

Executive Connections

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The Leadership Academy hosts Executive Connections events to provide thought leadership that drives change and creates value for our executive and their teams. The events address contemporary issues facing public sector leaders and focuses on leadership strategies that are sustainable.

Our events are designed to provide executives with information and insights on emerging trends, share global thought leadership and provide space for cross-sector collaboration.

All NSW public sector senior executives are invited to Executive Connections events, so keep an eye on your emails for our next event. There is no charge to attend these events.

Past Executive Connections events

Achieving net zero

This event discussed the actions required across NSW Government agencies to implement the landmark Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023.

Reaching net zero emissions by 2050 is a NSW Government commitment that requires a shift to embed climate action as part of our business as usual.

Preventing and responding to racism

This event focused on preventing and responding to racism in the workplace with guest speakers Stan Grant, renowned journalist, author, and film maker, Giridharan Sivaraman, Australian Human Rights Commission, Teela Reid, lawyer, essayist, and co-founder of @blackfulla_bookclub and Lisa Annese, CEO, Diversity Council of Australia.

In line with the NSW Government's signing of the "Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019–2029", we must collectively transform our organisations to deliver on this agreement and this includes addressing and preventing racism.

Preventing and responding to workplace burnout



Attendees heard strategies from Dr Jodie Lowinger on identifying, preventing, and managing the signs and symptoms of burnout and walk away with a practical toolkit to banish burnout and boost wellbeing. Dr Lowinger shared her Mind Strength Method – a groundbreaking methodology based on neuroscience, helping individuals and teams to build resilient high performance.

Dr John Chan shared the latest global research from the State of the Workplace Burnout 2024 report, alongside recommended strategies for addressing chronic workplace stress and the role senior leaders play in positively impacting their people.

Making sense of AI in the public sector



A distinguished panel of experts shared invaluable insights on how AI can serve as an indispensable tool for the public sector. The panel included Edward Santow, Professor and Co-Director of the UTS Human Technology Institute, Natacha Fort, Principal Solutions Architect, Government Data Science Lead, Amazon Web Services and Jessica Ho, Director Digital Investment and Assurance Division, NSW Department of Customer Service.

There is no one way to be a leader



This event was an opportunity for executives to understand how to better advocate for a diverse next generation of senior leaders, and to celebrate the incredible Aboriginal and CALD leaders we have in the public sector. Executives explored the importance of challenging some of the stereotypes of what a leader should be and how a diverse and inclusive leadership benefits the sector and the broader community.

Attendees heard from Lisa Annese, CEO Diversity Council Australia, Ming Long AM, private sector Non-Executive Director and former CEO/CFO, and Dr Todd Fernando, Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, on their journeys to leadership and insights on valuing cultural strength in the workforce. The session was moderated by Kathrina Lo, NSW Public Service Commissioner.

How to see around corners in a volatile world



Joining us from New York for this unique event was best-selling author and Professor of Management at Columbia Business School, Professor Rita McGrath. Rita is one of the world's foremost experts on strategy and innovation. She has consistently been ranked among the top 10 management thinkers globally and has

received the #1 award for strategy by Thinkers50 Her impressive background includes extensive experience with public sector contexts.

Dr McGrath shared how to apply her tools and frameworks to strategy – specifically for contexts of high uncertainty or requiring innovation. Participants heard her unique insights and were equipped with the strategic thinking skills you need to ‘see around corners’.

Building a sense of belonging in the workplace



International performance coach Owen Eastwood joined NSW Public Service Commissioner Kathrina Lo in conversation about how to foster a culture of belonging in the workplace and how inclusive practices can contribute to high performance in our organisations.

Owen shared his diverse experiences including working with the England football team, British Olympic Team and the Command Group of NATO. Participants heard the inclusive leadership skills you need to build psychological safety in your organisation, enabling people to thrive.

Cut through spin with data



Josh Bersin, an expert on the talent market and trends impacting workforces shared his views on the current economy and how we can use data to tell the 'real' story behind the media spin. He explored how the use of workforce data and insights can help us build the workforces we need to achieve our collective goals for NSW.

Josh is cited as one of the top HR and workplace industry analysts in the world and is frequently featured in talent and business publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *Fast Company*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. His recent research initiatives span diversity and inclusion, hybrid work, wellbeing, HR capabilities and business resilience.

Customer-centric leadership: from mindset to action



NSW Government aims to be the world’s most customer-centric government by 2030. In 2021, the NSW Department of Customer Service launched a whole of government strategy to work towards a customer centric government.

Being customer-centric means that government is there for people and businesses when they need support, is easy to deal with, and works hard in the background to keep making their lives better.

This event featured The Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government; Emma Hogan, Secretary for Digital and NSW Department of Customer Service, Kathrina Lo, NSW Public Service Commissioner, and Amy Brown, Secretary of Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade.

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