

Natalia Southern

curriculum vitae



Career Summary

Natalia Southern is an experienced senior executive and economist with more than 25 years' experience working in a range of Commonwealth and State public policy, regulatory and oversight bodies. She has extensive experience in undertaking economic analysis, stakeholder engagement and delivering clear and persuasive reports and complex projects across a broad range of issues and sectors.

In her most recent senior executive role, Natalia was the Deputy Secretary, Energy and Resources (and subsequently Resources) in the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. She was responsible for overseeing the policy and legislative program, and the earth resources regulator. She advised the Minister for Resources and liaised with senior bureaucrats across the public service. She represented Victoria at the COAG Energy Council Senior Committee of Officials.

Natalia has extensive experience in economic regulation. She held several senior roles at the Victorian Essential Services Commission overseeing advice and reports on highly complex economic regulatory issues in infrastructure industries and government businesses – predominantly across energy, water and transport. She coordinated the 2001-05 Victorian Electricity Distribution Price Review and the 2003 Victorian Gas Distribution Price Review. She also established the foundation frameworks for independent economic regulation of the Victorian water sector and led the state's first ever independent review of water pricing and setting of regulatory asset values.

Natalia was the Assistant Auditor General, Performance Audit at the Victorian Auditor-General's Office successfully managing the largest performance audit program across all States and Territories. She advised the Auditor-General on strategic audit priorities and oversaw more than 100 performance audits to provide assurance and drive improvement across the Victorian public sector with evidence based analysis and reports. She regularly briefed the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and Members of Parliament.

Natalia commenced her career at the Industry Commission and later Productivity Commission, where she developed strong analytical and advisory skills working on a range of inquiries and research projects. She has held senior positions including at the National Competition Council and Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance.

As a consultant, Natalia has provided advice to both government and private sector clients in relation to policy and regulatory matters particularly in the energy, water and transport sectors. She has advised and supported several inquiries including in relation to competition and regulation issues associated with the Port of Melbourne lease and a strategic review of the Goulburn Murray Water.

She is currently Director, Economic and Financial Consulting of FTI Consulting.

Education and Credentials

Australian Institute of Company Directors Course

Master of Public Policy, University of Melbourne

Bachelor of Business (Honours), Major in Economics and Finance, Curtin University

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Detailed experience

May 2018 - current

Director, Economic & Financial Consulting

FTI Consulting

Responsible for preparing analysis, advice and reports for clients on a range of economic and financial matters, including public policy and regulation.

January 2018 - current

Consulting

Private consulting

Responsible for preparing analysis, advice and reports for various clients primarily with respect to transport and energy issues.

November 2017 – January 2018

Secretariat

Independent strategic advisory panel review of Goulburn-Murray Water

Responsible for preparing the Strategic Advisory Panel's report examining issues related to governance, asset management, consumer and stakeholder engagement and costs and pricing.

January 2016 – June 2017

Deputy Secretary, Energy and Resources/Resources

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Responsible for leading the Energy and Resources portfolio (and subsequent Resources portfolio following Machinery of Government change). Responsibilities included leading 180 staff, overseeing Energy and Resources budget and outputs, providing advice directly to Minister for Energy and Resources/Resources, developing policy, cabinet briefings and legislative proposals, administering Earth Resources regulatory functions.

August 2015 – December 2015

Specialist advisor/consultant

Victorian Parliamentary Committees

Responsible for advising the Legislative Council Select Committee on competition, regulation and other related matters related to the Port of Melbourne lease bill, drafting the Inquiry report and liaising with Committee Chair on findings/recommendations.

May 2012 – June 2015

Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audit

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Responsible for leading and directing 50-60 performance audit staff and contractors to successfully deliver the largest performance audit program of all States and Territories. Performance audits provide assurance to the Parliament and the public in relation to the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the public sector and are a significant catalyst for change and improvement.

June 2011 - May 2012

Senior Consultant

ACIL Tasman

Responsible for providing management support and consulting advice to a range of public and private sector clients predominantly involved in the energy, water and transport sectors.

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June 2003 - May 2011

Various Executive Officer level positions

Essential Services Commission

Responsible for leading and managing a range of regulatory and corporate portfolios within the Essential Services Commission including as Director, Water Regulation, Director, Corporate and Strategic Projects and Director Transport and Industry Sectors.

November 1999 - June 2003

Project Manager/Senior Regulatory Manager, Price Review Division

Essential Services Commission (formerly Office of the Regulator-General)

Responsible for planning and coordinating the consultation and drafting of major regulatory decisions related to the 2001 Electricity Distribution Price Review, 2003 Review of Gas Access Arrangements and a range of ministerial investigations into proposed energy retail price increases (for 2002 and 2003 energy prices) and 2003-04 Transport Accident Commission Charges.

October 1998 - November 1999

Reform Policy and Commercial branches, Privatisation and Reform Division

Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance

Senior Policy Analyst responsible for preparing briefs and advice on issues related to competition policy and subsequently called upon to join the specialist group set up to manage the response to the Longford Gas Class Action.

January 1992 - October 1998

Research and Inquiry Branches

Productivity Commission

Commenced as a graduate economist in Office of Regulation Review and progressively promoted through to Assistant Director. Predominantly worked on a series of national inquiries and managed influential research projects and contributed to submissions to other national inquiries and processes.

November 1995 - July 1996

Gas and Electricity Division

National Competition Council

Initially seconded to assist in establishing the NCC. A member of a small division providing analysis, assessments and advice on legislative and national competition policy compliance of gas transmission and distribution access regimes. Also acted as Director, Transport, Communications and Water.