

Preface

The articles in this collection were first published in *the Canberra Times* between 14 November 2005 and 22 April 2006 in a slightly different format. In some cases two articles were published on the one secretary. These have been combined into one and minor edits and corrections have been made. The articles have not been updated to take account of events since they were first published.

The series aimed to provide a personal profile of the Commonwealth portfolio secretaries, their rise through the service and the challenges their departments faced.

Heads of departments have little to gain by stepping into the limelight and many are wary of the media. From the outset it was agreed that they would not be grilled on current political events. It was my hope that they would provide some inside information on historic events and some insight into policy development and program deliver. In the upshot many readily told fascinating tales of their experiences in administration during major political developments.

This series was only made possible because of the support of Dr Peter Shergold, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, who put my proposal to a portfolio secretaries meeting. Some secretaries initially expressed a reluctance to participate but in the end all agreed. I would like to thank Dr Shergold and the secretaries for their co-operation.

In closing, I would also like to thank John Butcher, John Nethercote and John Wanna for their assistance in preparing this manuscript.

Paul Malone
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