

PERFORMANCE ARCHITECT

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AFFORD TO
IGNORE THIS!



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By Andrew Simon

“Getting a better understanding of the US, its highly complex and contested system of government and how domestic issues can have a ripple effect on Australia...”

No matter what you think of the US, you can't ignore it if you are a senior leader in the public sector.

The US, what happens within its system of government and its national fiscal and economic policies has a material impact on Australia. The US is obviously a critical part of Australia's authorising environment given the alliance between the two nations, but its role in this environment is much more far reaching than traditional defence and security realms. Indeed, as we have seen with the GFC and most recently with the 'Fiscal Cliff' crisis, what happens domestically in the US has an impact on Australia as it does with much of the world. From nervous stock markets, upward pressures on the Australian dollar, reluctant private sector investment and depressed demand, the impact of what happens in the US is far reaching, multifaceted and potentially enduring. In such a context, leading in Australian public sector environments becomes even more challenging.

The US looms large in our national consciousness. We tend to feel that we know the US. Yet the US continues to surprise us! Their system of government and public policy environment is highly complicated and is very different to our system here in Australia despite our shared democratic ideals and some similar democratic traditions. Getting a better understanding of the US, its highly complex and contested system of government and how domestic issues can have a ripple effect on Australia, is one of several objectives of the Global Leadership Practices (GLP) Program USA, that Yellow Edge conducts in partnership with the Centre for Australia and New Zealand Studies at Georgetown University, in Washington DC.

This immersive in-country 6 day program now in its second year, provides senior Australian public service leaders with in depth and privileged insight into the US system of government, how Congress works, its tradition of issue based voting (as opposed to voting along party lines), its competitive relationship with the White House, economic issues (Australian participants in the program were exposed to the Fiscal Cliff scenario some 8 months ago!), federal budget and legislative processes, public policy development processes, the US Federal Civil Service and the highly intricate, high stakes business of professional lobbying. The program also provides political briefings from the prestigious Brookings Institute and American perspectives on China.

Participants get to engage in round table discussions with top US SES Officers on matters of common leadership interest and are exposed to the latest thinking on innovation policy, practice and innovation ecosystems by briefings from and visits to innovation think tanks and private sector innovation hubs.