

Enhancing ethical awareness in the APS



Australian Government
Australian Public Service
Commission

VODCAST 3: SISTER ACT

Robyn Travers

Member of the public, Sally's sister

Well, Sally's a dedicated public servant. You know, she's my sister. We see quite a bit of her these days. And, you know, really we are pretty close.

Sally Grant

APS 6 Supervisor, Data Entry Team Department of Personal Records

It's my job to monitor the quality of the department's data entry work. And I look at all the entries for my team—personal records for the members of the public. It's a huge database of personal information. So privacy and security—it's really important.

Robyn

But, I just don't think she quite gets what it's been like for me. My marriages have been a disaster, and the kids, you know. Well, with life being so bad at home when they were growing up, it really affected them badly, especially my daughter Christine. You know, I feel really guilty about that. I was such an idiot back then but I'm more settled now.

Sally

Well, I've got this sister Robyn. And she's had a really rough trot. She's had a couple of difficult marriages and some of her kids have ended up really dysfunctional. She's lost touch with one of them in particular—her eldest, Christine.

Robyn

Anyway, Christine left home a few years back and went on her own way and I heard that she actually since then been living with some different fellas and I had no idea where she was. And it was her 18th birthday coming up, you know. So when I realized that Sally worked for Personal Records, I asked her if she would be able to check Christine's file out for me just to see if she could find a current address.

Sally

Anyway, we are a large family and we are really close. So at a recent family barbeque Robyn asked me if I wouldn't mind finding some current address details for her daughter. She wanted to send her an 18th birthday present and I thought, well, that's fair enough. I was reluctant though because I did realise that it was a breach of policy but it was personal information and it was a family member. Anyway I told Robyn that I didn't really think it was a good idea and I could get into lots of trouble.

Robyn

But she said she wouldn't do it. She said it wasn't the right thing to do. You know, well, I thought her attitude was pretty selfish and insensitive. I love my sister and would do anything for, her especially family stuff. And anyway, why can't public servants help the public like me? I

mean, it's my daughter's record and it's Sally's niece.

Sally

And she went on and on about me being a public servant and that I should be there to help her because she is a member of the public. I really wanted to help because she's family and she's been through a rough time. It's good client service too, isn't it?

Robyn

Anyway, I thought she wasn't going to check it out but she came over a few days before Christine's birthday and she had told me that she looked at the file and there was Christine's address. Well, I gotta tell you, I cried I was so pleased about it. But I don't think it has actually worked out for the best in the end, you know. Christine rang the other night and she wasn't happy at all. She said that she had been trying to build a new life for herself, away from the family, and it's tough.