

People analytics: imparting insights – the art of story telling to compel action

00:00:05 - 00:00:12 Hello and welcome to the fourth episode in the People Analytics Podcast

00:00:12 - 00:00:17 Series. Today, Tanya Hammond from Tailored HR Solutions talks to Sandra

00:00:17 - 00:00:21 Crawford, Assistant Commissioner, Community Corrections, Department of

00:00:21 - 00:00:25 Communities & Justice on the topic of imparting insights, The Art of

00:00:25 - 00:00:29 Storytelling to compel action. It's fascinating to hear about the important role

00:00:29 - 00:00:33 community Corrections plays in New South Wales justice system and to learn

00:00:33 - 00:00:38 about the journey that Sandra has been leading since 2018 to develop their

00:00:38 - 00:00:43 strategic workforce plan and the current ambitious workforce diversity targets.

00:00:43 - 00:00:47 Sandra also introduces the topic of environmental scanning and the important

00:00:47 - 00:00:52 role HR has in predicting the social and digital capabilities that will be needed

00:00:52 - 00:00:58 by the workforce now and into the future. Enjoy. Hi, I am Tanya Hammond,

00:00:58 - 00:01:02 CEO of Tailored HR Solutions, and I have the pleasure of interviewing Sandra

00:01:02 - 00:01:07 Crawford. Today we'll be sharing with us her insights in relation to imparting

00:01:07 - 00:01:12 the art of storytelling to compel action. Welcome, Sandra. Thank you Tanya.

00:01:12 - 00:01:16 Lovely to be with you. Pleasure. The first question for everyone that's joined

00:01:16 - 00:01:19 us on these podcasts so far is if you wouldn't mind us giving us a short

00:01:19 - 00:01:24 overview of your background and your current role. I am currently the

00:01:24 - 00:01:29 Assistant Commissioner leading Community Corrections, an agency within

00:01:29 - 00:01:34 Corrective Services New South Wales, a division of the Department of

00:01:34 - 00:01:40 Communities and Justice and my background. I've been a senior executive in

00:01:40 - 00:01:46 the public service for the past 10 years, mainly working in the justice arena. I

00:01:46 - 00:01:51 actually started out as a child protection case worker in family and community

00:01:51 - 00:01:57 services about 30 years ago. So yeah, with the merger of FACs and Justice, I

00:01:57 - 00:02:03 feel like I've now done full circle when I'm back where I started from. So I left

00:02:03 - 00:02:09 clinical practice to take up various policy, project and management roles over

00:02:09 - 00:02:15 the years in various different government agencies, including health, the New

00:02:15 - 00:02:21 South Wales police force and aging disability in home care. So I've got a very

00:02:21 - 00:02:25 eclectic background, but I've always chosen to work in the public service.

00:02:25 - 00:02:29 Really interesting background. And I guess over your career you may have

00:02:29 - 00:02:34 observed some changes in the HR function and the role that HR practitioners

00:02:34 - 00:02:40 play. Have you got any insights you can share our?. The HR function has

00:02:40 - 00:02:47 always been one of the most, if not the most important business enabler, and I

00:02:47 - 00:02:53 really don't think anything has changed in that regard. A great HR practitioner

00:02:53 - 00:03:00 is truly worth their weight in gold. I guess I've been fortunate to have many

00:03:00 - 00:03:05 productive relationships with HR practices to effectively manage workforce

00:03:05 - 00:03:11 issues that has mainly focused on support in terms of dealing with individuals

00:03:11 - 00:03:18 and teams. I think the role of the HR practitioner and the HR function is now

00:03:18 - 00:03:26 far more strategic. By that I mean the HR function really assists to drive

00:03:26 - 00:03:32 business, productivity, performance and outcomes. For me, effective

00:03:32 - 00:03:37 partnerships is really the key. Without an effective partnership with clearly

00:03:37 - 00:03:44 delineated roles and agreed expectations, I don't think you really get the best

00:03:44 - 00:03:49 out of your relationship, from either HR or a business perspective. That's

00:03:49 - 00:03:54 a really great observation. I guess to assist our listeners to better understand your

00:03:54 - 00:03:58 context and your role, it would be terrific if you could provide us with a bit of
00:03:58 - 00:04:03 an overview, the organisation and your particular workforce. So community
00:04:03 - 00:04:09 corrections essentially exists to improve community safety by assisting people
00:04:09 - 00:04:14 who've offended to change their behavior and not to re offend again. We're an
00:04:14 - 00:04:18 operational service delivery agency working in a challenging area of
00:04:18 - 00:04:24 community service, we're responsible for supervising offenders in the
00:04:24 - 00:04:28 community on an order of the court, either a community based order or on
00:04:28 - 00:04:33 parole. But we also supply information and advice to the courts and the state
00:04:33 - 00:04:38 parole authority to assist them in their decision making. We also have a small
00:04:38 - 00:04:44 number of residential facilities, mainly to help people transition back into the
00:04:44 - 00:04:49 community from custody and to support them to desist from crime. We have
00:04:49 - 00:04:54 about 35,000 offenders in the community on a range of orders at any given
00:04:54 - 00:05:01 time. We have approximately 1600 staff who are located in 62 offices across
00:05:01 - 00:05:06 New South Wales. So some offices are quite large, they have 50 staff. Some
00:05:06 - 00:05:10 offices are actually really quite small in some of our regional and remote areas
00:05:10 - 00:05:14 , so they can have sort of between 6 to 8 staff members. So quite a lot of
00:05:14 - 00:05:21 diversity. Our workforce is mainly aged between 24 to 65 years of age and is
00:05:21 - 00:05:26 predominantly made up of women, so 73% of our force is actually female
00:05:26 - 00:05:32 About 40% of our workforce has been with us for 10 years or more, and I
00:05:32 - 00:05:36 think it's fair to say we're actually doing quite well in terms of women in
00:05:36 - 00:05:41 leadership roles. So we have about 60% of women holding leadership
00:05:41 - 00:05:47 positions in community corrections. We have just over 3% of the workforce
00:05:47 - 00:05:53 who identify as Aboriginal and just over 5% who have a disability.

00:05:53 - 00:05:59 Community corrections also relies quite heavily on partnerships with
00:05:59 - 00:06:02 government and non government organisations and the private sector to
00:06:02 - 00:06:07 achieve our goals. You mentioned you've got 1600 staff. What's the
00:06:07 - 00:06:11 predominant sort of job role? The predominant job role is the practitioner role
00:06:11 - 00:06:17 . So a Community Corrections Officer and they are responsible for delivering
00:06:17 - 00:06:22 supervision and interventions to offenders, in the community to affect positive
00:06:22 - 00:06:27 change in behavior. So they make up the bulk of our workforce, we then have
00:06:27 - 00:06:33 administrative officers on. We have managers and we also have unit leaders
00:06:33 - 00:06:38 who actually supervise the clinical practice just of the Community Corrections
00:06:38 - 00:06:44 officer. Wow, okay. Of those 62 officers do you have and I know I'm sorry
00:06:44 - 00:06:48 we didn't talk about this earlier, but do you have the HR team that then
00:06:48 - 00:06:53 supports those 62 officers. So they tend to be based in one location, or
00:06:53 - 00:06:58 are they spread within some of those those 62 offices. No, they're very much
00:06:58 - 00:07:03 based in one location. Yep. So we don't have dispersed human resource
00:07:03 - 00:07:09 officers, they are based centrally. Okay, what's really interesting for the
00:07:09 - 00:07:12 listeners when you sort of learning about an organisation such as yourselves in
00:07:12 - 00:07:16 terms of your you know, community corrections area? I've never really
00:07:16 - 00:07:19 thought much about it before. I understand that, you know, from our recent
00:07:19 - 00:07:23 catch up that you've been on quite a journey in the space of data and insights in
00:07:23 - 00:07:27 relation to your workforce. I'm curious. I'm sure my listeners will be around
00:07:27 - 00:07:32 the data that you find most valuable for you to understand the workforce and
00:07:32 - 00:07:37 use to make your evidence based decision. Look, that that is a really good
00:07:37 - 00:07:42 question, but a really challenging one to answer because I want to know

00:07:42 - 00:07:47 everything. And I find it all really useful in terms of providing insights into
00:07:47 - 00:07:52 different things. So, yes, I'm very keen to find out as much as I can and find
00:07:52 - 00:07:58 most of the data really fascinating. And for me, data and insights is a little bit
00:07:58 - 00:08:05 like putting a jigsaw puzzle together. Every piece actually helps to create that
00:08:05 - 00:08:09 bigger picture. And it's not until you have all of the different parts of the
00:08:09 - 00:08:14 puzzle together that you can actually see the bigger whole. And for me, it's
00:08:14 - 00:08:20 also about layering and working through the relationships between the different
00:08:20 - 00:08:24 datasets. And I think this is where HR can really help in terms of
00:08:24 - 00:08:28 understanding the relationships and why you might actually be seeing the
00:08:28 - 00:08:34 trends that you're seeing. And I guess when I have this, this then prompts me
00:08:34 - 00:08:39 to work out a strategy to address the issues that I'm seeing in the data. In terms
00:08:39 - 00:08:45 of saying that I think some of the most useful data sets that can be provided,
00:08:45 - 00:08:50 the first one would be around your workforce demographics. So these are
00:08:50 - 00:08:54 about understanding, the facts who makes up my workforce, Where am I
00:08:54 - 00:08:59 doing well, on where am I not doing so well? And this helps me to think about
00:08:59 - 00:09:05 strategy and what I need to focus on to ensure the workforce is optimal to
00:09:05 - 00:09:09 achieve business outcomes. So we know a diverse and inclusive workforce is a
00:09:09 - 00:09:14 good one. So I want to know information about my workforce diversity so I
00:09:14 - 00:09:18 can see where I need to make improvements. Then I want information around
00:09:18 - 00:09:24 what the workforce thinks and values. So this is where the people matters data
00:09:24 - 00:09:30 is really, really important to me. I want to know about how I'm tracking in
00:09:30 - 00:09:34 terms of performance management, and this is really important in terms of
00:09:34 - 00:09:40 driving leadership and workforce capability across the various different roles

00:09:40 - 00:09:45 that we have in community corrections. Workplace culture is also really
00:09:45 - 00:09:50 important, and I am able to understand a lot about my workplace culture from
00:09:50 - 00:09:55 the data and the insights that HR can provide, particularly in relation to the
00:09:55 - 00:10:00 data around understanding, grievances, bullying and harassment and worker's
00:10:00 - 00:10:07 compensation claims. Those forms of data are really helpful to me to gain a
00:10:07 - 00:10:11 better understanding of where we're doing well, and where we're not doing so
00:10:11 - 00:10:15 well and where we need to focus on in terms of making improvements. Very
00:10:15 - 00:10:20 comprehensive in terms of when you make decisions, you're drawing on lots
00:10:20 - 00:10:24 of information, not just one source. Absolutely. I think that's the power, is
00:10:24 - 00:10:28 when you triangulate your information and that's what I was talking about in
00:10:28 - 00:10:32 terms of you have your big picture. But then you have your relationships and
00:10:32 - 00:10:36 your layering, and the more information you have that can contribute to that
00:10:36 - 00:10:41 bigger picture, the better. That's great. And I think I'm one of the things that
00:10:41 - 00:10:45 we talked about is that you really, fundamentally believe that by partnering
00:10:45 - 00:10:50 with HR and having regular conversations with them, listening to the insights
00:10:50 - 00:10:54 and stories you avoid flying blind, which is a great quote, by the way, I
00:10:54 - 00:10:58 thought that was terrific. Can you talk us through your strategic workforce
00:10:58 - 00:11:03 planning journey and how you're determining priorities and focus areas for
00:11:03 - 00:11:07 your workforce based on those key evidence that you've talked about and your
00:11:07 - 00:11:14 insights? So I think community corrections is still really in our infancy in
00:11:14 - 00:11:19 strategic workforce planning. But we've come a long way, and I'm really I'm
00:11:19 - 00:11:24 really excited actually about what lies ahead for us in public service. I think
00:11:24 - 00:11:29 strategic workforce planning is really about understanding people and making

00:11:29 - 00:11:35 sure we optimise our people capacity and capability. In community corrections

00:11:35 - 00:11:41 we commenced the strategic workforce planning journey in 2018 with the

00:11:41 - 00:11:46 development of our first, very first strategic workforce plan. So for the first

00:11:46 - 00:11:51 time, because of some smart thinking by our HR business partners, we had

00:11:51 - 00:11:56 data to assist in identifying priorities and focus areas for improvement. A

00:11:56 - 00:12:02 really simple example was that we had an unacceptably high vacancy rate. So

00:12:02 - 00:12:06 we came up with and implemented a range of strategies to address that

00:12:06 - 00:12:11 particular issue. And two years later, that issue has been addressed. Our

00:12:11 - 00:12:16 vacancy rate now is really at an all time low, and that didn't happen by

00:12:16 - 00:12:22 chance. It was really the result of data driven strategies in the area of

00:12:22 - 00:12:27 recruitment and retention. I think this is a really simple example, but a really

00:12:27 - 00:12:33 good example of how we've used data to drive strategy and business

00:12:33 - 00:12:40 improvement. Last week, I convened a forum with our HR business partners

00:12:40 - 00:12:46 and my executive team to review that 2018 Strategic Workforce plan. A bit like

00:12:46 - 00:12:52 you'd conduct a business planning forum. We reviewed our plan. We

00:12:52 - 00:12:57 determined the priorities that we'd achieved. We looked at priorities that we

00:12:57 - 00:13:02 hadn't yet completed, that we wanted to carry over and we also looked at new

00:13:02 - 00:13:07 priorities for the next business year. So this was a discussion that started

00:13:07 - 00:13:11 actually with the presentation on data and People Analytics in terms of how

00:13:11 - 00:13:16 we'd done over the last couple of years. And I think this data and this

00:13:16 - 00:13:21 information was really the fuel that we used for that strategic planning

00:13:21 - 00:13:25 conversation. Without that, we wouldn't have been able to have the depth of

00:13:25 - 00:13:30 the dialogue that we actually had. And this was really it was a joint discussion

00:13:30 - 00:13:35 . It was an exchange of ideas and information between the business and human
00:13:35 - 00:13:42 resources, and for me, this is how you actually have and develop a true
00:13:42 - 00:13:46 partnership in strategic planning and thinking. Just as an example of what
00:13:46 - 00:13:50 came out of that, one of our new goals is to improve workforce diversity
00:13:50 - 00:13:55 because it's an area where we're doing OK, but we're not actually tracking as
00:13:55 - 00:13:59 well as I'd like us to track. Again, very much data driven. And what we've
00:13:59 - 00:14:04 come up with is we want to partner around a three pronged strategy to improve
00:14:04 - 00:14:09 the representation of Aboriginal people, to improve the representation of
00:14:09 - 00:14:14 people with a disability and to achieve greater gender balance in in our agency
00:14:14 - 00:14:20 . And this is such an important area for me and for our executive team that two
00:14:20 - 00:14:25 of my executive members have actually nominated to sponsor this work, in
00:14:25 - 00:14:28 terms of implementing our strategy, that's something that we will partner
00:14:28 - 00:14:33 really heavily with HR. In terms of developing and implementing new
00:14:33 - 00:14:38 approaches, to make some really positive improvements in this area. We will
00:14:38 - 00:14:43 come back together in a year's time and we will reflect on on how we've gone
00:14:43 - 00:14:50 and hopefully we'll see some good results. Sandra do you then regularly get
00:14:50 - 00:14:56 some kind of ongoing report in terms of how the workforce plan is tracking?
00:14:56 - 00:15:01 you started your journey in 2018, 2020 was sort of, you know, two years,
00:15:01 - 00:15:04 perhaps down the track and you're going to get together again in 12 months.
00:15:04 - 00:15:08 Do you have check-in points throughout the 12 months? What do you use to
00:15:08 - 00:15:19 report? Yes, so, historically, Tanya we haven't. I have to say that 2019 we
00:15:19 - 00:15:24 should have revisited our strategic workforce plan that didn't occur and going
00:15:24 - 00:15:31 forward one of the things that we undertook to do is to have regular quarterly

00:15:31 - 00:15:38 check ins with HR and the business, and we will use data to inform how we're
00:15:38 - 00:15:42 tracking and where we're doing well and where we're not doing so well. Then
00:15:42 - 00:15:46 we will look at whether we need to refine any of those particular strategies that
00:15:46 - 00:15:50 we've agreed to. That's a fairly typical process that certainly is used in business
00:15:50 - 00:15:55 planning. I think it's something that will work quite well in terms of strategic
00:15:55 - 00:15:58 workforce planning. Unlike business planning, where you get together with
00:15:58 - 00:16:02 your executive group, this will be the executive group getting together with
00:16:02 - 00:16:07 our HR business partners to jointly look at how we're tracking and what our
00:16:07 - 00:16:12 ideas are. I hope you don't mind me putting you on the spot. You mentioned
00:16:12 - 00:16:17 that 2018 was your your first go at it. Would you do anything differently based
00:16:17 - 00:16:21 on reflecting now and even having had that chance to reflect recently with the
00:16:21 - 00:16:25 team? Would you approach your strategic workforce plan development any
00:16:25 - 00:16:32 differently? I don't think so. I think for me at that time it was really uncharted
00:16:32 - 00:16:39 waters and it was the first time we've ever done it as I mentioned HR had had a
00:16:39 - 00:16:44 bit of a capability uplift in terms of recruiting a particular person who had
00:16:44 - 00:16:48 specific expertise in terms of data and people analytics. I think that that was a
00:16:48 - 00:16:53 very, very wise move. Prior to that, we were flying blind. We were making
00:16:53 - 00:16:58 decisions very much based on anecdote, on what people thought. We actually
00:16:58 - 00:17:01 didn't have any evidence to support the strategies that we were putting in place
00:17:01 - 00:17:06 . I think having the evidence and considering what that meant for our business
00:17:06 - 00:17:11 and then looking at what did we need to do to make improvements, I think was
00:17:11 - 00:17:16 a pretty good approach and I think is something that has served us well. One of
00:17:16 - 00:17:21 the really lovely things about our strategic workforce planning forum was that

00:17:21 - 00:17:26 there were particular things which we'd set out to achieve, which we could say
00:17:26 - 00:17:31 that we had achieved. We knew we'd achieved that because the data and the
00:17:31 - 00:17:36 evidence was telling us that we had, and then we could move on to looking at
00:17:36 - 00:17:42 what did we need to focus on next? that is where we came up with the strategy
00:17:42 - 00:17:46 around workforce diversity is that that was an area where going forward, we
00:17:46 - 00:17:50 need to be more ambitious in terms of our targets. We need to make sure that
00:17:50 - 00:17:54 we focus our efforts as we did with previous things that we achieved over the
00:17:54 - 00:17:59 next 12 months, to see outcomes in those areas. Again just out of interest, in
00:17:59 - 00:18:03 that reflection that you did recently with your team. Did you stop doing
00:18:03 - 00:18:06 anything? Were there any strategies that you, because you mentioned that
00:18:06 - 00:18:11 you've got a stronger focus now on the diversity aspect of the work force? Was
00:18:11 - 00:18:14 there anything that you sort of went? No, that's not important now,
00:18:14 - 00:18:19 contextually it was in 2018 but now it's not any longer. I don't think we have
00:18:19 - 00:18:24 arrived at the place where things aren't important any longer. I think for a lot
00:18:24 - 00:18:28 of our initiatives we will keep a watching brief. That is, what we agreed to is
00:18:28 - 00:18:33 that in terms of the BAU activities around, you know, the vacancy rates and
00:18:33 - 00:18:37 sick leave which we do really well in now, we will keep a watching brief, so it
00:18:37 - 00:18:42 isn't as if we want be getting data on that on a regular basis, we will. But we
00:18:42 - 00:18:46 won't actually have any particular initiatives that we implement to assist us to
00:18:46 - 00:18:51 improve in those areas because the things that we've already done have assisted
00:18:51 - 00:18:54 us to achieve the outcomes that we wanted to achieve. So in terms of our
00:18:54 - 00:18:59 vacancy rates, they're really, they're at record lows and we have achieved that
00:18:59 - 00:19:04 through more effective recruitment and retention practices. So we know what

00:19:04 - 00:19:08 we're doing is working well and we will continue to do those things. But it's
00:19:08 - 00:19:12 not as if we're going to focus our attention in that area. We just keep a
00:19:12 - 00:19:16 watching brief because what you learn in the field that are working is that if
00:19:16 - 00:19:19 you have a long list of things, you won't necessarily get to all of them. And it
00:19:19 - 00:19:25 is really important to just pick a few things where you want to make a dent and
00:19:25 - 00:19:29 to focus on those things until you can see that you're achieving what you want
00:19:29 - 00:19:33 to achieve. Then once you've done that, you move onto the next thing. That
00:19:33 - 00:19:39 seems to be what works most effectively for us. Now, with your quarterly
00:19:39 - 00:19:43 check ins and also in 12 months time, reflecting on how you're going as well.
00:19:43 - 00:19:48 What's the life of the strategic workforce plan? It's five years, so there are
00:19:48 - 00:19:52 particular targets that are set each year for that five year period, and in the
00:19:52 - 00:19:58 latter years the targets are to be confirmed. It's too far away to predict where
00:19:58 - 00:20:02 you want to be, because things are changing all the time, particularly in terms
00:20:02 - 00:20:06 of workforce diversity. It's very important to set stretch targets, and year by
00:20:06 - 00:20:12 year those targets will change. So the plan itself is a five year plan, but like
00:20:12 - 00:20:16 any good plan, it is really important to revisit that on a regular basis. As I said
00:20:16 - 00:20:22 , ideally, we should have revisited that in 2019. We have revisited that this
00:20:22 - 00:20:26 year, and it's my my plan to make sure that we do that on a regular basis
00:20:26 - 00:20:31 because it is such an important part of the business. On that theme, we are
00:20:31 - 00:20:35 living through a fairly serious pandemic at the moment, and I guess we're all
00:20:35 - 00:20:39 watching how it's going to play out and undoubtedly the impacts have been
00:20:39 - 00:20:44 very significant on your workforce, like most others. What's been some key
00:20:44 - 00:20:49 experience that you can share about how you utilise stories to engage a

00:20:49 - 00:20:53 workforce and how HR have partnered with you in that to provide you data and
00:20:53 - 00:20:59 information. I think I'd like to start that by saying that COVID-19 has had a
00:20:59 - 00:21:04 really profound impact on community corrections, and we're not unique in that
00:21:04 - 00:21:08 space. It has had a profound impact on our workforce. To be frank, I couldn't
00:21:08 - 00:21:13 be prouder of how our people have adapted and risen to the challenges that
00:21:13 - 00:21:18 COVID-19 has presented, its been truly phenomenal. I'm going to use one
00:21:18 - 00:21:23 example of how we've partnered with HR and how we couldn't have done what
00:21:23 - 00:21:27 we, I couldn't have done what I did without HR and how it resulted in a really
00:21:27 - 00:21:33 positive improvement for our workforce. That is when HR ran an organisation
00:21:33 - 00:21:39 wide survey in lieu of the people matters survey being conducted this year. So
00:21:39 - 00:21:45 that survey was organised and delivered by Human Resources within DCJ, and
00:21:45 - 00:21:50 that survey and the results, the data that was elicited was simply brilliant in
00:21:50 - 00:21:57 helping to tell a story, and that we would value what they had to say and listen
00:21:57 - 00:22:01 to it. I have to say they're absolutely right. We did well on many other
00:22:01 - 00:22:05 elements of the feedback and so where people thought we had great working
00:22:05 - 00:22:10 flexibility and for many of them, their productivity had actually improved.
00:22:10 - 00:22:14 They trusted the decision making of their leaders and thought we were doing a
00:22:14 - 00:22:19 good job in communicating and engaging with, in a time of great uncertainty
00:22:19 - 00:22:25 and change. So I use this data to tell stories about our achievements all the
00:22:25 - 00:22:32 time. If HR hadn't undertaken this exercise and provided this data I wouldn't
00:22:32 - 00:22:38 be telling data driven stories. I would be telling stories based on anecdote. I
00:22:38 - 00:22:43 think you know, many of the changes that we've made will absolutely be
00:22:43 - 00:22:47 sustainable into the future. We will never go back to doing business as we used

00:22:47 - 00:22:53 to. It will be about moving forward to a new normal, and I'm not sure exactly
00:22:53 - 00:22:57 what that new normal is going to look like, But I know that HR will be an
00:22:57 - 00:23:03 integral part of this journey and they will be walking with us side by side to
00:23:03 - 00:23:08 assist in making those critical decisions and telling stories to our people along
00:23:08 - 00:23:12 the way. I use that, it's a simple example, but I think it really helps to
00:23:12 - 00:23:19 understand the power of data. I do use that in all of my engagement sessions
00:23:19 - 00:23:24 with staff across community corrections in terms of reflecting back to them,
00:23:24 - 00:23:29 what they have said to me and what we are doing as a result of that feedback
00:23:29 - 00:23:35 and that very much helps me to look at the areas that I need to focus on, the
00:23:35 - 00:23:40 staff in the future. Yeah, that's that's great. I think you mentioned, though,
00:23:40 - 00:23:45 that you won't be going back to how it was. So you mentioned earlier. You've
00:23:45 - 00:23:52 got 1600 staff and obviously they all work across NSW remotely. What about
00:23:52 - 00:23:56 the different work practices that your workforce has actually had to live through
00:23:56 - 00:24:00 ? Are there things that you think that they'll be doing in the way they're
00:24:00 - 00:24:06 working that will be sustainable into the future? For me I think about it in in
00:24:06 - 00:24:10 three ways. I think about service delivery, I think about workforce and
00:24:10 - 00:24:16 workplace. So in terms of service delivery, we have really revolutionised how
00:24:16 - 00:24:21 we deliver services to the community. So there is a lot more that happens in
00:24:21 - 00:24:25 the virtual space. So once upon a time, individuals would need to come into
00:24:25 - 00:24:29 the office to receive an intervention in a group or individually face to face with
00:24:29 - 00:24:36 an officer. We are doing a lot more of that now via the phone and via face to
00:24:36 - 00:24:42 face by a virtual means, and that is really for some individuals, what I'm
00:24:42 - 00:24:46 hearing is, that they are more receptive to intervention approaches when they're

00:24:46 - 00:24:51 not actually face to face with someone. Which is really counterintuitive,
00:24:51 - 00:24:54 because I would have thought the reverse. But we're not seeing that. We're
00:24:54 - 00:24:57 actually seeing that some people are actually far more receptive and far more
00:24:57 - 00:25:03 engaged. So I think absolutely delivering services in different ways will
00:25:03 - 00:25:07 absolutely be something that we continue to do in the future and delivering
00:25:07 - 00:25:13 services by virtual means. Having people engaged in group activities in their
00:25:13 - 00:25:17 own homes is something that we'll be doing much more of from a service
00:25:17 - 00:25:21 delivery perspective. From a workforce perspective, one of the things that we
00:25:21 - 00:25:26 have had to implement across the board, like many other government agencies
00:25:26 - 00:25:31 is having more of our staff working from home. Again, that is one of the
00:25:31 - 00:25:37 things that we will continue to do to ensure that we maximise flexibility for our
00:25:37 - 00:25:42 workforce. We have seen that we can do that. We can do quite effectively with
00:25:42 - 00:25:47 good governance and making sure that we have accountability mechanisms in
00:25:47 - 00:25:50 place. We can have a workforce that works from home. Community
00:25:50 - 00:25:55 corrections, though, does deliver essential services to the community. So that
00:25:55 - 00:25:59 does mean we need to have client facing services. So we do need to have
00:25:59 - 00:26:05 people located in an office to receive members of the community to provide
00:26:05 - 00:26:10 services to them. So that will never not exist. We will always need to have the
00:26:10 - 00:26:15 ability and the environments to provide those services, but certainly in terms
00:26:15 - 00:26:20 of how our workforce, where they work from and how they do their business,
00:26:20 - 00:26:24 we have much greater flexibility in that space. And community corrections
00:26:24 - 00:26:27 was really fortunate because prior to COVID-19, we had actually been
00:26:27 - 00:26:32 implementing our workforce modernisation program over the prior two years.

00:26:32 - 00:26:36 So we had already had huge levels of mobility in terms of how our people
00:26:36 - 00:26:41 could work certainly in all of our regional locations, which was fantastic and
00:26:41 - 00:26:45 we'd already commenced workplace modernisation in terms of updating our
00:26:45 - 00:26:49 working environments to be more aligned and more fit for purpose in terms of
00:26:49 - 00:26:55 our business. So activity based working and creating much nicer workspaces
00:26:55 - 00:26:59 for our people. So we'd already been on that journey for two years prior to
00:26:59 - 00:27:03 COVID-19. So we were positioned really, really well when we had to
00:27:03 - 00:27:07 implement our COVID-19 response plan. So we were well positioned. The
00:27:07 - 00:27:12 third area is workplace. I think we will see changes in terms of our workplace
00:27:12 - 00:27:17 design and how we work together with other government agencies and what
00:27:17 - 00:27:22 our workplaces will need to look like because we will still need to have client
00:27:22 - 00:27:26 facing capacity. In terms of coming together, we can absolutely share
00:27:26 - 00:27:33 workspaces with other agencies. That I think is a real opportunity for us. A
00:27:33 - 00:27:37 strategic priority for the NSW government is to implement best practice
00:27:37 - 00:27:42 productivity and digital capability in the NSW public sector and drive public
00:27:42 - 00:27:47 sector diversity by 2025. I'm curious. You've talked about your workforce
00:27:47 - 00:27:52 modernisation and just the different changes that you're making. As a strategy,
00:27:52 - 00:27:56 though, as a broader NSW government, what's your thoughts on what would
00:27:56 - 00:28:01 be the most useful support that your HR business partners can provide yourself
00:28:01 - 00:28:07 and teams to accomplish this level of change? This is a tough question, to
00:28:07 - 00:28:13 answer, and I think my ask is quite significant. I think it's really important. I
00:28:13 - 00:28:18 think where the HR can really contribute is by forecasting and undertaking
00:28:18 - 00:28:22 predictive work around what the digital and social challenges will be for the

00:28:22 - 00:28:28 workforce and for the communities that we serve. I don't think anybody does
00:28:28 - 00:28:33 this very well at the moment. So it's a real thinking piece. It's a really creative
00:28:33 - 00:28:38 thinking piece, which does involve quite a high level of inductive reasoning.
00:28:38 - 00:28:42 So there's some information that you know, but there's a lot of information that
00:28:42 - 00:28:48 you don't. So it's the predictive piece. Some agencies in other jurisdictions,
00:28:48 - 00:28:50 they call it environmental scanning, so they're not looking at what is
00:28:50 - 00:28:54 happening here, and now they're looking what is happening here now, But
00:28:54 - 00:28:57 they're looking at that from the perspective of what does that mean for the
00:28:57 - 00:29:02 future and how do I look at what is happening here and now and apply that to
00:29:02 - 00:29:06 the future and develop strategies now that are going to serve me well for the
00:29:06 - 00:29:11 next 5 to 10 years. Now, it's not something that I fully thought through either.
00:29:11 - 00:29:15 It's something that I would like to put out there as a challenge for our HR
00:29:15 - 00:29:19 business partners to really think through because I think that's an area where
00:29:19 - 00:29:24 they could really add significant value, particularly in terms of thinking about
00:29:24 - 00:29:27 strategic planning into the future. So not for the next 3 to 5 years, but for the
00:29:27 - 00:29:32 next 5 to 10 years, because I think our workforce needs are going to be very
00:29:32 - 00:29:37 different in the next 3 to 5 years, and I think that COVID-19 has actually
00:29:37 - 00:29:42 resulted in massive disruption in social and digital capability, and I think that
00:29:42 - 00:29:48 that is just going to continue. I also think we need HR to assist in providing
00:29:48 - 00:29:54 insights about workforce impacts in understanding our business and our
00:29:54 - 00:29:59 workforce needs into the future. I think COVID-19 really does showcase what
00:29:59 - 00:30:06 is possible because we had to adapt and pivot if you like, like we've never had
00:30:06 - 00:30:10 to before and it was extraordinary, and the pace at which we did that was

00:30:10 - 00:30:16 extraordinary. I think that we will just continue to need to do that into the
00:30:16 - 00:30:23 future. I think that's where HR can really add value. A bit earlier to that part of
00:30:23 - 00:30:27 your change that you've made to your workforce plan is around increasing your
00:30:27 - 00:30:32 focus than in the diversity space around the indigenous to disabled and gender
00:30:32 - 00:30:36 diversity. Have you got any specific examples of the kinds of activities that
00:30:36 - 00:30:42 you're actually going to be implementing? So we commence the discussion
00:30:42 - 00:30:49 with HR at our Strategic Workforce Planning Forum in relation to some of the
00:30:49 - 00:30:53 things that we need to think about and from my perspective, well, I don't have
00:30:53 - 00:30:59 firm ideas on the specific strategies. I do know that we are going to need to
00:30:59 - 00:31:03 focus on how we attract people from those groups because I think we really
00:31:03 - 00:31:09 struggle in those areas and anecdotally, I do hear stories that we make it hard.
00:31:09 - 00:31:14 We make it hard for people, for Aboriginal people, for people with disability,
00:31:14 - 00:31:18 and to apply for our jobs and to be competitive, and we really need to be
00:31:18 - 00:31:25 addressing that. We need to not make it so difficult. It's around recruitment and
00:31:25 - 00:31:30 retention in terms of once we do have people in our organisation who do come
00:31:30 - 00:31:35 from different backgrounds, how do we make sure that we provide a working
00:31:35 - 00:31:41 environment that enables them to stay with us and not just stay with us, but
00:31:41 - 00:31:46 also to progress in the organisation as well? Because in terms of general
00:31:46 - 00:31:50 representation, Aboriginal people, people with a disability, representation is
00:31:50 - 00:31:56 quite low, but in leadership positions, the representation is even lower. So we
00:31:56 - 00:32:00 need to think about how we attract people and then how do we retain them?
00:32:00 - 00:32:04 And how do we ensure that we make leadership roles accessible to them?,
00:32:04 - 00:32:08 They were the general areas that we spoke about. In terms of the specifics, that

00:32:08 - 00:32:12 will actually form part of our strategy again, because I think there are some
00:32:12 - 00:32:16 things that we can do at an agency level. But they will also need to be specific
00:32:16 - 00:32:22 initiatives that we need to look at from a local perspective as well. So the
00:32:22 - 00:32:27 strategies that we might employ in Sydney metropolitan Sydney might be a bit
00:32:27 - 00:32:32 different to the strategies that we employ in Courke or in Broken Hill or in
00:32:32 - 00:32:38 Tamworth or in Albury in terms of ensuring that we have good representation
00:32:38 - 00:32:43 of people from diverse backgrounds who are reflective of the communities that
00:32:43 - 00:32:47 we work in within. Great. Thank you. Thanks for sharing that with us. We've
00:32:47 - 00:32:52 asked all of our folks that we've talked to in those podcasts so far around have
00:32:52 - 00:32:56 you remain current in terms of keeping abreast of an awareness of external
00:32:56 - 00:33:03 trends? Do you have any books or networks or articles that you read that help
00:33:03 - 00:33:09 inform you? Look, I'd like to say that I do, but I don't have any books as such
00:33:09 - 00:33:15 . I sort of keep up to date. I mean, I read reports like State of the Sector, that's
00:33:15 - 00:33:19 always really helpful. I do general scanning when an issue comes up that I
00:33:19 - 00:33:25 need to know more about, I also maintain my knowledge about trends and
00:33:25 - 00:33:29 developments in offender management and crime through reputable sources.
00:33:29 - 00:33:34 Changes in these particular areas they really impact on the type and capability
00:33:34 - 00:33:39 of workforce that I need. So for example, do I need more casual workers. Do
00:33:39 - 00:33:44 I need more volunteers and what should the profile of the workforce be based
00:33:44 - 00:33:50 on what works to reduce re offending? So, for example, there's quite a bit of
00:33:50 - 00:33:54 information now coming out about the importance and the value of circle
00:33:54 - 00:33:59 sentencing in terms of reducing re offending. And that involves elders,
00:33:59 - 00:34:03 Aboriginal elders from communities coming together with the judiciary to

00:34:03 - 00:34:07 make decisions around appropriate sentencing for offenders who are from
00:34:07 - 00:34:11 Aboriginal background. So that affects the makeup of my workforce. That's a
00:34:11 - 00:34:16 very simple little example. But it goes to what I'm talking about, and I need to
00:34:16 - 00:34:20 have an understanding about what is happening in my business because that
00:34:20 - 00:34:23 then has a knock on effect in terms of what sort of workforce do I need to
00:34:23 - 00:34:28 deliver on my business outcomes. And to be honest, I would actually like to
00:34:28 - 00:34:32 do a lot more in terms of maintaining my knowledge and understanding in this
00:34:32 - 00:34:35 area, because I think it's a really fascinating space. But again, I put the
00:34:35 - 00:34:41 challenge back to my HR partners in terms of what could they do to assist me
00:34:41 - 00:34:45 as being their business partner in terms of keeping up to date and abreast of
00:34:45 - 00:34:50 what I need to be knowledgeable about in this area to make sure that I have the
00:34:50 - 00:34:55 best possible workforce that I can have to deliver on my business outcomes.
00:34:55 - 00:34:59 It's a great challenge, and I'm sure our listeners will be providing you with lots
00:34:59 - 00:35:06 of insight. My final question is always around, if you could give our listeners
00:35:06 - 00:35:11 one key take away for imparting insights and other story telling to compel
00:35:11 - 00:35:17 action, what would it be? I always come back to partnerships. Partnerships is
00:35:17 - 00:35:22 really important for me. You know, my advice, to HR practitioners is
00:35:22 - 00:35:26 understand your business partner. Know what makes them tick and know
00:35:26 - 00:35:31 what's important to them. I think that would be my one take away message and
00:35:31 - 00:35:35 see yourself as invested in the journey with them, because I think that certainly
00:35:35 - 00:35:41 makes for a more fulfilling workplace. Terrific. Thank you. And thank you so
00:35:41 - 00:35:45 much. Sandra. I'm sure our listeners will agree with you. Very insightful.
00:35:45 - 00:35:49 Lots of interesting takeaways too and things to consider Sandra, thank you

00:35:49 - 00:35:55 very much for your time today. Thanks. Sandra and Tanya, great to hear
00:35:55 - 00:35:58 about the possibilities that are unfolding for community corrections through the
00:35:58 - 00:36:03 constant exchange of ideas and information between the business and HR. I
00:36:03 - 00:36:06 encourage our listeners to read the highlight notes and think about the key
00:36:06 - 00:36:10 messages from your own perspective on what you can do differently as a result
00:36:10 - 00:36:14 of listening to Sandra's podcast today. See you next week.