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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910141793403321 |
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| Titolo | The Centrelink experiment : innovation in service delivery // John Halligan with Jules Wills |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Canberra, Australian Capital Territory : , : Australian National University E Press, , 2008 |
| ISBN | 1-921536-42-X |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (xvi, 218 pages) : illustrations (some colour) |
| Collana | Open Access e-Books Knowledge Unlatched ANZSOG series |
| Disciplina | 352.430994 |
| Soggetti | Administrative agencies - Australia Public welfare administration - Australia Administrative agencies Public welfare administration Australia |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references. |
| Nota di contenuto | Introduction: Centrelink as a field of study -- 1. Designing a delivery agency -- 2. Centrelink's development -- 3. Strategies and management structure -- 4. Leading and managing change -- 5. Reinventing service delivery -- 6. Governance -- 7. Relationships with client departments -- 8. Entrepreneurship and challenging boundaries -- 9. Lessons from Centrelink's formative years |
| Sommario/riassunto | "Centrelink was established in 1997 as part of the Howard government's bold experiment in re-framing social policy and re-shaping service delivery. Centrelink was the embodiment of a key tenet of the Howard vision for public service: a specialised service delivery 'provider' agency separated from the policy functions of the 'purchaser'. Carved out of a monolithic Department of Social Security, Centrelink was established along 'business lines' operating 320 service centres and delivering payments to 10 million Australians. Although enjoying 'monopoly provider' status, the organisation was required to deliver services to many different clients on behalf of its 'purchasing |

departments' (up to 25 in total) under the terms of quasi-contractual service agreements. It was meant to demonstrate a greater level of both transparency and accountability for the administration of payments amounting to over \$60 billion of Commonwealth expenditure. For many years there was a real 'buzz' around the Centrelink experiment and staff and clients were generally enthusiastic about the transformation. However, after around eight years, the experiment was reined in and Centrelink was placed under closer ministerial direction and under a new managing department. The experiment continues, but its trajectory reflects the different pressures impacting on such dedicated 'services delivery agencies'."--Publisher's description.
