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Part I Introduction -- Chapter 1 Public Administration and the Reform Agenda -- Chapter 2 Contemporary Management Ideas and Public Sector Reforms across Westminster Polities -- Part II The Macro Level - Policy Contexts and Environments -- Chapter 3 The Environments in which Departmental Secretaries Construct the Craft of Public Administration -- Chapter 4 The Impact of Contemporary Management Ideas: Their Influence on Public Administration -- Part III Exploring the Everyday Work Life of the Most Senior Public Servants -- Chapter 5 Departmental Secretaries: The Public Actors who Construct the Craft of Public Administration -- Chapter 6 Roles, Responsibilities and Boundary Riding -- Part IV Discussion, Implications and Conclusions -- Chapter 7 Discussion, Conceptual Model, Contributions and Implications -- Chapter 8 Conclusions.

**Sommario/riassunto**

"This is an important and timely assessment of how senior public servants ply their craft, greatly enriched by the manner in which it incorporates the views of departmental secretaries themselves and captures their innate scepticism of managerialism. One is left agreeing that good public administration is a cornerstone of democratic governance but that its application requires much more than textbook knowledge." - Peter Shergold, Chancellor, Western Sydney University, Australia "This book is among the best empirical analyses of Australian departmental secretaries *in situ* to date." - John Wanna, Emeritus Professor, Australian National University and Griffith University, Australia "Christine Shearer's book is an important contribution to understanding the 'purple zone' between politics and administration. The book's strength comes from presenting the perspective of those directly involved, current and former Australian departmental secretaries." - Andrew Podger, Honorary Professor of Public Policy, Australian National University, Australia "Christine Shearer's terrific exploration of trends in contemporary public administration is essential reading for anyone wanting to make sense of how things work in government. Her clear-eyed study, drawing on interviews with senior public servants, confirms that grand reform ideas must work through complex - often invisible - gear shifts before the rubber meets the road. This book is a treasure trove of insights." - Michael Mintrom, Professor of Public Policy and Director of Better Governance and Policy, Monash University, Australia. This book draws on empirical research to provide unique insight into the craft of public administration of the most senior echelons of the Australian Public Service (APS). An analysis is offered of public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas on which they were based, from the 1980s across Westminster polities. This book addresses how Departmental Secretaries construct their craft today amid such reforms, concluding with a conceptual model of the craft of public administration and implications for theory and practice. Christine Shearer is an Executive Director within the Australian Tax Office.