



CASE STUDY

Department of Lands and Planning (NT)

In this case, risk leadership thinking and tools were used to challenge silos of work and to support a more positive, adaptive culture across the whole organisation. This was a highly effective change strategy, because risk leadership conversations helped decision makers to understand how their own behaviours could be sources of risk to success.

Department profile

The Department of Lands and Planning (DLP) was created in 2009, to facilitate sustainable land and transport development in the "Top End" of Australia. It established major offices in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs and provided services to many remote communities.

At its peak, the DLP had several hundred staff in multiple locations, working on Government policy, lands strategy, lands management, and transport planning and client services.

The DLP had an important role in both supporting and regulating infrastructure initiatives critical to the future of the Territory - for example, the multi-billion dollar INPEX Gas Development Project.

Business situation

By 2010 DLP had settled in to its role and had developed long-term goals and strategies. Unfortunately much of its time was taken

managing high profile legacy land management issues. Innovation and change in management thinking, practices and processes were also blocked by the limitations of legacy information systems and associated processes.

Project background

The CEO knew that he needed to move the work being done by the DLP to be more proactive and forward looking in order to create better value for the community and for the Government. In particular, he wanted to change risk-averse leadership behaviours at all levels to be more positive, performance oriented and accountable. He saw a strong link between leadership culture, behaviours and business systems and long-term strategic risks to DLP's performance and sustainability.

Solution

Phase 1

Over 12 months, RiskIQ engaged with the DLP Executive Team in particular and with leaders one level down, to:

- conduct a Systemic Risk Analysis across the Department, to reveal the key systemic drivers of risk and performance;
- provide an extended risk leadership education program, and to reframe ideas about risk, uncertainty and the role of leaders;
- coach senior leaders in linking risk leadership concepts and tools to their core work.

Phase 2

The second part of the approach was to reshape the DLP approach to governance, audit and risk to reflect systems thinking principles. This made their risk governance systems clearer and simpler and yet more performance oriented and demanding. At the same time, ongoing risk and problem solving support was provided to specific areas of the business - for example to those involved in the INPEX project.

BENEFITS

The changes in the language and behaviours of leaders were surprisingly quick in many cases, although some leaders struggled with the need to lift their own performance and to be more accountable for the quality of behaviours and decisions.

More notably, the number of outstanding legacy issues dropped dramatically over a period of about 2 years, enabling DLP to be much more proactive in its strategies and plans. The rate of "bottom up" innovation and change also rose strongly and became a normal part of business, and specific internal business systems became more efficient.

The real, lasting change was that DLP leaders and staff had reframed their ideas of leadership and risk, to better see the link between the two and to better understand the constant requirement for every decision to benefit the whole business, not just an isolated function or project.



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