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**Strategic Human Resource Management:
Matching the reality to the rhetoric in
the Australian Public Service**

**Master of Public Administration
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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on three main themes. Firstly, what is Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the rhetoric surrounding it? Secondly, does the reality match the rhetoric? Thirdly, is the model that has been adopted by the private sector an appropriate model for the Australian public sector to be using?

HR has been criticised for being an administrative function that is regulatory and compliance based, adding little value to an organisation. SHRM provides a strategic focus, involving the partnering of HR and line areas to provide value added people services. SHRM has been described by some theorists (Ulrich, Rothwell et al) as the only way of the future for the HR function.

The model/s of SHRM that have been adopted by the private sector are now being promoted by the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission as the way forward for HR in the Australian Public Service.

This paper discusses the appropriateness of the SHRM model/s for the public sector by examining what is happening in the HR area in three Commonwealth Government departments: Health and Aged Care, Transport and Regional Services and Family and Community Services. It examines the dilemmas for the HR functions as they try to move to an SHRM approach in these organisations, and suggests models that are appropriate to the public sector context.

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