



**Victorian
Public Sector
Commission**



VICTORIA
State
Government

Development framework for Victorian public sector managers

Contents

- Development framework for Victorian public sector managers 1**
- Rationale 3**
- The development framework 8**
- Understanding and developing yourself 9**
- Different styles of management for different situations 10**
- Resilience and achievement 11**

Rationale

Within any organisation, managers are the 'connectors'. They influence and have impact up, down and across an organisation.

Managers have a critical role to play in achieving organisational productivity and wellbeing. They deliver the tangible outcomes of organisational vision.

Strong and consistent capability at middle management level, individually and collectively, is vital for any organisation.

Many people come to a management role on the strength of achievement in pre-management roles, where subject matter expertise or a narrow scope of accountabilities has allowed them to excel. It is common for first time managers to assume that what is required in their management role is simply 'more of the same'; they need to keep doing whatever brought them success in their pre- management roles.

This belief can persist because position descriptions, performance plans and recognition practices for management roles seldom give attention to the full scope of management role accountabilities. The achievement of tangible outcomes is often given primary attention. The management knowledge, skills and behaviours required to achieve these outcomes are not clearly stated but assumed or implied.

For example, the extent to which a manager is expected to work proactively and collaboratively is often not made explicit. The manager's role to recruit, direct, advise, develop and support staff is often hidden within the phrase 'manage a team'. No further detail is provided about the complexity of these activities and how to perform them well.

As a consequence, managers are likely to have a good idea of *what* they need to achieve, but little sense of *how* they should achieve these outcomes from a management perspective.

Some managers may take from this that how they go about their role is less important than what they achieve, or that success in a management role requires no special knowledge, skills or behaviours. Managers can miss the fact that the scope and

nature of a management role is significantly different from that of previous roles.

Most managers are able to muddle through and develop approaches on the run. Sometimes these approaches are effective in the short term, but they do not always lead to sustained performance. Sometimes they can lead to serious problems such as micro- management, under-management, conflict, stress, inactivity and disengagement. It is often only when something goes wrong that attention is given to the 'how' of management. By this time it may be too late. Damage to individuals and the organisation may have already been done.

Given the central role that managers play in organisational productivity and wellbeing, it is important that managers have the opportunity to develop, in an overt and systematic way, the special knowledge, skills and behaviours required for success in their role.

Managers should be given this opportunity irrespective of their proficiency in pre-management roles or whether they have the potential or aspiration to move higher in the organisational hierarchy.

The Development Framework for Victorian public sector managers has been designed to provide a comprehensive statement about the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for success in any Victorian public sector management role. In doing so, it seeks to provide the basis on which to:

- make overt both the 'what' and the 'how' of management in the Victorian public sector;
- assess the strengths and development needs of people currently performing or aspiring to a Victorian public sector middle management role;
- focus efforts to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for success in a middle management role;
- communicate effectively with the wider development provider (training) community to encourage design, promotion and delivery of development activities that have clear and direct value to managers, organisations and the public sector as a whole; and
- build knowledge, skills and behaviours that are easily transferable to other management roles and contexts.



The Development Framework is detailed in different ways for different audiences through a suite of resources collectively titled *Great manager, great results*.

The application of the *Great manager, great results* materials is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- greater sophistication in the performance of Victorian public sector management roles;
- increased return on investment for management development activities; and
- easier movement of managers from one public sector role, division, organisation, situation or environment to another, which will contribute to the creation of a flexible and adaptable public sector workforce.

‘Management’ and ‘leadership’

There is often debate about the difference between management and leadership. The debate is created, to some extent, by the fact that the term ‘leadership’ is used in two different ways: to denote a set of skills/ qualities and to indicate a type of role within an organisational hierarchy.

Different organisations will have different interpretations of the terms. For example, many organisations consider achieving outcomes by influencing others (direct reports, colleagues or members of the wider community), developing strategy or simply being proactive, as ‘leadership’. So people working at any level in the organisation need to have and apply ‘leadership’ skills and attributes.

For these organisations, the term ‘management’ is used to describe the more technical or process oriented tasks of ensuring that particular activities are undertaken correctly. Used in this way, management skills and attributes are also required at all levels within an organisation.

The terms ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ are not used in this way throughout the *Great manager, great results* materials.

Rather, the term ‘manager’ in the title *Great manager, great results* refers to a formally recognised position within an organisational hierarchy. It denotes the group of roles that sit below the senior most roles and above the front line or operational roles within an



organisation. These management roles go by various titles across the Victorian public sector; position titles may include the terms 'Senior', 'Principal' or 'Manager'.

The Development Framework promotes activities such as achieving results by influencing others, thinking strategically and being proactive (sometimes viewed as 'leadership' skills), as inherent components of *every* Victorian public sector management role, not separate from or additional to them.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours required to perform a formal organisational leader role— that is, to perform a role at or near the senior most role in the organisational hierarchy, with a span of control and responsibility that covers the whole organisation or a substantial part of it— are not specifically highlighted in the Development Framework.

The *VPS leadership capability framework*, available from the Victorian Leadership Development Centre, highlights the capabilities required to succeed in the senior most roles within Victorian public sector organisations. The *VPS leadership capability framework* will be of interest to people who have developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours for management-level roles and now wish to pursue a formal organisational leadership role.

Mastery of the skills required to succeed in a Victorian public sector management role will provide a solid platform from which to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for success in a more senior organisational leadership role.

The Development Framework and the Employment Capability Framework

The *VPS employment capability framework* and associated materials (guides and card sets¹) were developed by the SSA. This framework describes 17 personal qualities and 26 knowledge and skills areas at different organisational levels.

While there is some overlap between the Development Framework and the Employment Capability Framework, they serve different functions and there are some significant differences between them.

The Employment Capability Framework was designed primarily for use in an attraction and recruitment context. It provides a dictionary of capability descriptors from which a 'forced choice' selection is made to identify the eight or so most important aspects of a role. This eight-point description is used in recruitment processes to promote the job



and provide the basis on which to assess the suitability of candidates.

Because they are designed for use in an attraction and recruitment context, the descriptions of the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Employment Capability Framework are very broad. Public sector- specific knowledge and skills are not included because recruitment decisions made on the basis of these capabilities could unreasonably limit the candidate pool.

Because the Employment Capability Framework functions as a lexicon, no claims are made about which capabilities are more important than others; this is for individual hiring managers to decide.

Also, because the Employment Capability Framework has been designed to support a point-in-time assessment of a candidate's suitability for a role, it does not focus on the other capabilities a candidate may need to develop over time and in what order, although it can help with this analysis.

By contrast, the Development Framework detailed through the *Great manager, great results* resources seeks to specify *all* the knowledge, skills and behaviours a Victorian public sector manager needs to develop in order to succeed in their current and future management roles.



The development framework

The Development Framework highlights 13 development areas presented in two sections:

- **management role foundations:** core knowledge, skills and behaviours that every successful Victorian public sector manager uses every day
- **management role activities:** the tasks and actions that all managers need to undertake in order to deliver outcomes, regardless of the specific nature or context of their work.

Each of the 13 development areas is described briefly in the following pages.

Further detail for each area is provided in the relevant [Development Guides](#).



Understanding and developing yourself

Good self-knowledge provides the basis for effective self-development, selection of appropriate management styles, strengthening resilience, strategic thinking and communication. In other words, it provides the foundation for success in a management role.

Any development a manager undertakes in this area should, at minimum, cover the following topics.

- The importance of understanding and developing yourself, especially in the context of the changing and complex environment in which the Victorian public sector operates.
- Understanding the role and responsibilities of the Victorian public sector manager, including the role of a manager to facilitate connections up and across an organisation, model appropriate behaviours and be proactive.
- Understanding self: personality, strengths, limitations, aspirations, needs, anxieties and preferred ways of working.
- Undertaking effective self-development and continuous growth in a systematic and targeted way.
- Undertaking effective transitions from one role, organisation, situation or environment to another while maintaining strong and consistent performance.
- Seeking assistance to understand and develop yourself: knowing when to seek assistance and who to seek it from.

For further information, see [Development Guide 1](#).



Different styles of management for different situations

It is often not what a manager does that produces results, but how they do it. Being able to use a style of management that suits an individual's personality and the situation in which they manage is a core skill for managers.

Any development a manager undertakes in this area should, at minimum, cover the following topics.

- The importance of being able to adapt management approaches for different situations, especially in the context of the changing and complex environment in which the Victorian public sector operates and the composition of the public sector workforce.
- Reading a situation using environmental and emotional intelligence, and an understanding of different personality types and organisational cultures to identify when actions are required and what form these should take.
- Understanding different management styles commonly used in contemporary Australian workplaces.
- Applying preferred and alternative management approaches appropriate to a manager's personality, the situation and changes to the situation.
- Seeking assistance to select and adapt appropriate management approaches: knowing when to seek assistance and who to seek it from.

For further information, see [Development Guide 2](#).



Resilience and achievement

Keeping going when the going gets tough

The ability to achieve outcomes through perseverance and professionalism, even in the face of set-backs and challenges, is a critical aspect of success in any management role.

Any development a manager undertakes in this area should, at minimum, cover the following topics.

- The importance of building resilience and strategies for ensuring achievement, especially in light of the changing and complex environment in which the Victorian public sector operates.
- Understanding resilience, including the key attributes and factors that build or diminish resilience.
- Balancing work and wellbeing in order to address the demands of the job while maintaining personal wellbeing and honouring non-work commitments.
- Laying the groundwork for achievement, including techniques for making decisions with confidence, time management and prioritising tasks.
- Being comfortable with complexity, ambiguity, change and risk typically encountered within the Victorian public sector environment.
- Dealing with set-backs by, for example, maintaining perspective and reframing the set-backs as learning opportunities.
- Understanding and actively managing stress, including being able to identify causes and signs of own stress and productive stress-response strategies.
- Seeking assistance to build resilience: knowing when to seek assistance and who to seek it from.

For further information, see [Development Guide 3](#).