

Public Guardian – Member Questions from Ernst & Young Project

Thank you to the members who attended the Public Guardian meeting in August. In relation to questions members raised about the Ernst & Young Project, the PSA has contacted the CEO. The CEO's response to member questions are in italics. Member feedback to the responses is welcomed.

The primary concern is the time commitment that will be required to appropriately input this data; EY have suggested it will take 10 minutes per day, however members believe this will take 10 minutes per task which is a substantial increase to workload.

Ernst & Young (EY) were chosen to assist with the Resource Capacity Analysis Project as they have previously worked with several Government and private sector agencies to implement the same system. EY also have a technology solution to log and track tasks which will allow us to gather more accurate data by rolling out the software to a larger number of people. As the software platform being used, EmpowerIQ, records the amount of time it takes for someone to log each task, the system can accurately report the total time spent logging tasks. Because of this EY are confident that the average time taken each day to log tasks is around 10 minutes per day. This is based off their previous experiences implementing EmpowerIQ in other organisations.

We will make sure that staff have sufficient time to complete this activity, along with their regular work so they won't have to complete additional hours. If anyone finds that the time it takes to record the activities is too arduous, then managers and staff will work together to reprioritise work to accommodate the data recording. EY have designed EmpowerIQ to make logging a task as quick as possible and have advised that if it is consistently taking staff longer than expected to log tasks then EmpowerIQ can be reconfigured to ensure that the time taken to log tasks is around 10 minutes per day.

There has been a lack of adequate consultation regarding the development of the tool that is being used to collect data, what data is being collected and how it is going to be used.

As you'd be aware the Resource Capacity Analysis project was included in the People & Culture Plan because of consultation with staff. During this project subject matter experts (SMEs) were consulted on the design/configuration of EmpowerIQ. This included a number of sessions where EY worked with our SMEs to understand and map, confirm, and test processes to ensure they were properly reflected in the system. Further consultation on the project occurred through a number of briefing sessions with managers and staff, which included training and Q&A sessions. Additionally, a division wide update was provided to all Public Guardian staff on 28 July informing them of the project and what was involved. An all staff communication was also sent out via the intranet on 6 August and again on 7 August as a part of the Friday Round-up.

The data being collected through the system includes:



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- *The name of the task/break/interruption.*
- *The start and end time of the task.*
- *Who has undertaken the task.*
- *Timestamps relating to logging tasks.*
- *A unique task ID which allows non-linear tasks to be joined together.*
- *Whether parts of the task needed to be redone.*

The data analysis will be looking at the average time taken to complete processes and tasks. This will allow us to capture any variance in the same task (i.e. where a specific task might be more complex and therefore take longer than the last) and minimise distortions due to breaks, interruptions, etc. The data will also be used to complete a root cause analysis to help identify possible improvements to processes or technology.

Once NSW TG confirmed that we would be engaging EY to assist with this initiative, the project group started to work with managers in both the Public Guardian and Financial Performance & Investments divisions to ensure the tasks and processes that were being included accurately reflected the work completed by staff. Managers for both divisions participated in detailed workshops to ensure the processes and tasks being set up by EY are able to best capture the work being done in teams. By being as accurate as we can with tracking tasks and processes, NSW TG will be able to better understand the type of work being done, how long it is taking and how we can best use our current resources to fill gaps.

There has been inadequate training and notice given about the project.

On 28 July 2020 communication to the Public Guardian division commenced with information provided about the project including the objectives of the initiative, what would be involved and who would be participating. This was followed with an all staff intranet announcement on 6 August, followed by the initiative being the lead article in the Friday Round-up email that is sent to all staff (7 August).

Staff participating in the project have been provided with a one-hour session which included a briefing, training and Q&A. Staff have also been provided with training resources and an FAQ to refer to. We are also currently in the middle of testing EmpowerIQs configuration with power users prior to going live with the system. The power users group is made up of staff who were involved in assisting to configure EmpowerIQ, and by providing these staff with early access they will be able to help support other staff with questions.

The team from EY remain on hand for any further training needs and I am happy to receive any further feedback that might improve the training provided.



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Terms such as a “inefficiencies” are quite concerning for members, who are already overworked and overwhelmed.

As you'd be aware staff have reported concerns with workloads and inefficient processes/technologies for some time. However, to make meaningful improvements in the right places we need to understand exactly where efficiencies can be made. One of the project aims is to identify where we can make improvements and efficiencies to processes and technology. By making improvements through more efficient processes and technologies we hope to be able to better support staff and reduce work-related stress levels.

There is a lack of practice guidelines for this data collection which will result in a potential lack of consistency and integrity of data.

The EY team has spent considerable time meeting with senior leaders and SMEs (power users) to map the processes used in each area. This means that the options available when logging a task in EmpowerIQ should reflect the processes followed. The current phase of testing aims to find any issues with the configuration and ensure clarity, data consistency and integrity. As managers from each team were involved in the process mapping they will be available to support staff and ensure consistency. The training resources from EY also include definitions for the different options/terminology used in EmpowerIQ and will act as a guide for staff so that we can have tasks and processes tracked as consistently as possible.

There has been no information about how this data will be used, particularly in terms of performance management. As such, data should be de-identified.

All information provided to staff has very clearly specified that the data will not be used for performance management. As the focus of the project is on processes, volumes of work and the time taken to complete tasks, EY will be providing NSW TG with dashboards that show de-identified data or aggregate data outlining average times to complete tasks.

There is a perceived misunderstanding of the Public Guardian role, Guardianship is not a linear process and is more qualitative than quantitative.

It is certainly acknowledged that the work done by guardians, as well as other parts of NSW TG, is qualitative and this project looks to measure how long it takes for staff to complete the qualitative aspects of their role. EmpowerIQ includes a Unique ID field that allows staff to connect non-linear tasks together. This will allow us to view the total amount of time taken to complete a process from start to end, even when different steps are completed over a period of time.



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To make improvements that have a meaningful impact on staff workloads and well-being, we need to understand in detail the volume of work and how long takes to complete it. Without a deep understanding of this, NSW TG will not be able to identify the areas, tasks and processes we need to work on. Therefore, I would ask that the PSA support this initiative to help improve workloads for its members and provide better services to the NSW public.

I'd like to highlight that an alternative method for an analysis like this is to shadow staff throughout the day and manually record tasks and times. This is extremely time intensive, would mean we could only include a handful of staff, and would require people to have someone with them throughout the work day. One of the reasons we have chosen to work with EY on this project was due to their software platform, EmpowerIQ. By using EmpowerIQ we've placed trust in our staff and empowered them to log tasks accurately without the need to be shadowed.

If you have any further questions or concerns about the project, I would be happy to discuss them. Alternatively, if you'd like a demonstration of EmpowerIQ I would be happy to arrange one with the EY team for yourself and the delegates of your choice.

Your PSA staff

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26 August 2020

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