

(the envoy)

Dr Peter Shergold

Foundation professor, Centre for Social Impact

After 20 years as a senior political mandarin in Canberra – latterly as secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet – Peter Shergold was entitled to a quiet retirement. Instead, he has embarked on a quest to overhaul the way government, business and the not-for-profit sector work together. “I’m not a retiring sort,” says Shergold, 62.

In February 2008, he became foundation professor at the Centre for Social Impact. The centre, a partnership between UNSW and three other universities, aims to enhance the work of the “third sector” and foster social responsibility within the corporate world. “The not-for-profit sector is becoming increasingly important in delivering services,” he says. “But its relationship with government is generally poor.”

Shergold is widely acknowledged to have given the centre a strong public profile in 2009, winning support at the highest levels of government and business. “Peter has a calm certainty about him,” says panellist Richard Aedy. “Under his leadership the centre is starting to make a real impact.” Shergold’s aim is to foster “corporate social responsibility”. “We’re a centre for social impact, not just for the study of social impact,” he says. “That’s an important difference.”