecting Children and Youth: Democracies at Risk organised by Sydney Democracy Forum.

In August GSG hosted David Knott (below) from the UK Prime Ministers’ Strategic Unit for a week at University of Sydney. David was in Australia on secondment to the Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet. GSG invited David to give a talk to the Alumni and Practitioners’ Network, on Taking the long-term view: perspectives in UK policy making.

Further Alumni events are also planned in the next few months, including the GSG Alumni and Practitioners’ Network Function, hosted by Deloitte on November 13th.

Register and Update Online

Former students can become a part of the GSG Alumni and Practitioners’ Network by registering your details online at the University of Sydney Alumni Web portal. To ensure current alumni don’t lose contact, the portal can also be used to update your details as well.

http://www.usyd.edu.au/alumni/

When updating your details, ensure that a current email address is provided. Most invitations to events are sent out by email through our Alumni and Practitioners’ Network.