



Australian Government  
Australian Public Service Commission

# State of the Service Report

## 2022–23



The Australian Public Service Commission welcomes enquiries and comments on this report.

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This document must be attributed as the *State of the Service Report 2022–23*.



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Public Service Commission**

The Hon Patrick Gorman MP  
Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister  
Assistant Minister for the Public Service  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Assistant Minister

In accordance with Section 44(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, I present you with my report on the state of the Australian Public Service for 2022–23.

I acknowledge the contributions of my predecessor, Mr Peter Woolcott AO, to the Australian Public Service in 2022-23.

Section 44(3) of the *Public Service Act 1999* requires that this report is laid before each House of Parliament by 30 November 2023.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gordon de Brouwer".

Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM  
Australian Public Service Commissioner  
10 November 2023

# Introduction

Section 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999* states that the Australian Public Service Commissioner must give a report to the Agency Minister, for presentation to the Parliament, on the state of the Australian Public Service during the past year.

The State of the Service Report is a collaboration between the Australian Public Service Commission and APS agencies.

It shows how the APS is supporting the priorities of the Australian Government, the Parliament and serving the Australian community. This year's report offers:

- an overview of developments affecting the operating environment of the APS
- analysis of how the APS workforce and workplaces are evolving, supported by research and data insights
- consideration of APS capability, leadership and integrity issues, trends and responses
- stories of how the APS is serving the Australian community, including by connecting with non-government organisations, businesses and the research sector
- an exploration of how the APS is improving its approaches and preparing for the future.

This is the 26<sup>th</sup> State of the Service Report, and the first to be prepared as a digital-first report.

# Contents

A message from the APS Commissioner	8
Executive summary	11
List of figures	14
List of tables	15
<b>Operating context</b>	<b>17</b>
Priorities of the Australian Government	18
APS reform	19
APS Capability Reinvestment Fund	21
Engaging with the region	22
Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy	24
Australian public services – trust and satisfaction	26
APS Net Zero commitment	29
<b>APS profile</b>	<b>31</b>
APS at a glance	32
Boosting First Nations employment in the APS	33
APS cultural and linguistic diversity	34
Gender equality in the APS	37
Understanding neurodiversity in the APS	40
APS employees with disability	42
APS LGBTIQA+ community	44
<b>Working in the APS</b>	<b>47</b>
Embedding stewardship as an APS Value	48
A new approach to APS workplace relations	49
Review of the Maternity Leave Act	50
Flexible and remote work	51
Mobility in the APS	53
APS employee engagement	55
Supporting mental health and wellbeing	57
<b>Capability</b>	<b>59</b>
Attracting and retaining employees	60
Rebalancing the APS workforce	61
Australian Government Consulting	63
Strategic workforce planning	64
Career Pathways	66

APS Professions	67
APS Academy	69
Cohort-based social learning	70
Experience and capability of APS managers	72
Capability reviews	74
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>75</b>
Frank, honest and evidence-based advice	76
Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours	78
Senior Executive Service	80
Identifying and developing leadership talent	82
Ways of working	83
<b>Integrity</b>	<b>85</b>
National Anti-Corruption Commission	86
Protection for whistleblowers in the public sector	87
Robodebt Royal Commission	88
APS Integrity Taskforce	89
Bell Inquiry implementation	90
Review of Public Sector Board Appointments Processes	91
Respectful and ethical workplaces	92
<b>Serving the community</b>	<b>95</b>
Connecting the Pacific with rural and regional Australia	96
Democratising access to Australian cultural heritage	98
A unique style of public service during the Kimberley floods, and all year round	100
A life events approach to government services	102
Working together for the health of the Murray–Darling Basin	104
Helping people in familiar settings	105
Measuring and communicating Australia’s radiation risk	107
Preparing for the dry times	109
Saving and improving lives with a world-class blood supply	111
Preventing misuse and criminal communication through payment text fields	113
<b>APS of the future</b>	<b>117</b>
Measuring What Matters	118
Long-term insights briefings	120
Place-based approaches	122
Data and Digital Government Strategy	124

Net Zero economy	126
Supporting the National Situation Room	128
<b>Agency benchmarking</b>	<b>131</b>
Employee engagement	132
Harassment and bullying	137
Perceptions of SES leadership	142
APS First Nations employment	147
APS employment of people with disability	149
Trust and satisfaction with Australian public services	151
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>153</b>
List of figures	153
List of tables	153
Appendix 1 – APS workforce trends	156
Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data	172
Appendix 3 – APS agencies	197
Appendix 4 – Secretaries Board	201
Appendix 5 – Public inquiries into the APS and APS agencies	203
Appendix 6 – APS workforce planning	209
Appendix 7 – Methodology	214

## A message from the APS Commissioner

The Australian Public Service, through its 104 agencies, and more than 170,000 staff, undertakes diverse work which affects all Australians.

The foundation for this, and the requirements of our jobs – what we do, and how we do it – is set out in law, especially the Public Service Act and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act. As public servants, we serve the Government, the Parliament and the Australian people. The way we do this must be in keeping with the APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct.

As intended under the Public Service Act, this State of the Service Report contributes to the transparency of the APS. It draws on a range of sources, especially the APS Employee Census and the Agencies Survey. We are committed to balance in this report – showing what we are doing well, and where we need to improve.



*Australian Public Service Commissioner Dr Gordon de Brouwer*

*Image: Australian Public Service Commission*

This report covers inquiries and other key issues for the APS over the past year, and how we are responding to them. Whether it is agencies considering the findings of major reviews like the Robodebt Royal Commission, or an individual employee reflecting on a wrong call, what matters is that the APS is a workplace where people can provide frank, evidence-based advice, and change course when needed.

While I will focus here on some key issues relating to the people of the APS, I am pleased that the report also includes content on the work of the APS – the context we operate in, some of the big policy initiatives that will affect how we do things in future and some excellent stories of how agencies are delivering important services by working closely with partners in other sectors and the community.

It is encouraging to see that engagement remains high, with 76% of staff feeling that the work they do gives them a sense of accomplishment (2023 APS Employee Census). APS employee perceptions



relating to role and purpose are impressive, with 92% agreeing that they understand how their role contributes to achieving an outcome for the Australian public and 84% agreeing that they believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of the APS (2023 APS Employee Census).

These positive sentiments are consistent with the responses of staff to APS Reform initiatives including the work on stewardship, where more than 1500 submissions were received from staff and around 90% of respondents confirmed that they do see themselves as stewards in their workplace. For these staff, stewardship means taking care for the long-term and future generations, maintaining knowledge and responsible management.

Yet there are negative aspects of our workplaces that must be addressed, including unacceptable behaviours. In 2023, 10.4% of respondents to the APS Employee Census indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in the workplace in the last 12 months, up from 9.7% in 2022. Reported rates of perceived harassment or bullying are higher for some APS agencies, and this is shown in a new agency benchmarking section in this report. We must have a culture of zero tolerance for any form of unacceptable behaviour in the APS, and work together to bring this about.

It has been an important year for policies relating to First Nations, people with disability and women in the APS, with a number of new initiatives being introduced. In the past year we have gained greater insights into APS staff who identify as LGBTIQ+ or consider themselves to be neurodivergent, through the APS Employee Census and the valued contributions of staff-led networks.

APS employment data tells us that, at 30 June 2023, 24% of APS employees were born outside Australia. This is comparable with the Australian workforce, yet we know that greater representation of employees with diverse backgrounds is needed at the senior levels of the APS. Secretaries Board is overseeing a new Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy that will provide practical ways to increase representation of CALD people at all levels of the APS and foster inclusive workplaces that provide opportunities for all. The strategy is being developed with extensive consultation. It is essential, not just so that the APS represents the Australian people in their entirety, but so that the richness in backgrounds brings diversity of insight and experience in how we do our jobs.

Consistent with the Government's APS Reform agenda, there is detailed information in this report about how our Senior Executive Service leaders are performing. In the past year, the focus on SES behaviours has continued to deepen, as well as on the results they achieve.

According to the APS Employee Census over the last three years, areas of strength for our SES include contributing to the strategic direction for the agency and APS, and clearly articulating the direction and priorities for a work area. Critical areas requiring improvement are for SES officers to work well as a team within and between agencies, and to communicate effectively with each other and with other employees. This year, agencies will publish their APS Employee Census results along with action plans to tackle the issues identified.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and other recent challenges, have shown us that we are at our best when we support each other. For those of you currently serving in the APS, please take the future of the APS personally and consider the impact you want to have, as well as how you can help others to achieve what they are trying to do.

For those who may be considering joining the APS, it is an exciting time to do so. Take a close look, with more than 239 job roles in 596 locations and growing opportunities to work flexibly and remotely, a rewarding APS career has never been more achievable. All are welcome, bring who you are and what you know, to your workplace.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of Mr Peter Woolcott AO, who was APS Commissioner until 10 May 2023. Peter's achievements during his five-year tenure include overseeing the surge reserve during the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering the first APS Workforce Strategy,

strengthening talent management of senior APS officers, and launching the APS Academy, the Professions Model and capability reviews.

I am honoured to have been appointed Commissioner from 11 May 2023. My vision over the next five years will be to deliver a world-leading service, an APS that is a great place to work with rewarding careers for our people, and an unwavering focus on integrity and capability. Across the APS we each have a role to play. I am immensely proud of public servants, their deep commitment to serving our community and the contribution they make. The APSC looks forward to supporting them over the coming years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gordon de Brouwer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM

## Executive summary

**The Australian Public Service is delivering on its legislative mandate and responding to the Australian Government's vision for the country and the public sector, as well as significant changes in its operating environment.**

- Major reviews and initiatives are underway across portfolios, to move from the response and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent crises, to reform and renewal to position Australia for the future.
- APS Reform is a service-wide undertaking to strengthen and empower the public service and increase trust and confidence in Australia's public sector institutions. In 2022–23 it involved more than 44 initiatives led by 12 agencies.
- An APS Capability Reinvestment Fund has been established and Round 1 is investing in major capability priorities. These include evaluation, gender impact analysis, First Nations cultural competency, and culturally and linguistically diverse capability. Also included are foresight, scenario and futures analysis, and developing deeper knowledge and networks in Asia and the Pacific.
- The APS is supporting a whole-of-government approach to deepening engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, using all elements of statecraft. The Australian Government has committed to the Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy to support action on key governance challenges facing democracies.
- The APS is working to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. The Australian Government signed up to the world's first Net Zero Government Initiative at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual summit of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) in November 2022.
- In 2022–23, levels of trust in Australian public services remained stable, with 61% of respondents to the Survey of Trust in Australian public services indicating they trust these services. More people (73%) report trust in the specific services they have used. Almost 3 in 4 respondents (72%) are satisfied with Australian public services. Fewer people were satisfied with public service processes such as wait times (64%), although a higher proportion (77%) received what they needed at the end of the process.

**The APS is repositioning itself as a model employer, and its workforce is growing and highly engaged.**

- Workplace conditions are being improved and modernised with the re-introduction of service-wide bargaining for 103 agencies. A review of the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973* is complete and the Government is considering the recommendations.
- The APS Employee Value Proposition is being defined and communicated, underpinned by research on the lived experiences of public servants and public perceptions of the APS as an employer. It will be complemented by flexible work principles, an APS location strategy and outcomes from service-wide bargaining.
- Work continues to understand and close the gender pay gap, and increase representation of First Nations people and people with disability in the APS workforce.
- Development of a new Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy is underway. In the APS workforce, representation of people born outside Australia is broadly comparable with the Australian population, but this is not reflected at more senior levels.
- The APS workforce continues to rebuild internal capacity, growing by 6.9% over the 2022–23 financial year.
- In the 2023 APS Employee Census, around three quarters of APS employees expressed job satisfaction (73%) and that their work gave them a sense of accomplishment (76%).

**APS leaders are working to shape a culture with integrity at its core, and build a capable workforce with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to deliver for the Australian community.**

- The National Anti-Corruption Commission has started operation, and new whistle-blower protections have been introduced. These initiatives are part of the Australian Government's broad integrity agenda for the public sector.
- Reforms proposed in the Public Service Amendment Bill in June 2023 include provisions to strengthen accountability in the APS and embed stewardship as an APS Value.
- A taskforce of senior APS leaders examined system-wide improvements to support a pro-integrity culture at all levels. The Australian Government has released its response to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme, and a central team based at the Australian Public Service Commission is examining alleged breaches of the APS Code of Conduct arising from the inquiry.
- The introduction of new standardised performance assessments for the Senior Executive Service give equal weight to outcomes and behaviours. Employee perceptions of the SES are measured in the APS Employee Census and published.
- The Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council continue to develop a strong and diverse leadership pipeline, with a focus on skills, experience and behaviours.
- Graduates are applying for APS jobs in record numbers, encouraged by multiple entry pathways. Cadetships, traineeships and opportunities to obtain vocational qualifications are also on offer.
- Increasingly, APS agencies are identifying and managing emerging critical skills shortages and labour market risks. Capability reviews help agencies to look forward, assess future state needs and mitigate predicted risks.
- The APS Academy and the APS Professions are supporting capability development for all employees, including building excellence in APS Craft – the core skills needed to deliver great policy and services.

**The APS is critical to the past, present and future of Australia and its communities, working with partners to identify and respond to needs and aspirations around the country.**

- The APS is connected with all levels of governments, non-government organisations, industry groups, businesses, community groups and the research sector. These partnerships save lives, solve problems, protect heritage and enhance the futures of people and places.
- Around 100 APS agencies bring specialist expertise to the table, applying knowledge and skills from a large range of professions and disciplines to global and domestic issues.
- APS agencies collaborate extensively with each other, to address policy, operational, regulatory and outreach aspects of specific issues.

**As the challenges and opportunities facing Australia become more complex and demanding, the APS is being more proactive and joined up.**

- Traditional indicators of progress are no longer enough, so broader measures are being used to better understand how Australia and its people are faring.
- The APS is looking further ahead, to consider what may affect Australia in the medium and long term, to support delivery of the Government's policies and to share as much information as possible with the wider community.
- The APS needs to listen, as well as lead. Place-based and other flexible approaches are being implemented to improve service delivery and outcomes.

- The APS has an important role to play in major transformations currently underway, including the transition to a Net Zero economy, rapid changes in the availability and application of digital technologies and data, and a more complex geopolitical world.

## List of figures

Figure 1.1	Trust in Australian public services (2018–19 to 2022–23)	26
Figure 1.2	Satisfaction with Australian public services (2018–19 to 2022–23)	27
Figure 2.1	Employees born outside of Australia (at 30 June)	34
Figure 2.2	Employees whose first spoken language was not exclusively English (at 30 June)	35
Figure 2.3	Average gender pay gap trends (2018 to 2023)	37
Figure 2.4	Women employees in the APS (2019 to 2023)	38
Figure 2.5	Employees who have an ongoing disability (2020 to 2023)	42
Figure 2.6	Employees identifying as LGBTIQ+ (2017 to 2023)	44
Figure 3.1	Mobility rates for ongoing employees (2008–09 to 2022–23)	53
Figure 3.2	Employee experiences (2020 to 2023)	55
Figure 3.3	Employee perceptions most associated with employee engagement (2023)	56
Figure 4.1	Completed priority workforce strategy actions	65
Figure 4.2	The Graduate Expedition	70
Figure 4.3	Confidence in completing management tasks (2023)	72
Figure 5.1	Employee perceptions of SES leaders (2021 to 2023)	80
Figure 6.1	Reported perceived rates of harassment or bullying (2014 to 2023)	92
Figure 6.2	Employees found to have breached the Code of Conduct for corrupt behaviour (2018 to 2023)	93
Figure 8.1	Measuring What Matters framework	118
Figure 9.19	First Nations employees by agency (at 30 June 2023)	147
Figure 9.20	No data for Indigenous status by agency (at 30 June 2023)	148
Figure 9.21	Employees with disability by agency (at 30 June 2023)	149
Figure 9.22	No data for disability status by agency (at 30 June 2023)	150
Figure 9.23	Trust in Australian public services in 2022–23	151
Figure 9.24	Satisfaction with Australian public services in 2022–23	152

## List of tables

Table 9.1	Employee Engagement Index, by agency size	132
Table 9.2	Employee Engagement Index for extra-large agencies (10,000+ employees)	132
Table 9.3	Employee Engagement Index for large agencies (1,001 to 10,000 employees)	133
Table 9.4	Employee Engagement Index for medium agencies (251 to 1,000 employees)	134
Table 9.5	Employee Engagement Index for small agencies (101 to 250 employees)	135
Table 9.6	Employee Engagement Index for extra-small agencies (20 to 100 employees)	136
Table 9.7	Perceptions of harassment and bullying for all agencies, by agency size	137
Table 9.8	Perceptions of harassment and bullying for extra-large agencies (10,000+ employees)	137
Table 9.9	Perceptions of harassment and bullying for large agencies (1,001 to 10,000 employees)	138
Table 9.10	Perceptions of harassment and bullying for medium agencies (251 to 1,000 employees)	139
Table 9.11	Perceptions of harassment and bullying for small agencies (101 to 250 employees)	140
Table 9.12	Perceptions of harassment and bullying for extra-small agencies (20 to 100 employees)	141
Table 9.13	Leadership SES Manager Index, by agency size	142
Table 9.14	Leadership SES Manager Index for extra-large agencies (10,000+ employees)	142
Table 9.15	Leadership SES Manager Index for large agencies (1,001 to 10,000 employees)	143
Table 9.16	Leadership SES Manager Index for medium agencies (251 to 1,000 employees)	144
Table 9.17	Leadership SES Manager Index for small agencies (101 to 250 employees)	145
Table 9.18	Leadership SES Manager Index for extra-small agencies (20 to 100 employees)	146

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# Operating context



The Australian Government is undertaking major reviews and initiatives across portfolios, to move from the response and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent crises, to reform and renewal to position Australia for the future.

It has announced a plan to build a stronger Australian Public Service through public sector reform. APS Reform is a service-wide undertaking to strengthen and empower the public service and increase trust and confidence in Australia's public sector institutions.

The APS Capability Reinvestment Fund is investing in projects to address common capability challenges. It supports scalable and impactful activities that strengthen the APS to deliver for the Australian community now and into the future.

The APS is building capability to support the whole-of-government approach to deepening engagement in the region, using all elements of statecraft.

More than 40 countries adopted the OECD Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy in November 2022, committing to address pressing challenges facing democracies today.

The Luxembourg Declaration supports action on key governance challenges facing democracies. This includes ministerial action plans on combating misinformation and disinformation, enhancing representation, participation and openness, and governing in a sustainable way.

In 2022–23, levels of trust in Australian public services remained stable, with 61% of respondents to the Survey of Trust in Australian public services indicating they 'strongly trust', 'trust' or 'somewhat trust' these services. Distrust is also stable at 18%. This survey found that 72% of respondents are satisfied and getting what they need from Australian public services, a small decrease from 73% in the previous year.

The Australian Government has committed to achieving net zero emissions in the APS by 2030. Australia was one of 19 global partners to launch the world's first Net Zero Government Initiative at the 27th annual summit of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) in November 2022.

# Priorities of the Australian Government

The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, used his address at the National Press Club on 22 February 2023 to reflect on the first 9 months in government and outline priorities for the coming year. These priorities were framed with the intent to provide stability, confidence and security to the Australian people, and to address cost-of-living pressures.

The Australian Government is undertaking major reviews and initiatives across portfolios, to move from the response and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent crises, to reform and renewal to position Australia for the future.

On defence and national security, investing in Australia's sovereignty, strengthening Australia's relationships in the region and securing Australia's place in the world are priorities. Related actions have included commissioning and responding to the Defence Strategic Review and confirming the AUKUS trilateral security pact between Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom in March 2023.

Internationally, the Australian Government's approach is to work with Pacific neighbours as partners and equals, and to deepen connections with countries in South East Asia bilaterally and through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the East Asia Summit. Collaboration on regional security in the Indo-Pacific is taking place with the United States, Japan and India, including through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue Leaders summits. The Australian Government is focused on stabilising Australia's relationship with China, which is Australia's major trading partner.

The Australian Government has implemented new policies in relation to climate change, legislating a national emissions reduction target of 43% by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. In addition to setting targets for the environment, the goal is to mobilise clean energy investment and the transition to a decarbonised economy.

On social policy, areas of focus for the Government include strengthening Medicare, putting people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS, universal and affordable childcare, new housing policies and greater security in aged care.

A National Reconstruction Fund has been established to support a more resilient and diversified economy. It has an investment mandate across 7 priority areas: renewables and low emission technologies, medical science, transport, value-adding in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, value-adding in resources, defence capability and technologies that support new jobs in areas like manufacturing.

Other major Australian Government reviews and initiatives in 2022–23 include those related to the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) 2023, Robodebt, migration, higher education, cyber security, the Reserve Bank of Australia and emergency management.

## **See also**

Prime Minister of Australia [Address to the National Press Club](https://www.pm.gov.au/media/address-national-press-club), Prime Minister of Australia website <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/address-national-press-club>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS Reform

The plan to build a stronger Australian Public Service through APS Reform was announced by the Australian Government in October 2022. The reform agenda is underpinned by 4 pillars:

1. An APS that embodies integrity in everything it does
2. An APS that puts people and business at the centre of policy and services
3. An APS that is a model employer
4. An APS that has the capability to do its job well.

The Government has committed funding of \$30.8 million in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Public Service Commission to continue the delivery and implementation of this ambitious reform agenda.

Currently, 44 initiatives are being implemented across the service. These were selected for their potential to deliver immediate impact for the APS and the public. They lay the foundations for ongoing improvements to the APS and how it addresses longer-term challenges.



*Building a stronger Australian Public Service through APS Reform*

*Image: APS Reform Office*

APS Reform aims to further strengthen and empower the public service and increase trust and confidence in Australia's public sector institutions. It builds on reform efforts to date and positions the APS to be future fit and capable of adapting and evolving to changing and rising expectations.

Specific initiatives will:

- build the capability and capacity of the APS
- strengthen a pro-integrity culture and practices in the APS
- support greater transparency and genuine partnership with the community

- position the APS to work in collaborative and dynamic ways to support the Government to deliver on its agenda now and into the future.

The outcomes of the agenda are intended to be intergenerational and reach every aspect of the APS.

APS Reform is a service-wide undertaking. A strategic and phased approach to reform is guiding delivery efforts to ensure effective management of delivery risk and responsiveness to emerging priority areas. The first tranche of reforms focus on enabling measures that support the foundations for enduring reform.

The current APS Reform initiatives are being implemented across the service, overseen by Secretaries Board, and led by 12 departments and agencies with coordination driven by the APS Reform Office. The APS Reform Office and Australian Public Service Commission work closely with the Secretaries Board, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Finance and other agencies to deliver APS reform.

In May 2023, the Minister for the Public Service outlined the 8 outcomes that the APS Reform agenda seeks to achieve. These are backed by metrics to demonstrate the impact that Reform initiatives are having. The 8 outcomes are:

*Outcome 1:* Public sector employees act with and champion integrity

*Outcome 2:* Public service employees are stewards of the public service

*Outcome 3:* The APS delivers human and user-centred policy and service excellence

*Outcome 4:* The APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples

*Outcome 5:* The APS's Employee Value Proposition is attractive

*Outcome 6:* The APS sets the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity

*Outcome 7:* The APS sets the standard for First Nations employment and cultural competency

*Outcome 8:* The APS continuously improves its capabilities.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Reform](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/), APS Reform website <https://www.apsreform.gov.au/>, accessed 6 October 2023.

## APS Capability Reinvestment Fund

To build Australian Public Service organisational capability, \$25 million over 2 years was allocated for projects under an APS Capability Reinvestment Fund from 2023–24. The Australian Government allocated the funds in the October 2022 Budget.

From December 2022 to February 2023, Round 1 applications were open to APS agencies to submit project proposals under the fund. Ten projects involving 14 agencies were identified, with funding allocated to agencies during the 2023–24 Budget process and made available 1 July 2023. These projects are being implemented in 2023–24, with project milestones to be reported to the Secretaries Board.

The APS Capability Reinvestment Fund aims to further build the capability of the APS to address service- wide challenges. It supports scalable and impactful activities that strengthen the APS to deliver for the Australian community now and into the future.

Guidelines for Round 1 identified the highest priority capability areas as:

- embedding evaluation across the service
- improving gender impact analysis in policy
- uplifting APS-wide First Nations cultural competency
- promoting culturally and linguistically diverse capability in the APS
- developing APS capability in foresight, scenario and futures analysis and
- developing deeper knowledge and networks in Asia and the Pacific.

Guidelines for Round 2 of the fund are being settled, drawing on the outcomes of the Audit of Employment, the Audit of Wasteful Spending and the pilot Capability Review program.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d) [APS Capability Reinvestment Fund 2023–24](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/reports/aps-capability-reinvestment-fund-2023-24), APS Reform website <https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/reports/aps-capability-reinvestment-fund-2023-24>, accessed 6 October 2023.

## Engaging with the region

The Australian Public Service is building capability to support the whole-of-government approach to deepening engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, using all elements of statecraft.

Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, has undertaken an intensive program of visits in Asia and the Pacific since taking office. She has said that she begins engagement by communicating that Australia is ‘a land that is home to the oldest continuous culture on the planet, and to people from more than 300 ancestries ... with the ability to build on common ground with people around the world.’

In May 2023, the Australian Government announced \$1.9 billion over 5 years for the Enhancing Pacific Engagement budget measure, with a new International Development Policy and Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to follow in the second half of 2023. These significant initiatives escalate the need for the APS to be able to foster authentic, respectful and culturally-sound relationships with regional counterparts.

Mr Justin Mohamed was announced as Australia’s inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People on 7 March 2023. In this role he leads efforts to embed First Nations perspectives in Australian foreign policy.

The Ambassador helps foster cooperation between First Nations people and regional partners, based on the unique experience and knowledge of First Nations people, to address challenges including health security, environmental management and climate change, and gender equality.

To do this, Ambassador Mohamed consults extensively with First Nations leaders and communities around Australia. He heads an Office of First Nations Engagement within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and works in partnership across departments and agencies.

The role of Ambassador for Climate Change has been reinstated, with Ms Kristin Tilley taking up the appointment in November 2022. With Pacific partners, Australia will bid to host the 31<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP31) in 2026, to highlight the impact of climate change on the region, accelerate global action and harness the economic opportunities from the clean energy transition.

As part of the APS Reform program (Priority 4, Outcome 8), there are 2 capability development projects to help lift the Asia and the Pacific capability of APS employees.

The APS Indo-Pacific Executive Development program will:

- target high-performing Executive Level 1s and 2s to build the skills and confidence to advance Australia’s interests in the Indo-Pacific
- develop APS cultural competency and geopolitical awareness of the Indo-Pacific region across a range of policy challenges
- create an APS-wide network to support sharing of skills and knowledge
- build an APS cohort of practitioners for expert advice and regional connections
- deliver insights into how best to uplift APS capability in working across the Indo-Pacific.

The Australian Public Service Commission is working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AsiaLink, part of the University of Melbourne, to design and deliver the program.



The Pacific Cultural Capability postgraduate microcredential will involve 40 to 60 hours of learning over 6 to 8 weeks. This skills-based training, delivered by Pasifika educators using Talanoa methodologies will cover:

- Pacific history, culture, values and economic and political systems
- impacts of colonialism and key drivers of Australian engagement in the Pacific
- how cultural structures and systems of power leveraged by dominant cultures shape our thinking, beliefs and behaviour.

The APSC is working with DFAT and Flinders University to design and deliver the microcredential. It will be credit-bearing at an Australian Qualification Framework Level 8 (Graduate Certificate) and offer an articulation pathway into a postgraduate qualification.

A set of learning resources for Asia and the Pacific capability will also be made available through the APS Academy and the Diplomatic Academy.

### **See also**

Senator the Hon Penny Wong (2023) [National Press Club Address, Australian interests in a regional balance of power](#), Minister for Foreign Affairs website, <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/>, accessed 6 October 2023.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (n.d.) [Ambassador for First Nations People](#), DFAT website, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/indigenous-peoples/ambassador-first-nations-people>, accessed 6 October 2023.

The Hon Chris Bowen MP (2023) [Joint media release: Australia's International Climate Engagement](#), Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water website, <https://minister.dcceew.gov.au/bowen/media-releases/australias-international-climate-engagement>, accessed 6 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [The role of the APS Academy](#), APS Academy website <https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/>, accessed 6 October 2023.

# Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy

More than 40 countries adopted the Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy in November 2022, committing to address pressing challenges facing democracies today.

Ahead of signing the Luxembourg Declaration for the Australian Government, former Australian Public Service Commissioner Peter Woolcott AO participated in the first Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Global Forum on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy.

The forum brought together over 800 stakeholders from government, business, civil society, the media and academia from more than 60 countries. Participants shared perspectives on solutions to make democracy fit for the 21st century and explored actions to rebuild trust in public institutions.



*Former APS Commissioner Peter Woolcott (front right) at the OECD Global Forum on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy in Luxembourg, November 2022*

*Image: OECD*

Discussions were informed by the results of the first OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions. Survey findings indicate that public confidence is evenly split between people who say they trust their national government and those who say they do not. Disadvantaged groups and younger people have lower levels of trust in government.

A strong majority of respondents to the OECD Survey are confident that they can rely on governments to deliver public services like health and education. However, governments are falling short of meeting people's expectations on participation, representation, responsiveness and integrity.

The Luxembourg Declaration supports action on key governance challenges facing democracies. This includes ministerial action plans on combating misinformation and disinformation, enhancing representation, participation and openness, and governing in a sustainable way.



The OECD has launched the Reinforcing Democracy Initiative to provide evidence-based guidance and good international practices to help countries reinforce democratic values and institutions.

**See also**

[Operating context – Australian public services – trust and satisfaction](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 26.

[Agency benchmarking – Trust and satisfaction with Australian public services](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 151.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2022) [Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy](#), OECD website, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0484>, accessed 6 October 2023.

## Australian public services — trust and satisfaction

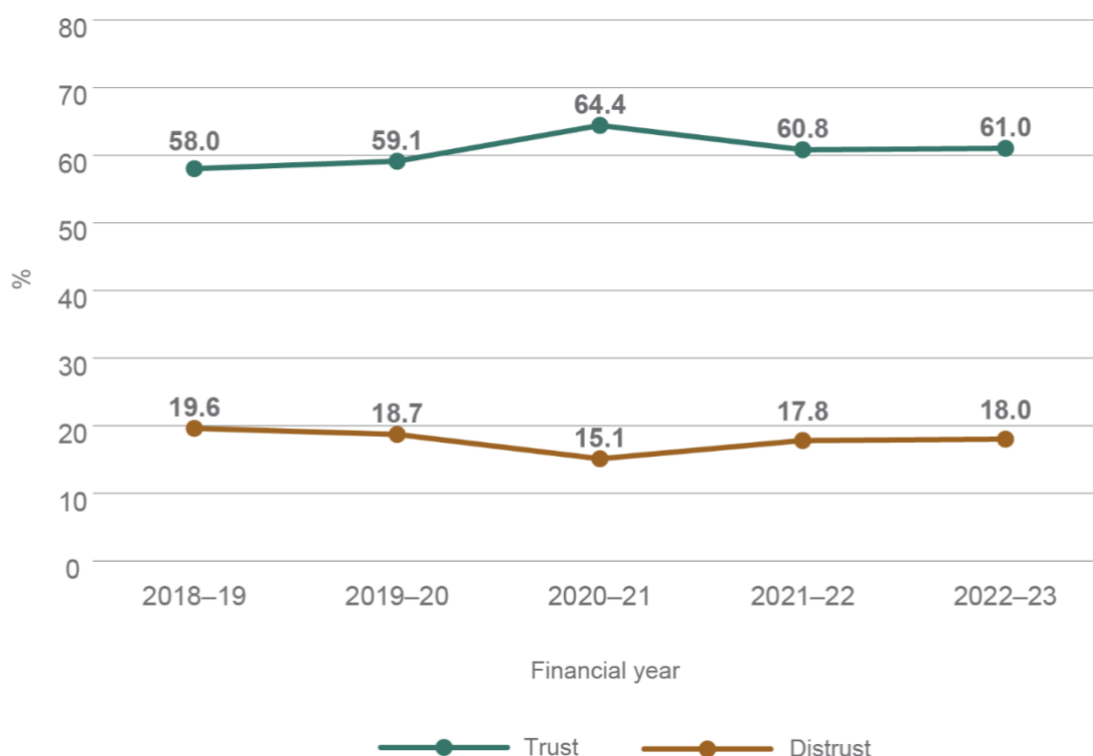
Results from the national Survey of Trust in Australian public services will now be made available in a new, detailed annual report. The Australian Government announced this in October 2022.

Transparency of community feedback supports improved performance and responsiveness by agencies and the wider Australian Public Service reform priority to put people and businesses at the centre of policy and services.

The *Trust in Australian public services: 2023 Annual Report* communicates survey results on public trust and satisfaction with Australian public services for July 2022 to June 2023. Services include those delivered by agencies such as the Australian Electoral Commission, Australian Taxation Office, National Disability Insurance Agency and Services Australia. The survey is based on 12 monthly survey waves of approximately 1,000 people each.

In 2022–23, levels of trust in Australian public services remained stable, with 61% of survey respondents indicating they ‘strongly trust’, ‘trust’ or ‘somewhat trust’ these services (Figure 1.1). Distrust also remained stable at 18%.

**Figure 1.1: Trust in Australian public services (2018–19 to 2022–23)**



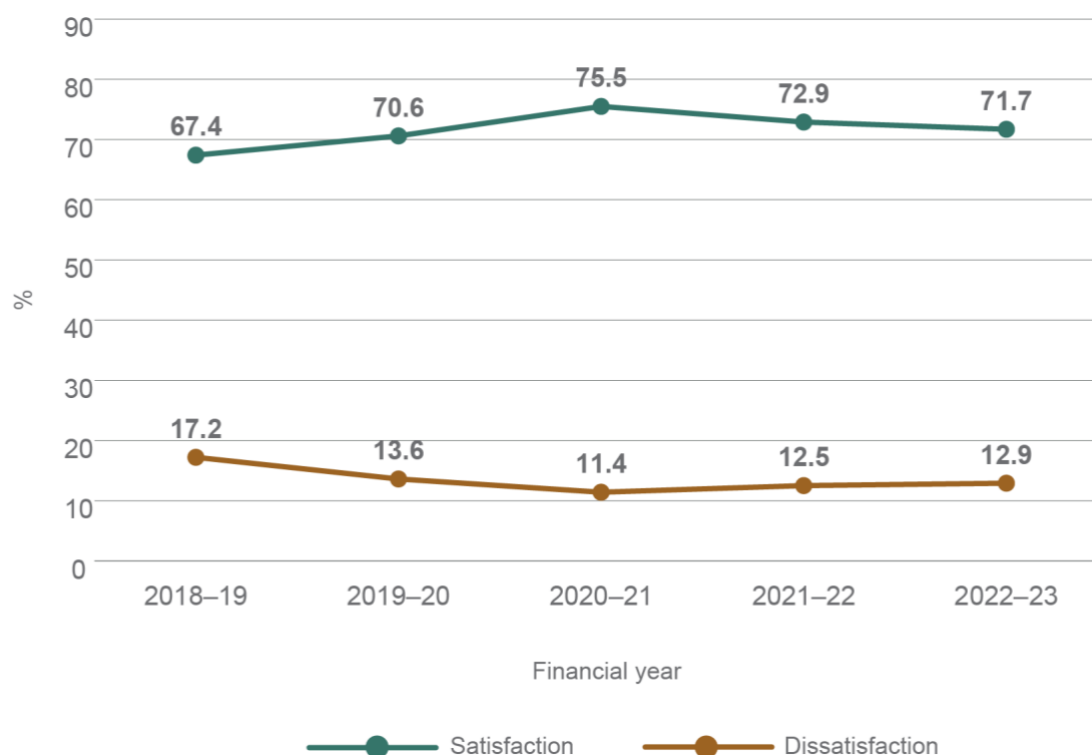
Source: *Trust in Australian public services: 2023 Annual Report*

In 2022–23:

- people in regional areas continued to trust services less (55%) than those in metro areas (63%)
- trust by gender remained steady at 57% for women and 65% for men
- 65% of people aged 18–34 reported that they trust public services, a higher proportion than people aged 35–64 (58%). 68% of people aged 65+ reported that they trust public services
- migrants continued to trust Australian public services more (67%) than those born in Australia (60%).

This report found that 72% of survey respondents are satisfied and getting what they need from Australian public services (Figure 1.2). This is a small decrease from 73% in the previous year, but still higher than before the pandemic.

**Figure 1.2: Satisfaction with Australian public services (2018–19 to 2022–23)**



Source: *Trust in Australian public services: 2023 Annual Report*

In 2022–23:

- the satisfaction with services gap by gender fell to 1 percentage point (72% for men, 71% for women)
- more people aged 65 and over (81%) were satisfied with public services than other ages (70% of respondents aged 18-34 and 35-64 reported satisfaction).

In 2023, the Australian Government expanded its commitment to monitoring public trust by conducting a Survey of Trust in Australian democracy. It was completed in June using a representative sample of 5,000 Australians, and measured trust and satisfaction with a range of public institutions and processes. Results will be available early 2024.

The Australian Government commissioned the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to conduct a country study in Australia on drivers of public trust. The OECD will conduct knowledge-sharing activities with Australia and analysis of cross-national OECD Trust Survey results. The OECD will ultimately deliver a report with targeted recommendations on how Australia can build higher trust in public institutions. Australia will use OECD recommendations to inform areas of focus so public institutions are meeting people's needs.

More detailed trust and satisfaction in Australian public services survey results by demographic group, and APS agency, are listed under 'See also' on this page.

### **See also**

[Agency benchmarking – Trust and satisfaction with Australian public services](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 151.

[Operating context – Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 24.

Australian Public Service Commission (n.d.) Trust in Australian public services: 2023 Annual Report, APSC website, <https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/reports/trust-australian-public-services-2023-annual-report>.

Australian Government (n.d) [Trust in Australian public services: dashboard of survey results](#), APS Reform website, <https://www.apsreform.gov.au/research/trust-in-australian-public-services/dashboard-of-survey-results>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS Net Zero commitment

Achieving net zero emissions in the Australian Public Service by 2030 is an Australian Government commitment. Australia was one of 19 global partners to launch the world's first Net Zero Government Initiative at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual summit of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) in November 2022.

National governments are frequently among the largest employers, electricity consumers, vehicle fleet owners, real estate holders and purchasers of goods and services in their countries. By acting to reduce their own emissions, governments can accelerate economy-wide actions in support of the environment and lead by example.

Achieving net zero in the APS by 2030 also supports the Australian Government's priority to be a model employer, as part of the Government's APS Reform agenda. The APS has been challenged to set the benchmark on emission reductions and inspire other major workplaces to follow suit.

The Department of Finance has established an APS Net Zero Unit to support agencies with tools and guidance, learning and development, and sharing of knowledge and experience. The unit is actively engaging across the APS, Australia and internationally to inform the strategy for how the service will reach net zero.



*United States Deputy Chief Sustainability Officer Dee Siegel visited Canberra in July 2023 to participate in knowledge exchange with Australia and New Zealand as part of the United States-led Net Zero Government Initiative*

*Image: United States Embassy, Canberra*

As part of the Australian Government's commitment to APS Net Zero by 2030, reporting of government emissions was reinstated for the first time in 10 years. Emissions are now included in 2022–23 Australian Government agency annual reports.

Efforts are underway to introduce standardised, internationally-aligned climate risk reporting requirements for Australian Government that are comparable to the private sector. These requirements will assist the Government to be more responsive to climate change and reduce emissions from its own operations.

**See also**

[APS of the future – Net Zero economy](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 126.

Department of Finance (2023) [APS Net Zero Emissions by 2030](#), Department of Finance website, <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/aps-net-zero-emissions-2030>, accessed 6 October 2023.



The Australian Government and Australian community expect the Australian Public Service to set the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity. The APS is building and supporting a workforce which reflects the Australian people it serves and draws on the full range of available experience.

Addressing barriers to the employment of people from diverse community groups is critical. In particular, there is a focus on improving practices for attracting, recruiting, retaining and promoting people from First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and people with disability.

The First Nations Unit, established in May 2023, focuses on increasing the number of First Nations people in the APS to 5% by 2030. A CALD Employment Strategy is being developed through extensive consultation to provide practical ways to increase representation of people from all cultural backgrounds. The APS has a target of 7% for employment of people with disability by 2025, and was at 5.1% at 30 June 2023.

While the gender pay gap in the APS continues to narrow, and is less than half the national gender pay gap, more is being done to fully understand what drives it. Other support for gender equity includes assessing the gender impact of new policies, and the strengthening of laws protecting workers from discrimination and sexual harassment.

Equity, inclusion and diversity depend on safe and welcoming workplaces where everyone feels they belong. The APS is developing the cultural competency of its workforce and looking for ways to foster greater understanding and appreciation of difference. Agencies are implementing programs to support specific cohorts of employees and employee-led networks are working hard to ensure APS workplaces provide environments where everyone can perform at their best.

The APS is taking positive action to create and maintain a workforce culture where all employees are valued for the knowledge and experience that they bring. The goal is an APS where members of the community can see themselves and be confident their views are heard, and where many perspectives contribute to the best policy and program outcomes.



# APS at a glance

30 June 2023 data

## Employee headcount

**170,332**  6.9%  
increase from  
30 June 2022

Number of ongoing engagements – 22,031

Number of ongoing separations – 11,798



## Gender by classification

Classification	Women (%)	Men (%)
Trainee	39.0	60.6
Graduate	47.2	52.3
APS 1	70.6	29.0
APS 2	56.2	43.5
APS 3	62.5	36.2
APS 4	67.5	32.1
APS 5	63.3	36.4
APS 6	60.2	39.6
EL 1	56.7	43.2
EL 2	52.4	47.6
SES Band 1	54.7	45.2
SES Band 2 and 3	49.6	50.0

## Diversity

**60.4%**  
Women

**3.5%**  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
employees

**5.1%**  
Employees with  
a disability

**7.7%**  
\*Employees who  
consider themselves  
to be neurodivergent

**8.7%**  
\*LGBTIQA+

**23.9%**  
Employees born  
outside Australia

**24.4%**  
Employees whose  
first spoken  
language was not  
exclusively English

#2023 APS Employee Census

## Patterns of work

**82.7%**  
full-time

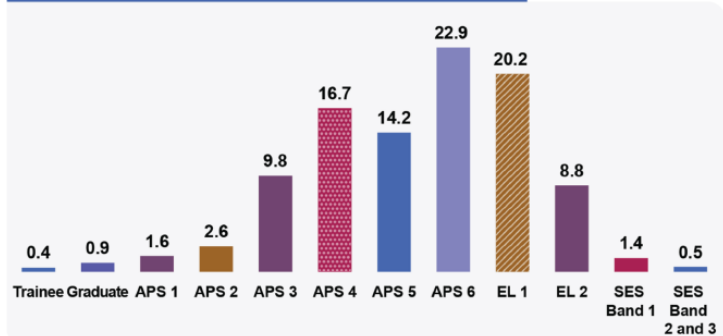
**12.7%**  
part-time

**4.5%**  
casual

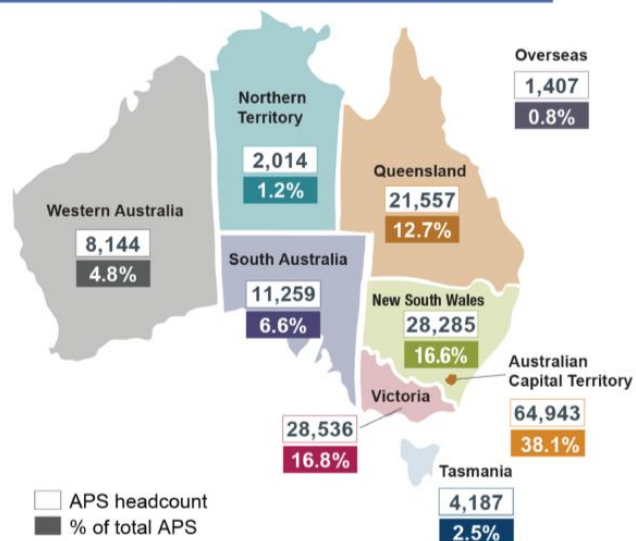
## Proportion of employees by age



## Proportion of employees by classification %



## Number and proportion of employees by location





## Boosting First Nations employment in the APS

The First Nations Unit was established in May 2023. This initiative directly supports the Australian Government's commitment to increase First Nations employment in the Australian Public Service to 5% by 2030.

The unit works across the APS, in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and in collaboration with the First Nations Community Controlled Sector, through the Coalition of Peaks. Actions focus on creating new employment opportunities and tackling known barriers to engagement, retention and advancement for First Nations peoples.

Representation at senior levels is critical to ensure First Nations participation in the decision-making process. Priority is being given to boosting First Nations leadership and increasing First Nations Senior Executive Service employees to 100. Later in 2023, an APS-wide First Nations SES recruitment round will be coordinated by the First Nations Unit and the NIAA. Work will begin to establish a talent development pipeline to support First Nations executive level employees.

To improve the workplace experience of First Nations employees and encourage improved retention rates, the unit will support and strengthen a self-sustaining, culturally-safe employee cohort. Further, the Cultural Capability Hub operating under the APS Academy will strengthen cultural capability and accountability across the APS.

The work of the First Nations Unit supports the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Priority Reform Three – to transform government institutions and organisations, specifically to identify and eliminate racism, and embed and practise meaningful cultural safety.

### **See also**

[Agency benchmarking – APS First Nations employment](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 147.

[Appendix 1 – APS workforce trends](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 156.

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

Australian Public Service Commission (n.d.) [Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–2024](https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce/commonwealth-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce-strategy-2020-2024), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce/commonwealth-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce-strategy-2020-2024>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS cultural and linguistic diversity

A new Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Employment Strategy for the Australian Public Service is being developed. The Australian Government asked the Australian Public Service Commission to lead this initiative in February 2023.

This strategy will provide practical ways to increase representation of CALD people at all levels of the APS. It will foster inclusive workplaces that provide opportunities for all. The strategy is being developed with extensive consultation.

Employment data at 30 June 2023 shows that 24% of APS employees were born outside of Australia. While, overall, this proportion is comparable with the Australian workforce, the figure drops at senior levels. Senior Executive Service 1 and SES 3 levels have declined since 30 June 2004 (Figure 2.1).

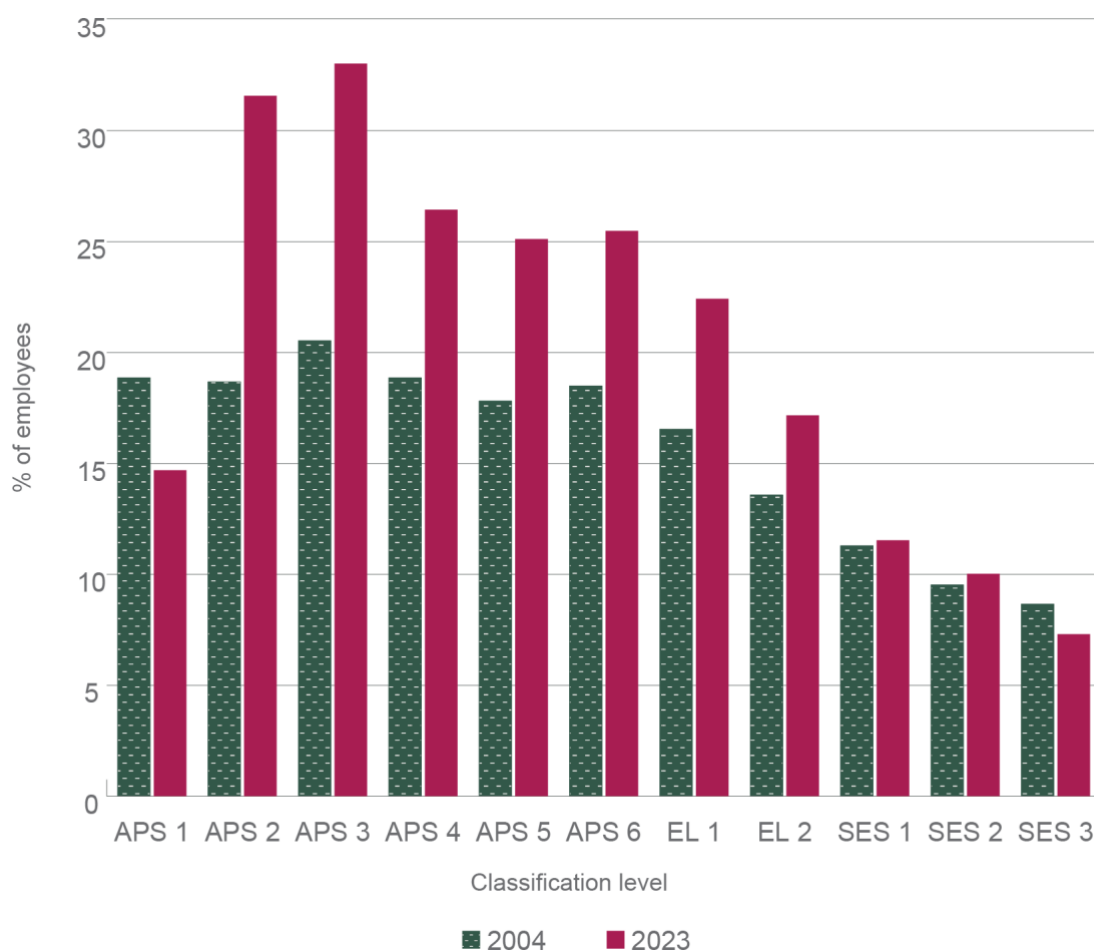
**Figure 2.1: Employees born outside of Australia (at 30 June)**



Source: APSED

Reflecting a similar trend for the same period, APS 2 to EL 2 classifications have seen increases in the proportion of employees whose first spoken language was not exclusively English (Figure 2.2). In contrast, SES cohorts have not changed significantly over this period.

**Figure 2.2: Employees whose first spoken language was not exclusively English (at 30 June)**



Source: APSED

In the 2023 APS Employee Census, perceptions of discrimination were lowest for respondents who reported as being from an Australian background. This includes those who described their cultural background as Australian along with one or more diverse cultural backgrounds. Higher rates of discrimination were reported by respondents from all other cultural backgrounds.

Key elements of the CALD Employment Strategy will be:

- promoting individual cultural capability across the APS to recruit and lead diverse teams
- improving key process points for recruitment, mobility and promotion
- developing an organisational culture that values diversity.

In-depth consultation took place to inform the development of the strategy, including:

- a survey with over 840 participants from all portfolio agencies
- analysis of transcripts from Listening Circles held by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet with 97 employees from 24 agencies
- interviews with more than 50 individuals and organisations to hear personal and professional experiences.

External subject matter experts were consulted, and an extensive literature review undertaken.

The consultation process made it clear that the APS is not fully harnessing the skills and strengths that CALD employees bring. Systemic barriers for these employees are real. They make it more difficult for CALD people to enter the APS, be their whole selves at work, and advance their careers. Strong leadership and cultural literacy were identified as critical to achieving change.

Consultation also showed significant goodwill and curiosity from both CALD and non-CALD employees. This leads to many opportunities for enriching the work of the APS by better integrating diversity into all policies, programs and operations.

### **See also**

[Appendix 1 – APS workforce trends](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 156.

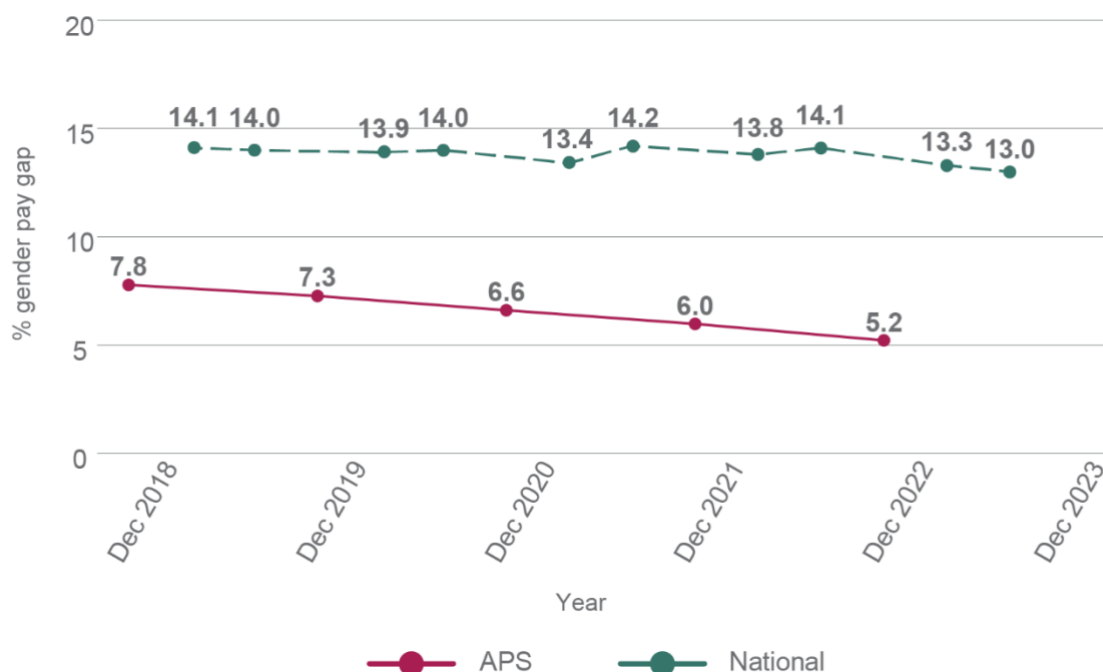
[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy](#), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-inclusion-news/australian-public-service-aps-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-employment-strategy>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Gender equality in the APS

The Australian Public Service achieved its lowest-ever gender pay gap in December 2022, at 5.2% (Figure 2.3). This is less than half the national gender pay gap.

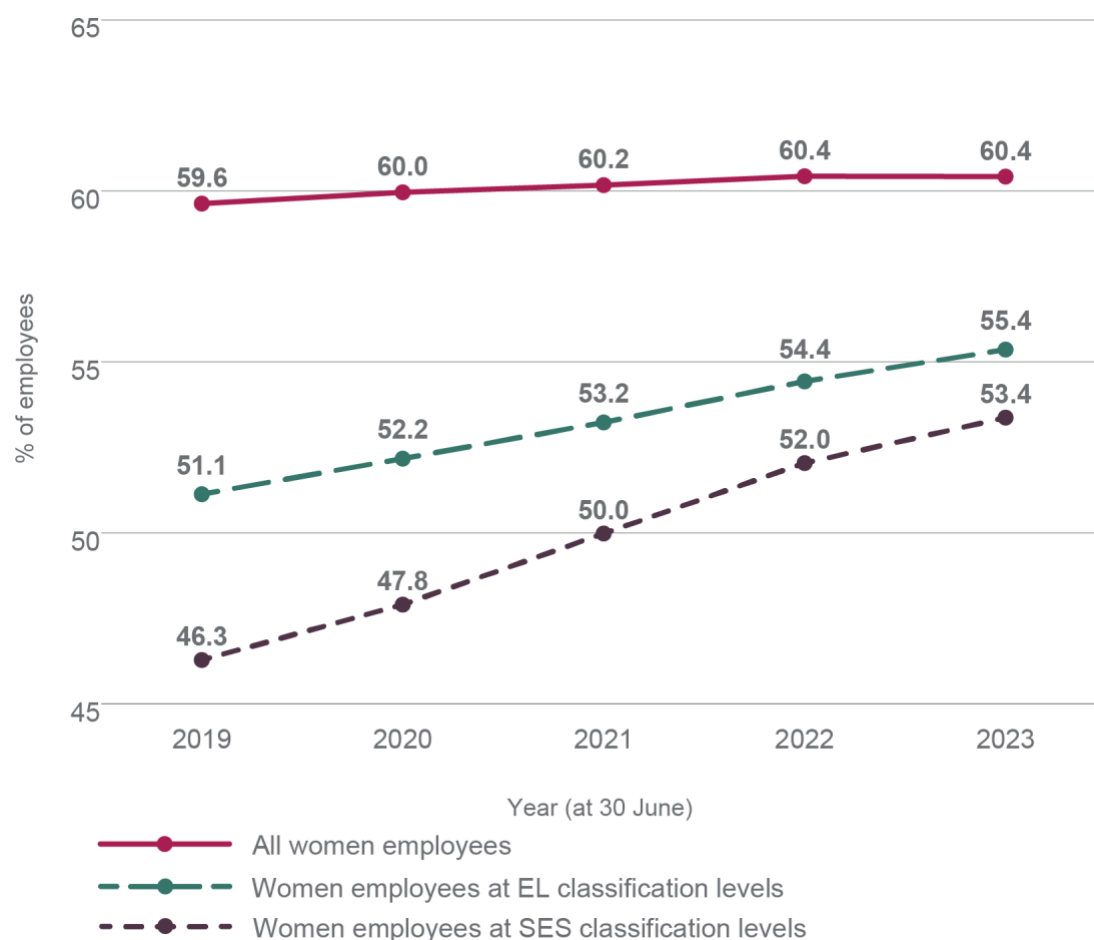
**Figure 2.3: Average gender pay gap trends (2018 to 2023)**



Source: APS Remuneration Survey (2022), Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2023)

Since 2018, the APS gender pay gap has narrowed from 7.8% to 5.2%. This reduction is being driven in part by more women employees at executive and Senior Executive Service levels. In June 2023, women were in 55% of Executive Level roles, compared to 51% in June 2019. Women were also in 53% of SES roles in June 2023, compared to 46% in June 2019 (Figure 2.4). For the first time, women reached gender parity at the SES Band 2 level.

**Figure 2.4: Women employees in the APS (2019 to 2023)**



Source: APSED

Research by the Australian Public Service Commission shows that the pay gap persists due to the distribution of women and men across the classification structure, and the predominance of women at APS 3 to APS 5 levels. Further investigation is underway to better understand factors that may be associated with this pattern. This includes examining the type of work being undertaken at these levels and the location of certain jobs.

A key reform to drive transparency and action in relation to the national gender pay gap is mandatory reporting. Australian Government agencies have been required to participate in gender equality reporting from September 2023. From 2024, gender pay gaps of Australian employers with 100 or more employees will be published by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. This includes individual APS agencies.

The gender pay gap is one indicator of possible gender inequality. Reducing the incidence of discrimination, harassment and unfair treatment is critical in enabling women to achieve equality in the workplace. From 12 December 2022, the *Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022* came into effect. The Act provides increased protections for workers from these behaviours, as recommended by the Australian Human Rights Commission following its inquiry *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*.

The APSC is partnering with Attorney General's Department, the Australian Human Rights Commission and Comcare to provide agencies with information on current and impending legislative

requirements. Resources and tools have been developed to support agencies in creating safe and respectful work environments.

Other Australian Government initiatives in support of gender equality include introducing protocols to support agencies to develop gender-responsive budgets and applying gender impact assessments when developing policy. Initiatives also include the:

- review of the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973*
- creation of a Gender Data Asset Register by the Office for Women
- implementation of the *APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26* and gender-based budgeting.

### **See also**

[Appendix 1 – APS workforce trends](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 156.

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

[Working in the APS – Review of the Maternity Leave Act](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, 50.

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26](#), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/australian-public-service-gender-equality-strategy-2021-26>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Drivers of the 2021 APS Gender Pay Gap April 2023 Research Note 03-23](#), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/Drivers%20of%20the%202021%20APS%20Gender%20Pay%20Gap.pdf>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Fact Sheet: Respect@Work Changes to the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Australian Human Rights Commission Act \(December 2022\)](#), AHRC website, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/complaint-information-service/fact-sheet-respectwork-changes-sex-discrimination-act-1984-ahrc-act-1986-december-2022>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) Workplace Gender Equality Agency [Get future ready: A guide to understanding changes to WGEA's legislation](#), WGEA website, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/about/our-legislation/Closing-the-gender-pay-gap-bill-2023>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Understanding neurodiversity in the APS

The Australian Public Service is working to improve its awareness and understanding of neurodiversity and unlock the benefits of these diverse skills and capabilities.

The 2023 APS Employee Census included a question measuring neurodivergence. Results showed that 7.7% of respondents considered themselves to be neurodivergent. A further 11.5% indicated they were not sure. This is the first time that data of this type has been captured across the APS.

Census data indicated that people who consider themselves to be neurodivergent work across the APS at all classification levels and in all types of roles. They identified as being young and old, and male, female and non-binary. They also identified as coming from a range of cultural backgrounds.

APS agencies are implementing programs to attract and support employees who consider themselves neurodivergent. One of these programs is the Aurora Neurodiversity program at Services Australia. This program helps people with autism start their career in the APS in fields including information and communication technology, data analytics and other professional services.

The Neurodiverse Apollo program at the Department of Home Affairs provides another APS career pathway for neurodivergent people. The recruitment process is supportive and inclusive for neurodiverse candidates. Successful candidates have access to a structured program offering ongoing support and coaching to participants, supervisors and teams.

In late 2022, the APS-wide Public Sector Neurodiversity Community of Practice was established by neurodivergent employees from employee-led diversity networks. Their goal was to spark an ongoing conversation between agencies on the work being done to support and include neurodiversity in the APS. The Community of Practice provides a unique forum for people at all levels to discuss their experiences and share resources. It is an avenue for corporate areas to reach out with consultation opportunities.

In June 2023, 300 employees from over 35 agencies attended the Community of Practice's second APS-wide event. Feedback from attendees was very positive, particularly on the willingness of neurodivergent senior leaders to share their stories.

A GovTEAMS community operated by the Community of Practice is open to all neurodivergent employees and allies. It facilitates the sharing of resources between employees, networks and agencies.





Co-founders Mr Andrew Pfeiffer and Ms Robin Edmonds received the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Secretary's Excellence Award for Inclusion in 2022, for their work establishing the Community of Practice and advocating for neurodiversity inclusion across the APS

Image (from left): PM&C Ability Champion Ms Lee Steel, co-founder Mr Andrew Pfeiffer, PM&C Secretary Glyn Davis, and co-founder Ms Robin Edmonds

### **See also**

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

Australian Government [Public Sector Neurodiversity Community of Practice](#), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-inclusion-news/public-sector-neurodiversity-community-practice>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Aurora Neurodiversity program](#), Services Australia website, <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/aurora-neurodiversity-program?context=1>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government [Neurodiverse Apollo program](#), Department of Home Affairs website, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/careers/neurodiverse-apollo-program/overview>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS employees with disability

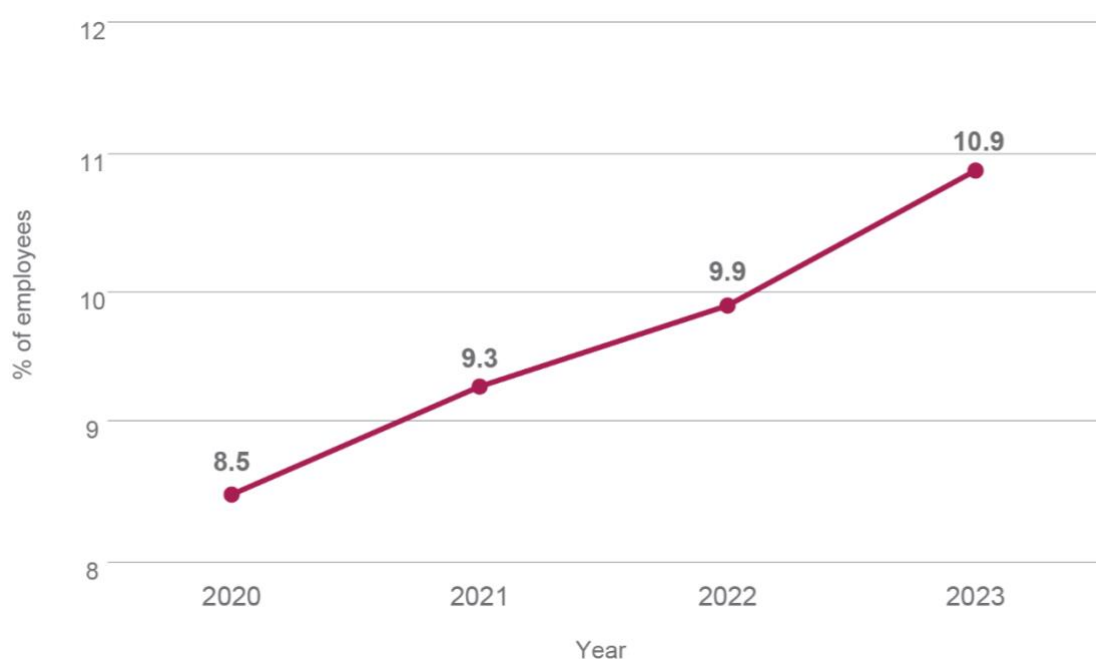
Increasing the employment of people with disability across the Australian Public Service to 7% by 2025 is an Australian Government commitment.

At 30 June 2023, employment data indicated that 5.1% of all APS employees reported they had a disability. Employment data for individual agencies showed that 13 agencies had reached more than 7% representation for people with disability, and 18 others had exceeded 5%.

Since the release of the APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25, the percentage of employees who reported they have a disability in their responses to the APS Employee Census increased from 8.5% in 2020 to 10.9% in 2023 (Figure 2.5). When completing the Census, participants are advised that no identifying information, such as an email address, will be attached to their response. The confidential nature of disclosure is different to reporting disability status within an agency's human resource system which identifies the individual alongside their employment data.

Employees report disability more often in the APS Employee Census than is recorded in employment data. The Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is working to understand and reduce barriers to APS employees sharing diversity information in human resource systems. The project aims to close the gap between disability figures obtained through Australian Public Service Employment Data and disability figures obtained through the APS Employee Census. Work will be completed towards the end of 2023. Project outcomes will help agencies improve their diversity data collection policies and practices and assist the Australian Public Service Commission's diversity and inclusion activities.

**Figure 2.5: Employees who have an ongoing disability (2020 to 2023)**



Source: APS Employee Census

To expand employment opportunities for people with disability, it is critical that the APS exercises best practice in inclusive recruitment. This will provide all candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their capability. It will also maximise the impact of the special provisions for people with disability included in the APS Commissioner's Directions.

The APSC developed and launched the Affirmative Measures – Disability Recruitment Hub (AMDHub) in 2022–23, offering agencies guidance, tools and resources to improve how they attract and recruit people with disability.

The AMD Hub – available on the GovTEAMS portal – is used by more than 70 agencies, including 2 from outside the APS but within the Australian Government public sector. The hub was co-designed with people with disability, recruitment specialists and diversity and inclusion practitioners. It helps agencies shift their perceptions of the way recruitment can be done and build an inclusive recruitment culture.

Guidance is being developed to support agencies who want to advertise suitable positions on The Field. This disability-led platform connects job seekers with disability inclusive organisations. It was developed by the Get Skilled Access organisation and funded by the Department of Social Services.

In support of the development of a broader Employee Value Proposition for people with disability, significant progress has been made to identify accessibility issues across the APS property portfolio. Guidance to assist agencies to address accessibility barriers will be available later in 2023.

Since the launch of the APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25, some agencies have introduced targeted recruitment programs. An example is the Ability Apprenticeship program led by Social Services. This program provides an alternative entry pathway, on-the-job and formal training, and support from a disability employment provider. When the pilot for the program finished (April 2023), 16 positions had been filled. Another 10 positions will be funded in 2023–24.

### **See also**

[Agency benchmarking – APS employment of people with disability](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 149.

[Appendix 1 – APS workforce trends](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 156.

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

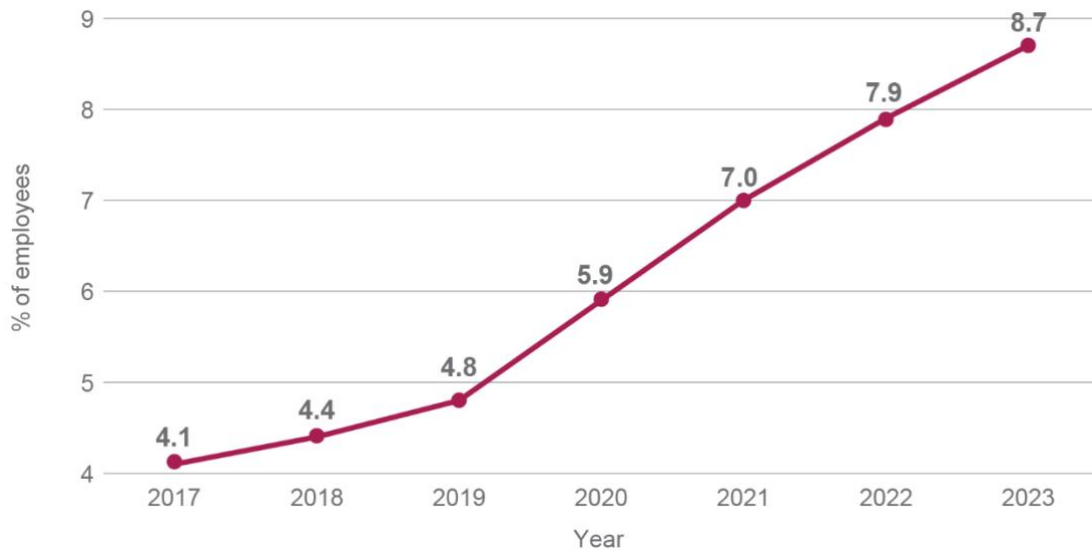
Australian Government (n.d) [APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25](https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/australian-public-service-disability-employment-strategy-2020-25), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/australian-public-service-disability-employment-strategy-2020-25>, accessed 6 September 2023.

Australian Government (n.d) [Ability Apprenticeship program](https://www.dss.gov.au/careers/ability-apprenticeship-program), Department of Social Services website, <https://www.dss.gov.au/careers/ability-apprenticeship-program>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS LGBTIQ+ community

In 2023, 8.7% of Australian Public Service employees identified as LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Questioning and/or Asexual). The proportion has more than doubled since data first became available through the annual APS Employee Census in 2017 (Figure 2.6).

**Figure 2.6: Employees identifying as LGBTIQ+ (2017 to 2023)**



*Source: APS Employee Census*

Celebrating days of significance to the LGBTIQ+ community, such as the International Day Against LGBTIQ+ Discrimination and Wear it Purple, is one important way agencies are building inclusive workplaces for LGBTIQ+ people. Simple steps like encouraging the use of preferred pronouns in email signature blocks serve to demonstrate that agencies and employees welcome people with diverse gender identities.

Employee networks across and within agencies are working hard to ensure APS workplaces provide environments in which everyone can perform at their best. During this year's Pride month, the Pride Network at the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts hosted a Pride Prom Happy Hour. This provided the LGBTIQ+ community with a safe space to be themselves and celebrate diversity. Services Australia's Rainbow Roundtable meets regularly to better understand workplace culture and involve employees in the development of LGBTIQ+ initiatives.





*Ms Hannah Venn-Brown, Co-chair of Services Australia's Rainbow Roundtable, celebrating Mardi Gras*

LGBTIQA+ allies take action to support and advocate for the equal treatment of a community other than their own, even when it is challenging to do so. When a person displays visible LGBTIQA+ symbols of inclusion, they are signalling that they are someone who understands and supports those who identify as part of the LGBTIQA+ community.

**See also**

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

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# Working in the APS



The Australian Public Service is positioning itself as a model employer, where employees understand their role, feel supported and have terms and conditions that are fair and flexible.

Working in the APS requires commitment to the values and behaviours set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*. In 2023, the Australian Government proposed that stewardship become legislated as an APS Value. This highlights that all employees have a responsibility to support the enduring success of the APS as well as the ongoing and sustainable delivery of Government policies and programs.

Future work to support the APS in articulating our role and purpose will align with the existing provisions under the Act and serve as a mechanism to develop a unifying vision that actively engages public servants in connecting their work to the APS purpose. Consultation has begun, with a diverse group of employees from across the APS coming together to discuss and articulate the purpose of our work, based on legislative obligations and values.

The Australian Government has re-introduced service-wide bargaining, negotiating pay and common conditions on behalf of 103 APS agencies. It is expected to deliver the largest pay increase in more than a decade to over 160,000 employees. Work continues to address salary differences between APS agencies over time. The Government is considering the recommendations of the Review of the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1979*.

The Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee is supporting various priority actions to assist the APS to attract and retain talent in competitive labour markets and build more effective, diverse and inclusive workplaces. These include the APS Employee Value Proposition, an APS-wide approach to flexible work, an APS Location Strategy and action plan, reducing reliance on contractors and consultants and improvements to APS hiring practices.

APS employees are responding well to the changes taking place in 2022–23 and engagement levels remain high. The year has been challenging for some on a personal level, with a number of public inquiries into the work of the APS including the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme. Employee wellbeing is a priority and support continues to be available, including in the area of mental health.

## Embedding stewardship as an APS Value

The Australian Government introduced the Public Service Amendment Bill 2023 to Parliament in June 2023 to amend the *Public Service Act 1999*. One proposed change is to add stewardship as an Australian Public Service Value:

Stewardship – The APS builds its capability and institutional knowledge and supports the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what it does.

This proposed new value aligns with the Australian Government's priority for an APS that embodies integrity in everything it does. It highlights the important and enduring role that all public servants play in stewarding the APS, and serving the Government, Parliament and Australian public. Stewardship underpins the integrity of advice and implementation of Government policies and programs. It also builds trust through the collective harnessing of experience, diversity and resources for the ongoing and sustainable delivery of policies and programs.

Stewardship captures the notion of responsibility for how an institution performs now and into the future. It is central to a trusted, professional and high-performing public service. It means taking steps today to ensure the APS is equipped to address tomorrow's challenges and continues to support the Australian Government and the Parliament and meet the interests of the Australian community.

Early in 2023, all APS employees were encouraged to put forward their views on what stewardship means to them and their role. Over 1,500 submissions were received. Around 90% of respondents said that they saw themselves as stewards in their workplace.

Most respondents suggested that stewardship means taking care for the long-term and future generations, maintaining knowledge and responsible management.

Most respondents suggested that acting like stewards includes:

- sharing knowledge
- providing advice on long-term impacts
- supporting employees to grow capability
- maintaining information
- ensuring good record keeping
- building better and lasting systems.

Respondent insights will be used in embedding stewardship as an APS Value, including through updates to the APS Commissioner's Directions and in guidance materials.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Reform outcomes and initiatives](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/about-aps-reform/our-focus-areas), APS Reform website, <https://www.apsreform.gov.au/about-aps-reform/our-focus-areas>, accessed 5 October 2023.



## A new approach to APS workplace relations

A new approach to workplace relations is being implemented by the Australian Government with the release of the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2023 in March 2023.

This policy aims to ensure that the Australian Government is a model employer, a key Australian Public Service reform priority. It supports APS-wide bargaining to reduce differences in pay and conditions between APS agencies and deliver service-wide pay increases.

APS-wide enterprise bargaining began on 30 March 2023 for APS and Executive Level employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The Workplace Relations Bargaining Taskforce managed negotiations for pay and common conditions on behalf of more than 100 APS agencies. It did so by hearing and considering over 1,600 claims from unions and other employee representatives and by developing and consulting on more than 90 proposed common conditions.

On 29 August 2023, the Australian Government tabled its improved pay offer to APS employees, as part of the bargaining process. Over 160,000 APS employees were offered an 11.2% pay increase over 3 years, the highest in more than a decade.

Salary differences between APS agencies are being addressed by creating a base salary range at each APS classification, from APS 1 to EL 2.

Service-wide bargaining will deliver innovative solutions to workforce pressures and initiate significant reforms to APS terms and conditions of employment. This includes:

- an embedded APS-wide approach to flexible work
- significant improvements to parental leave
- improved conditions for First Nations and culturally diverse people.

Agencies are negotiating separately with their employees on any specific requirements, with enterprise agreements expected to be finalised by early 2024.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS bargaining](https://www.apsc.gov.au/apsbargaining), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/apsbargaining>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Workplace Relations](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workplace-relations), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workplace-relations>, accessed 5 October 2023.

# Review of the Maternity Leave Act

The first substantial review of the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973* in more than 40 years was completed by the Australian Public Service Commission in 2023.

The review explored:

- parental leave eligibility and entitlements
- health needs of pregnant employees
- flexibility for all parents
- superannuation issues
- ease of administration.

Review findings were published on 20 June 2023. They suggested that new legislation be enacted to provide a contemporary framework for parental leave support that is flexible and inclusive of all parents and families.

Twenty-six recommendations aim to increase support to parents to make a successful transition to family life, protect and advance women's economic equality, and provide greater flexibility.

Recommendations include:

- 6 weeks paid pregnancy leave
- 18 weeks paid parental leave for new parents, with flexibility of use
- paid leave for stillbirth and pregnancy loss
- salary increment and employer superannuation payments during parental leave
- paid lactation breaks and access to breastfeeding facilities on return to work.

The review underlines the need for competitive conditions, so the Australian Government remains an employer of choice.

While the 1973 Act was groundbreaking for its time, community standards have evolved. Today, women are looking to advance their careers while having families. Partners are seeking to share more equally in the care of their children.

The Government is considering all review recommendations. Any changes to legislation or other recommended entitlements will be subject to future decisions. As an interim step, some parental leave recommendations have been considered as proposed common conditions in APS-wide bargaining, to be delivered in agency-level enterprise agreements.

The review received nearly 190 public submissions from Australian Government agencies, individuals, academics, employee networks, unions and peak bodies.

## **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Maternity Leave Act review report](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workplace-relations/maternity-leave-act-review-report), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workplace-relations/maternity-leave-act-review-report>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Flexible and remote work

A service-wide, principles-based approach to embedding flexibility into ways of working in the Australian Public Service was endorsed by the Secretaries Board in March 2023.

Greater use of flexible work helps the APS:

- attract and retain talent in competitive labour markets
- build more diverse and inclusive workplaces
- support employee wellbeing
- improve workforce resilience
- improve capacity to maintain business continuity.

The Principles of Flexible Work in the APS provide a framework for considering flexible arrangements that meet the needs of the organisation, team and individual. They outline that in the APS:

- flexibility applies to all roles, with different types suitable for different roles
- flexibility needs to be mutually beneficial for the organisation, team and individual
- organisational and team needs frame conversations about individual flexibility arrangements
- flexible work arrangements value meaningful and regular face-to-face contact
- flexibility is embedded, modelled and refined.

The Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee developed these principles through extensive consultation with APS agencies and research into best-practice approaches. These approaches are offered by other Australian and international employers in both public and private sectors.

The Principles of Flexible Work in the APS were considered during the service-wide bargaining process. Following agreement, agencies will align individual departmental flexible work policies with the final APS-wide approach.

An APS Location Strategy is being developed to support agencies in making decisions about the geographic location of their workforce. The option for employees to operate from different locations presents opportunities to tap into the national talent pool. It helps to address workforce pressures by increasing access to skilled workers.

Current APS recruitment efforts are often Canberra-centric and tend to attract existing employees. The broader labour market, however, tends to be located in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. For example, in 2022–23, almost 50% of the accounting and finance job family engaged by the APS were Canberra-based. However, close to 98% of the national workforce employed in these occupations were located outside of the nation's capital (around 79% in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria). Only around 40% of the APS roles within the accounting and finance job family are based in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

The APS Location Strategy is expected to be finalised in early 2024. Its aim is to ensure the APS has the right people to meet existing and emerging workforce demands. The strategy will include an action plan to help agencies implement the approach.

The Principles of Flexible Work in the APS and the APS Location Strategy support the Australian Government's APS Reform agenda by helping to position the service as a model employer, with the capability it needs to do its job well.

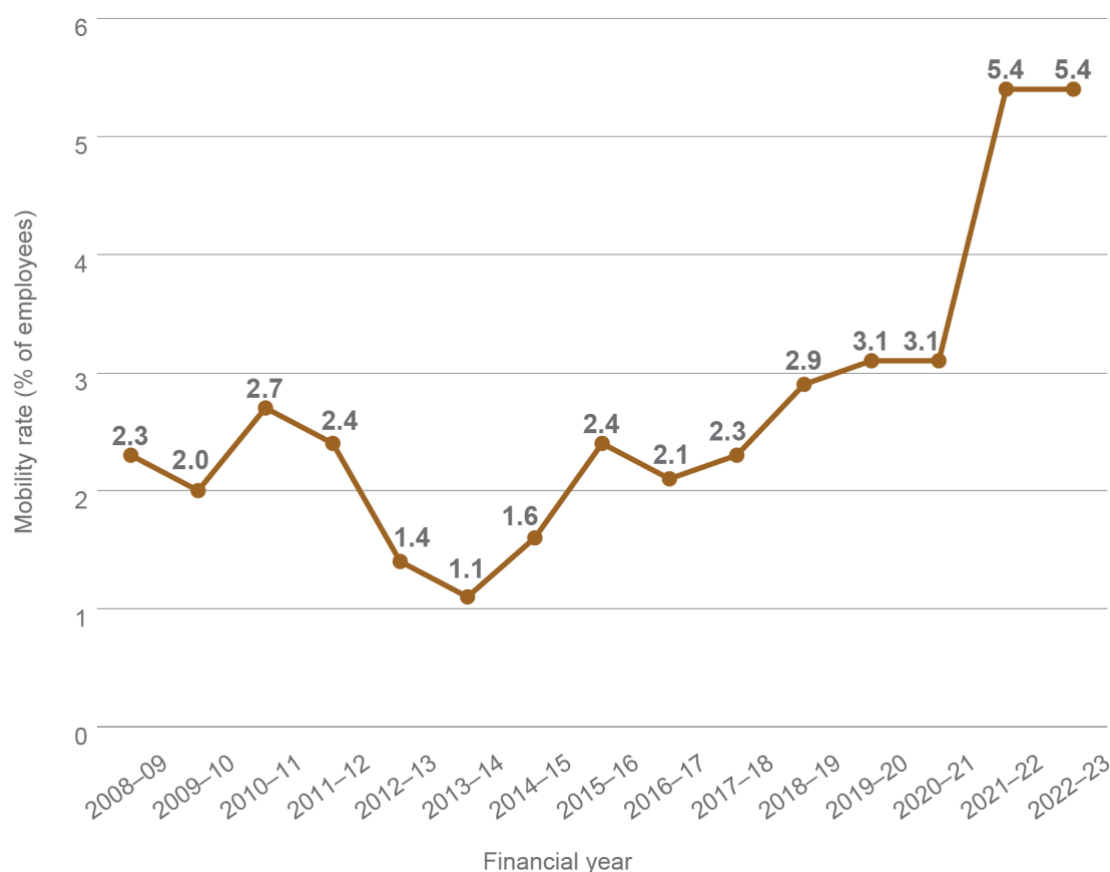
**See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Principles of Flexible Work in the APS](https://www.apsc.gov.au/news-and-events/latest-news/principles-flexible-work-aps), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/news-and-events/latest-news/principles-flexible-work-aps>, accessed 14 July 2023.

## Mobility in the APS

Movement of ongoing Australian Public Service employees between agencies on a permanent basis continued at a historically high level in 2022–23, at 7,945 employees or 5.4% of ongoing employees (Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1: Mobility rates for ongoing employees (2008–09 to 2022–23)**



Source: APSED

Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025 identifies employee mobility as a key strategic workforce management tool. It highlights the importance of removing barriers to movement. Work is ongoing to continually improve the platforms and systems that facilitate the movement of employees and support an agile workforce.

In addition to the movement of employees on a permanent basis between agencies, the ability and willingness of employees to move to different roles on a temporary basis provides many opportunities. This includes opportunities to build skills and experience, progress careers and keep engaged in their workplace. In the 2023 APS Employee Census, 22% of respondents reported barriers to seeking a temporary move, down from 28% in 2022 and 29% in 2021.

The APS Jobs website remains the focal point for advertising roles in the APS, including ongoing roles for engagement, promotion or transfer. In 2022–23:

- 22,900 job vacancies were listed on APS Jobs
- 3,574,800 visits were made to the website's home page by 454,900 users
- 14,530,000 visits were made to the job search page by 956,300 users.

A new section on APS Jobs was launched by the Australian Public Service Commission in June 2022 to make it easier for Australian Government employees to apply for short-term roles in the APS. In 2022–23, 84 agencies used the page to list 1,037 temporary job opportunities.

The ability to register for the APS Surge Reserve was added to APS Jobs in February 2023. Employees can now sign up and identify themselves as available for a temporary move to another agency at short notice to deliver critical services in times of crisis. At 30 June 2023, 1,138 APS employees had registered.

From September 2022, agencies have been able to access thousands of current merit lists online, making it easier to leverage recruitment activity across the APS to fill similar vacancies.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Workforce Strategy 2025](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-workforce-strategy-2025), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-workforce-strategy-2025>, accessed 5 October 2023.

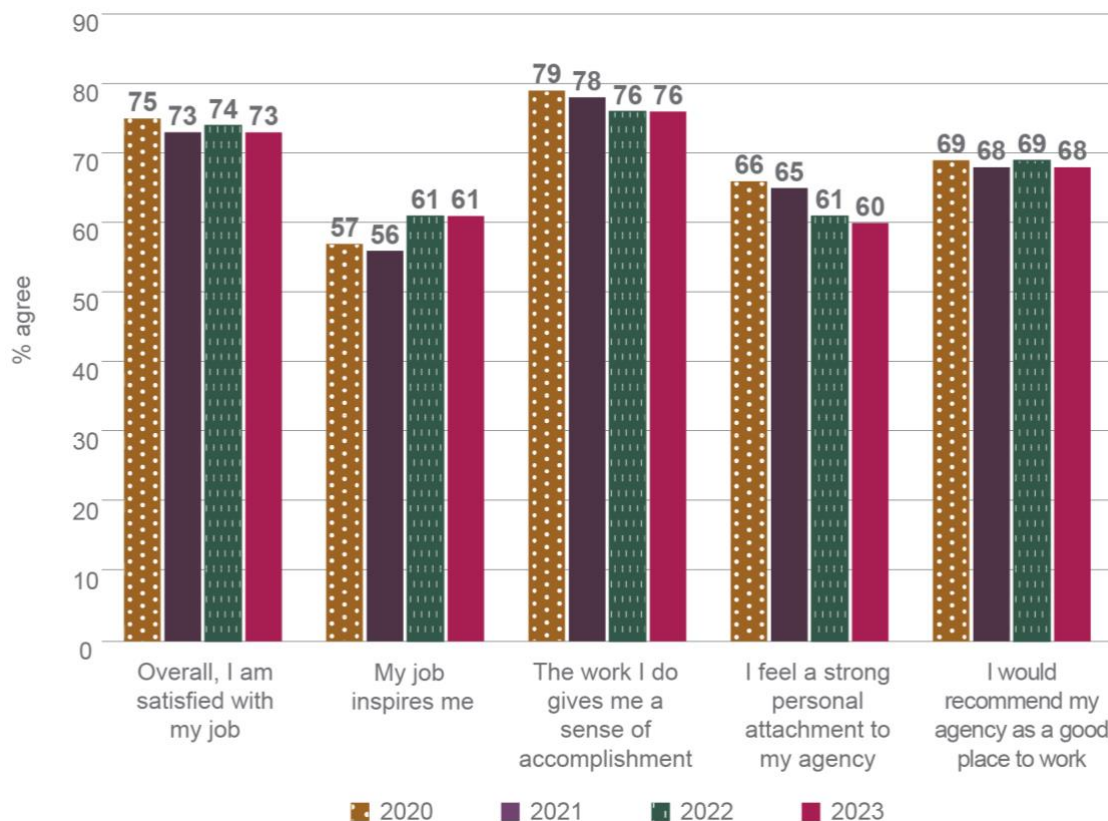
Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Jobs – Gateway to the Australian Public Service, APS Jobs website](https://www.apsjobs.gov.au/s/) <https://www.apsjobs.gov.au/s/>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS employee engagement

Employees in the Australian Public Service show consistently high overall levels of job satisfaction and engagement.

In the 2023 APS Employee Census, around three-quarters of APS employees expressed job satisfaction (73%) and that their work gave them a sense of accomplishment (76%). More than two-thirds (68%) said they would recommend their agency as a good place to work (Figure 3.2).

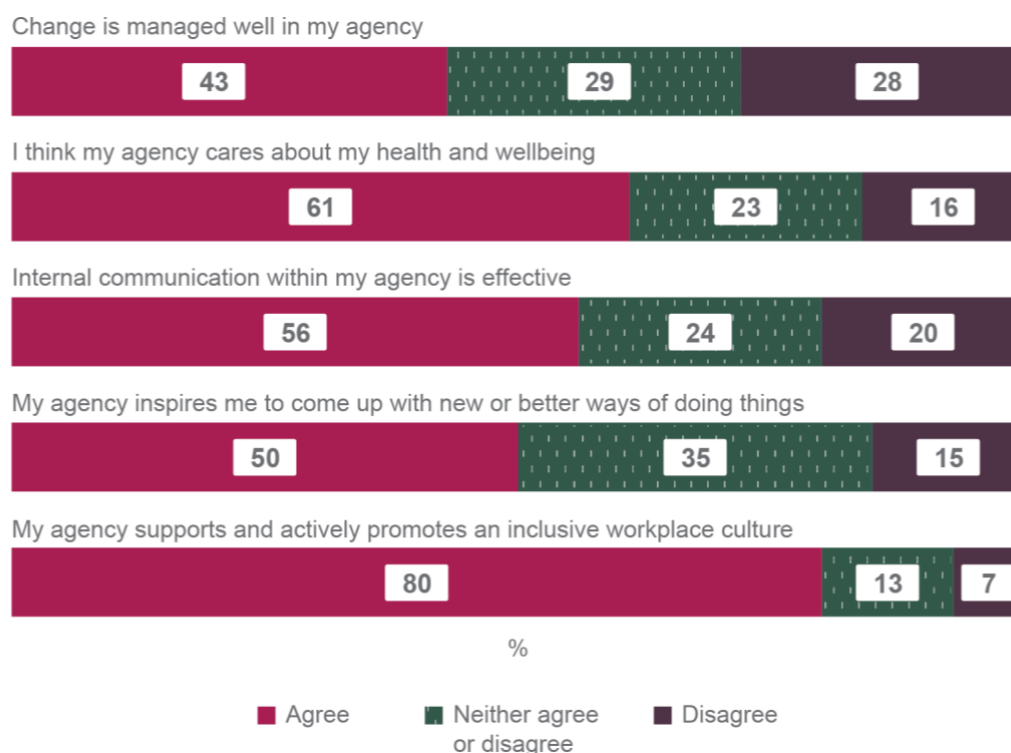
**Figure 3.2: Employee experiences (2020 to 2023)**



Source: APS Employee Census

Employees who are engaged in their work are more productive and innovative than those who are not. In response to the 2023 APS Employee Census, employee engagement was most associated with perceptions in the 5 areas shown in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3: Employee perceptions most associated with employee engagement (2023)**



Source: APS Employee Census

These findings suggest that the workplace environment created in organisations directly affects levels of employee engagement. APS agencies looking to boost employee engagement are advised to:

- ensure an inclusive workplace culture
- encourage continuous improvement and innovation
- ensure effective internal communication
- demonstrate a commitment to the health and wellbeing of employees
- manage change well.

Improvements in these areas can lead to higher levels of employee engagement and performance.

While levels of employee engagement are high overall for the APS, results vary significantly across agencies.

### **See also**

[Agency benchmarking – Employee engagement](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 132.



## Supporting mental health and wellbeing

The Connections: Core capabilities for workplace peer supporters' program was launched in April 2023. Connections was launched by the Australian Public Service Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit, in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs, APS peer supporters and senior executives.

Investing in workplace relationships is important to overall mental health and wellbeing in the APS, particularly given that 2023 APS Employee Census results indicated a substantial proportion of employees find their roles emotionally demanding. Well-developed peer support networks can serve an important role in mitigating the impacts of emotionally demanding work as they create and harness valuable opportunities for staff to connect and share.

A growing contingent of APS employees – in addition to their regular roles – are choosing to put their hand up to support the mental health and wellbeing of their co-workers. A capability program that focuses on developing the skills and capability of peer supporters has the potential to achieve far-reaching benefits for all APS employees.

Connections is focused on the interpersonal and wellbeing aspects of peer support. It builds the relational capability of peer supporters in the workplace. The program uniquely embeds First Nations knowledge to provide a deep and holistic perspective on wellbeing and connection.

Since its launch, over 500 APS employees have enrolled in the course. Alongside Connections, comprehensive guidance is available for agencies on designing and implementing peer support programs.

Connections is an evidence-informed program. It was co-designed by peer supporters, First Nations employees, psychologists, and human resource practitioners across the APS. Connections is part of the broader systems transformation work being led by the APS Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit. This work is to grow mental health and suicide prevention capability in the service, through alignment with the APS Mental Health Capability Framework.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit](https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aps-mental-health-and-suicide-prevention-unit#aps-mental-health-capability-framework-), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aps-mental-health-and-suicide-prevention-unit#aps-mental-health-capability-framework->, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Connections: Core capabilities for workplace peer supporters](https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/connections-core-capabilities-workplace-peer-supporters), APS Academy website, <https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/connections-core-capabilities-workplace-peer-supporters>, accessed 5 October 2023.

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Positioning the Australian Public Service as a model employer is a key priority in a challenging labour market. This includes communicating an Employee Value Proposition to lift the profile of APS employment, to help attract and retain talent.

Research indicates a lack of public awareness about the work of the APS, and extensive consultation is underway to develop an APS Employee Value Proposition based on the lived experience of a wide range of APS employees. Providing opportunities for interesting work and career progression is also important - for employees and for capability uplift across the service. The APS is rebalancing its workforce to reduce reliance on external contractors and consultants, including through the establishment of Australian Government Consulting.

User friendly, coordinated entry pathways are essential for attracting talented candidates. The Australian Government Career Pathways initiative is providing these, including for graduates who are now applying for APS jobs and being engaged in record numbers. To secure an ongoing pipeline of graduates for specialist roles, APS Academy Campuses are now operating in Newcastle and Townsville.

Strategic workforce planning is central to the ability of the APS to deliver. More agencies are identifying and managing emerging critical skills shortages and labour market risks, supported by centralised workforce planning tools, guidance, development opportunities and hands-on assistance. The re-introduction of capability reviews helps agencies to look forward and assess future needs. The insights these reviews provide will help embed a culture of continuous improvement in the APS.

Lifelong, peer-supported, relevant learning for employees at all levels is supported by the work of the APS Academy and the APS Professions. New social learning programs that are practical and cohort-based provide opportunities for specialist development and expanding professional networks. The APS Academy is continuing its focus on APS Craft – building the core capabilities to strengthen excellence in public service.

## Attracting and retaining employees

Positioning the Australian Public Service as a model employer is a key priority for the Australian Government. Developing and communicating a strong Employee Value Proposition for the APS to attract and retain employees will help meet this objective.

Extensive research has been undertaken to better understand:

- public perceptions of the APS as an employer
- what candidates are looking for in an employer
- what employees find rewarding about a career in the APS.

A strong, contemporary and well-communicated Employee Value Proposition is essential to maintaining a skilled and talented workforce into the future. It is a set of attributes that the labour market and current employees perceive as the value they gain through employment with an employer. Such a proposition can help employees and candidates evaluate and compare potential employers and help employers attract and retain talent by providing a clear statement of what they offer.

Research conducted by the Australian Public Service Commission highlights a lack of public awareness of employment opportunities within the APS. In a 2023 survey into public perceptions of the APS as an employer, the most common reason for respondents not seeking APS employment was a lack of awareness of the service as an employer. This is supported by findings from the 2023 New Starters Survey, which found that almost half (45%) of new starters had previously worked for the APS before starting in an ongoing role. These findings present significant opportunities for the APS to attract and retain talent from outside of the service by lifting its employer profile.

Potential APS Employee Value Proposition attributes were tested against the lived experience of a wide range of APS employees across 42 agencies through a series of co-design sessions held in April and May 2023. The sessions provided an opportunity to collate employee thoughts, stories and experiences about working in the APS, which will feature strongly in the APS Employee Value Proposition communications approach.

Following its release in late 2023, the APS Employee Value Proposition will be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to reflect the strengths of the APS employee offer and remains contemporary in the employment market.

Work is also underway to examine ways to attract and retain specialists, and to develop tools and resources to support reskilling and upskilling of employees to meet emerging capability needs.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/future-of-work-sub-committee), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/future-of-work-sub-committee>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Rebalancing the APS workforce

Priority actions to rebalance the Australian Public Service workforce are being progressed by the Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee. This includes work to reduce reliance on contractors and consultants, and to attract and retain talent.

This work supports the Australian Government's reform agenda to ensure the APS is a model employer and has the capability to do its job well. It supports the 2022–23 Budget commitment to achieve savings of \$3.6 billion over 4 years, by reducing spending on external labour, advertising, and travel and legal expenses.

The Australian Government values the expertise of the APS and its role in delivering quality advice to the Government and services to the Australian community. To improve the APS's ability to fulfil this role, various reviews have highlighted a need for the service to reduce its reliance on external labour hire and strengthen its internal capability.

With the APS doing more itself, there will be further opportunities for direct employment and more varied and interesting work opportunities for employees. This will build employee capability and improve the Employee Value Proposition. In turn, this will help with retention and the ability to attract new talent.

The APS Audit of Employment, completed in May 2023, brought together information on the use of external labour by 112 agencies employing staff under the *Public Service Act 1999*. It found that in 2021–22, these agencies employed an external labour workforce of 53,911 employees (on a full-time equivalent basis) at a cost of \$20.8 billion. By way of comparison, the direct employment of public servants in these APS agencies over the same time period was 144,271.

This implies that in 2021–22, the Australian Government workforce (public servants plus external labour) was around 37% larger than the workforce measured by public servant numbers alone.

Activities underway to rebalance the APS workforce include:

- an APS Strategic Commissioning Framework to provide principles-based guidance for agencies to support decisions about when to use internal APS resources, or when it may be appropriate to use the external workforce
- an in-house consulting capability to provide high-quality management consulting services quickly and at lower cost than external firms, reducing over-reliance on external consultants while strengthening internal APS capabilities
- an APS Employee Value Proposition and implementation strategy, to support the attraction and retention of employees.

Rebalancing the workforce will take time, and investment in employee capability will continue to be prioritised. However, in the immediate future, APS workplaces will use the best possible mix of internal and external expertise to deliver in complex operating environments.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring ongoing capability of the public service by maintaining a strong, responsive and apolitical APS. A reduction in the number of consultants and contractors, and the strengthening of APS capability are part of this commitment.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Strategic Commissioning Framework](https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework>, accessed 25 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [The Australian Government's report on the Audit of Employment](https://www.finance.gov.au/publications/reviews/australian-governments-report-audit-employment), Department of Finance website, <https://www.finance.gov.au/publications/reviews/australian-governments-report-audit-employment>, accessed 5 October 2023.

# Australian Government Consulting

Creating an in-house consulting capability to reduce over-reliance on external consultants is an Australian Government commitment.

From late 2023, Australian Government Consulting will provide a new source of high-quality management consulting services for the Australian Public Service. This will support Government priorities quickly and at a lower cost than external firms, while strengthening internal APS capabilities.

Policy and service development is the core business of the APS. Bringing core work back into the APS will strengthen the integrity of public policymaking, build capability and save money.

AGC will benefit the public service through 3 related functions:

- delivering core strategic consulting projects
- strengthening APS capability through consulting practitioner skillset transfer and leveraging existing APS capability through a Specialist Network
- supporting agencies to achieve better value when engaging external consultants.

AGC will apply a rigorous, structured problem-solving methodology combining the best of public sector expertise and private sector approaches to quickly bring clarity to a client's challenges.

Clients will have the opportunity to practise and implement in-house consulting methodologies through a collaborative approach to project delivery. Over time, the tested approaches to capability uplift can be rolled out across the APS.

The AGC's Specialist Network of existing APS specialist services also allows experts to be seconded into project teams, bringing relevant expertise together on a particular problem.

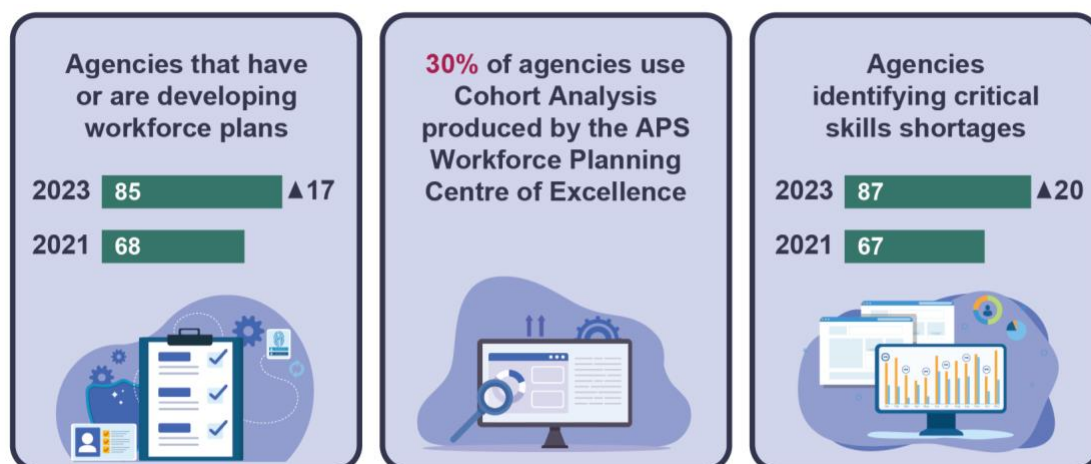
The Australian Government has committed \$10.9 million over 2 years from July 2023 to create the in-house consulting capability for the APS.

## **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Albanese Government's APS Reform agenda](https://ministers.pmc.gov.au/gallagher/2022/albanese-governments-aps-reform-agenda), PM&C website, <https://ministers.pmc.gov.au/gallagher/2022/albanese-governments-aps-reform-agenda>, accessed 27 July 2023.

## Strategic workforce planning

The number of agencies developing and implementing workforce plans and identifying critical skills shortages has increased significantly. The increase has occurred since the Australian Public Service Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning was established in 2020 and the Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025 was launched in 2021.



*Agency workforce plans and critical skills shortages*

*Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey*

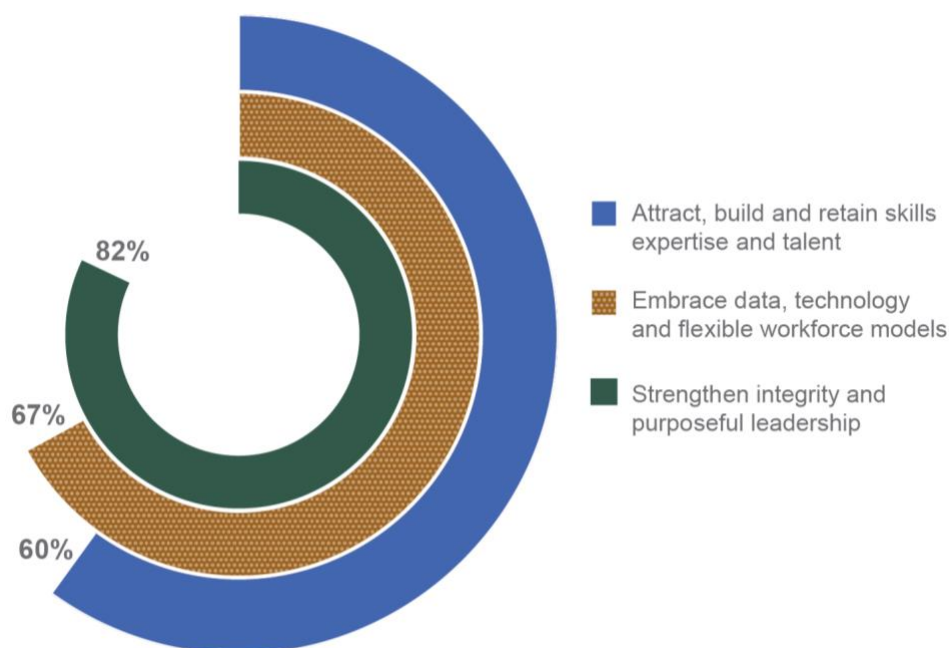
In 2023, a mid-point evaluation of the strategy was conducted and progress towards its 3 priority workforce actions assessed. Implementation of each action is well underway (Figure 4.1).

The evaluation also found positive workforce changes from 2019. Agencies are looking to better harness capability from within the service through temporary transfers.

Strategy implementation has been further strengthened by work on attraction and retention undertaken by the Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee, and through the APS Reform agenda.



**Figure 4.1: Completed priority workforce strategy actions**



*Source: Mid-point evaluation of the Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025*

Since 2020, the APS Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning has worked with the APS Academy to deliver foundational and technical training in workforce planning for more than 1,000 practitioners, managers and leaders. Over the last 2 years, 16 APS agencies (including the 4 extra-large agencies) received customised hands-on strategic workforce planning and development support through the centre's advisory service.

The centre assists agencies by:

- providing policy tools, best-practice guides and in-depth analyses of critical job families and targeted workforce plans
- facilitating coaching, mentoring and peer review
- supporting a 1,000-strong community practice that spans more than 100 agencies across all states and territories
- advising on APS-wide strategic workforce management projects.

The centre also strengthens workforce planning capability in the broader Pacific region, delivering strategic workforce planning training and advisory services to 62 participants spanning 6 Pacific public services. It contributes to shaping strategic workforce development and management in the public sector globally through representational roles to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Public Employment and Management Committee.

### **See also**

[Appendix 6 – APS workforce planning](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 209.

Australian Government (n.d.), [APS Workforce Strategy 2025](#), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-workforce-strategy-2025>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Career Pathways

The Australian Government Career Pathways initiative has grown to include 10 graduate streams and multiple other pathway programs, facilitating first steps for a career in the public service.

The initiative plays an important role in ensuring the Government maintains a strong presence in the job marketplace as an employer of choice. A coordinated approach and positive user experience is key to securing talent. This encourages members of the community to locate and apply for diverse roles across the public sector and provides a pipeline of employees with priority skills and capabilities.

Using the One-APS model, individual Australian Public Service agencies conduct recruitment processes on behalf of the whole service, supported by the Australian Public Service Commission which provides coordination, central marketing and best-practice guidance across all programs.

The 10 streams available in the APS Graduate Development Program now include the legal, finance, human resource and digital professions. As at June 2023, the program had grown to over 1,400 positions, an increase of 180% from June 2021. Over 7,000 new applications were received, representing a 28% increase on application numbers from the previous financial year.

A range of other programs attract and support employees with varying levels of experience and education. This includes cadetships, traineeships and mentoring programs, and opportunities to obtain vocational qualifications.

Applicants can self-select which program aligns with their studies and professional development needs. Once successful in their application, participants are supported to continue to develop in their chosen pathway.

Secretaries Board has agreed to expand the APS-wide approach to attraction and recruitment to all entry level and career change programs under the umbrella of the Career Pathways initiative.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d) [Career Pathways](https://www.apsjobs.gov.au/s/career-pathways-home), APS Jobs website, <https://www.apsjobs.gov.au/s/career-pathways-home>, accessed 24 July 2023.

## APS Professions

Australian Public Service Professions contribute to ensuring the APS has the workforce it needs. Since its launch in 2019, APS Professions has done so by focusing on the attraction, development, retention and deployment of specialist capability in the public service.

Increased competition for talent and the changing nature of work is increasing demand for those with high levels of skills. Professional streams help lift capability in critical skills areas and support agencies to find and develop the skills they need now and in the future.

The APS has professional streams for digital, data and human resources. Across more than 150 agencies, including from state and territory governments, there are over:

- 10,000 members in the Digital Profession
- 6,000 members in the Data Profession
- 5,000 members in the Human Resources Profession.

The design of each profession is tailored to the needs of that profession and informed by future service-wide demand. The Australian Public Service Commission supports collaboration across professions and provides advice on recruitment, career pathways and capability development.

A number of emerging talent programs are in place for the professions, increasing the talent pipeline for specialist roles across the APS workforce. In 2023, the APSC opened the first APS Academy Campus in Newcastle, and it now supports 22 data and digital cadets and one digital apprentice across 8 agencies. The Townsville Campus recently opened and has 8 cadets representing 3 agencies.



*Minister for the Public Service, Sen the Hon Katy Gallagher, launches the APS Academy Campus at the University of Newcastle*

*Image: University of Newcastle*

For employees, membership in a professional stream can build skills and enhance career opportunities through access to specialist advice and training, and better communication and connection with others in the field.

For agencies, professional streams provide an opportunity for a coordinated approach to identifying skills, addressing gaps and developing initiatives to engage and retain employees in high demand, specialist areas.

**See also**

[Appendix 6 – APS workforce planning](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 209.

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Professions](#), APS Academy website, <https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/aps-professions>, accessed 1 August 2023.

# APS Academy

The Australian Public Service Academy continues to build capability in the core skills that define excellence in public service – APS Craft. During its second year of operations, the APS Academy is strengthening whole-of-APS capability through a focus on practitioner-led learning and partnering across the network to identify and scale learning offerings in craft domains.

The APS Academy operates as a networked hub of learning and development excellence to leverage expertise from across the APS, academia and the private sector, connecting learners with experts in their field.

The APS Academy has recently partnered with APS agencies to deliver a number of flagship offerings. Examples include:

- Delivering Great Policy, developed with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and covering the key elements of delivering policy advice
- Strengthening Partnerships with ministers and their offices, developed with an expert panel to help every APS employee understand their role and the role of their minister and ministerial advisers
- APS Unlocked, which brings together new and returning members of the service with experienced APS leaders and practitioners, to share information and experiences for a successful and productive start in the service.

Specialised APS Craft programs are delivered through an annual calendar, focussing on building foundational, practitioner and lead capabilities in the APS. These include senior leadership programs (Senior Executive Service Band 1 to 3), foundational and SES-level integrity offerings, Excellence in Regulation and the APS Indo-Pacific executive development program.

The integrated approach to building capability is guided by Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025 and Highly Capable-Future Ready: APS Learning and Development Strategy and Action Plan.

Established in July 2021, the APS Academy's mission is to foster an APS-wide culture of learning that builds core public service capabilities and drives high performance. It operates in support of the broader APS reform agenda and is central to the Government's priorities of integrity, putting people at the centre and driving a continuous learning culture for public service excellence.

## **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [The role of the APS Academy](https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/), APS Academy website, <https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Highly Capable, Future-Ready: APS Learning and Development Strategy](https://www.apsc.gov.au/learning-and-development/highly-capable-future-ready-aps-learning-and-development-strategy), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/learning-and-development/highly-capable-future-ready-aps-learning-and-development-strategy>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Cohort-based social learning

The Australian Public Service Academy is using cohort-based social learning to put the APS Learning and Development Strategy and Continuous Learning Model front and centre in the APS Graduate Development and APS Leadership Edge programs.

In cohort-based social learning, participants engage in a program alongside a group of peers, sharing knowledge and work experiences with others and fostering strong connections. Cohorts comprise up to 50 learners from a wide range of APS agencies learning with and from each other.

The APS Graduate Development Program was redesigned and expanded earlier in 2023, using the cohort-based social learning model. The program supports new graduate employees to develop foundational skills, behaviours, mindsets and networks that will assist them throughout their APS career.

The program includes a series of events, boot camps and collaborative projects to facilitate peer-to-peer learning (Figure 4.2). In the workplace, graduates rotate to different roles and have access to coaching sessions.

**Figure 4.2: The Graduate Expedition**



Image: Cahoot Learning

APS Leadership Edge is a program designed for Executive Level 2 employees to further develop leadership and management skills. It comprises independent online and real-time cohort activities, providing opportunities to embed learnings through practical application and to expand professional networks across the APS. Over 7 months, 4 courses of 3 to 5 hours are delivered in 2-week periods. In between courses, participants are encouraged to embed their learning in their work practices through activities and weekly check-ins.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [The APS Graduate Development Program](https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/aps-craft/working-government/aps-graduate-development-program), APS Academy website, <https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/aps-craft/working-government/aps-graduate-development-program>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Leadership Edge](https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/aps-leadership-edge), APS Academy website, <https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/aps-leadership-edge>, accessed 5 October 2023.

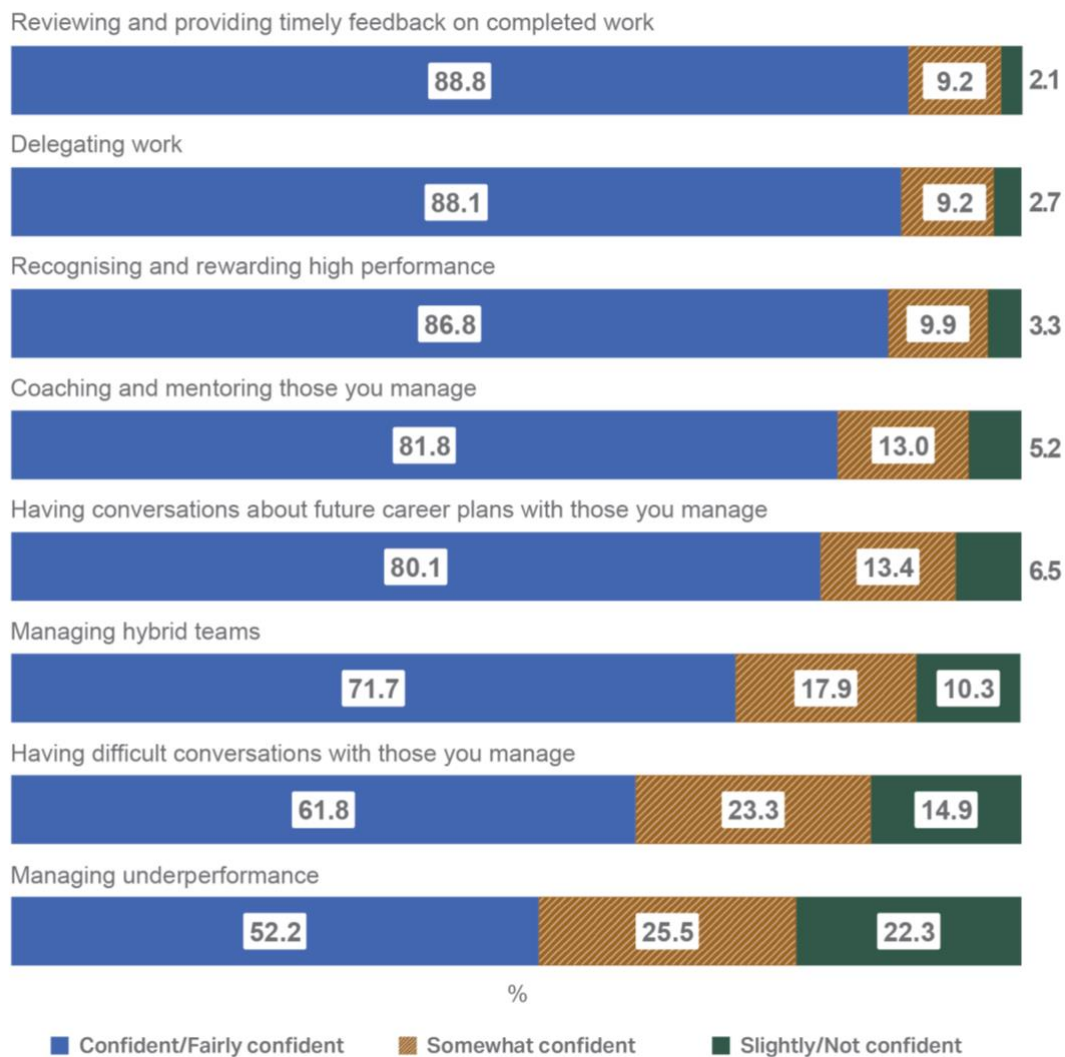


## Experience and capability of APS managers

In November 2022, the Australian Public Service Commission explored levels of experience held by managers in the Australian Public Service, and how managers approach the development of their management capability.

A survey of more than 5,000 employees across the service found that APS managers are generally confident in undertaking most management-related tasks (Figure 4.3). Some, however, report a lack of confidence in their ability to deal with difficult conversations, underperformance and managing hybrid and remote teams.

**Figure 4.3: Confidence in completing management tasks (2023)**



Source: APS Management Survey

The areas APS managers find challenging commonly require highly-developed interpersonal and communication skills to build healthy manager-employee relationships based on trust.



Other management survey findings are that:

- managers most commonly developed their managerial capabilities by seeking advice and feedback from others – more than half of respondents (62%) had completed formal leadership training and another 59% had received mentoring and coaching
- those completing formal leadership training most commonly accessed training provided by their agency, and just under one-quarter (23%) had completed a course offered by the APS Academy or APSC
- more than half (51%) who had completed a form of formal leadership training said it was extremely or very helpful in improving their managerial capabilities
- just under two-thirds (63%) thought their most recent period of mentoring/coaching was extremely or very helpful in improving their managerial capabilities
- most managers (80%) indicated they would take up opportunities to develop their managerial capabilities
- around half of managers were interested in developing their ability to manage underperformance (50%) and resolve conflict and mediate (46%)
- managers indicated they would like to continue to develop their managerial capability through formal leadership training (58%), mentoring or coaching (56%) and applying their skills in new and challenging opportunities (56%).

To help build management skills, the APS Academy offers a range of leadership and management courses including the Working Effectively series for APS Executive Level employees and Management in Action for APS 5 to EL 1 officers.

A new approach to developing manager capability at the EL 2 level is being implemented. The APS Leadership Edge program is designed and delivered by APS practitioners and subject matter experts. It is based on a cross-agency, cohort-based social learning model which offers participants flexibility to learn in the flow of their work without interrupting agency operations.

# Capability reviews

Capability reviews have been reintroduced, as announced by the Australian Government in October 2022. Four were underway at 30 June 2023 for the:

- Australian Public Service Commission
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Capability reviews aim to facilitate discussions around an organisation's desired future state, highlighting strengths and identifying organisational capability gaps. They help embed a culture of continuous improvement within the Australian Public Service to deliver for Government.

The agencies in the 2022–23 cohort differ in focus, size and day-to-day work. However, interim findings suggest some common areas for further development:

- workforce planning
- strategic policy
- engaging and collaborating across the APS
- breaking down internal silos
- better use of the data agencies collect
- the importance of investment in digital and data

Each review is conducted in partnership with the agency being reviewed and is led by a Senior Review Team of independent and senior APS reviewers. Findings are set out in a report that assesses agencies against comparable standards to identify common themes and share best practice between all APS agencies.

The current program is managed by the APSC and builds on its earlier capability review program which began in 2010. The APSC has benefited from generous advice and support from Western Australia's Public Sector Commission and New Zealand's Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, which run similar review programs.

Capability review reports are used by agencies to develop and implement action plans. Reports and their corresponding action plans are published on the APSC website.

## **See also**

Australian Public Service Commission (n.d.) [Capability Review Program](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/research-analysis-and-publications/capability-review-program), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/research-analysis-and-publications/capability-review-program>, accessed 10 July 2023.



Building community trust in the Australian Public Service is a priority, and there is a renewed focus on strengthening leadership and integrity across the service. Recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme have been agreed, or agreed in principle, by the Australian Government. Code of Conduct matters raised by the Royal Commission are being assessed. The APS Integrity Taskforce has worked to identify system-wide improvements to support a pro-integrity culture at all levels.

Reforms proposed in the Public Service Amendment Bill in June 2023 include:

- introducing stewardship as an APS Value
- strengthening provisions in relation to ministerial directions on employment matters
- mandating agency capability reviews, long-term insights briefings and publication of agency APS Employee Census results.

The introduction of new performance assessments for the Senior Executive Service now give equal weighting to outcomes and behaviours, and employee perceptions of SES behaviours are published annually. Results in relation to immediate SES managers driving the strategic direction for their agency and communicating effectively are consistently high over the last 3 years (over 69%). However, perceptions in relation to SES within agencies working as a team, and effectively communicating with each other and with other employees, are consistently low over the last 3 years (between 51% and 54%).

A survey of direct reports conducted in March 2023 indicates that most managers at all classifications are perceived as demonstrating the behaviours outlined in the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours. Areas of relative strengths include managers treating others with respect, having a positive attitude and listening. However, survey results indicate that managers are less effective in dealing with unacceptable behaviour and engaging with risk.

Updated guidance on Optimal Management Structures provides agencies with advice on developing flatter and more responsive structures, and on considering where the authority for decision-making is most appropriate. This will empower staff and more effectively use available capability.

The Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council continue to develop a strong and diverse leadership pipeline for the future, with a focus on skills, experience and behaviours. The APS Academy is building leadership capability at all levels, including opportunities for SES Band 3 deputy secretaries and agency heads to focus on their contribution to stewarding the APS.

## Frank, honest and evidence-based advice

Leaders in the Australian Public Service have a responsibility to serve the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public. They do so by providing advice that is relevant and comprehensive, is not affected by fear of consequences, and does not withhold important facts or bad news. These responsibilities are made clear in the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022.

Recent public, critical examinations of the APS have found that these principles have not always been upheld. The Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme highlights failures in providing frank, evidence-based advice and implementing programs in accordance with the law.

Rebuilding trust in the APS is a priority. It includes reinforcing a culture with integrity at its core. It includes creating an environment in which leaders and employees are robust in the way they formulate advice to Government, and authentic in how they put it forward. Rebuilding trust also means that public servants should have front of mind their responsibility to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government, as made clear in the APS Value – Committed to service.

There is a strong and renewed focus on strengthening leadership and integrity across the APS.

An inter-departmental committee has examined the recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme and the Australian Government has released its response. The APS Integrity Taskforce has worked to identify system-wide improvements to support a pro-integrity culture at all levels. The final report of the taskforce is expected later in 2023.

A central team, based at the Australian Public Service Commission, has been established to inquire into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by APS employees, former APS employees and agency heads arising from Robodebt.

The Public Service Amendment Bill was introduced on 14 June 2023. Reforms include introducing stewardship as an APS Value. This captures the responsibility of all employees for an APS that is trusted, professional and effective into the future. Improved accountability measures include:

- strengthening the provision prohibiting ministers from giving direction on employment matters
- mandating agency capability reviews, long-term insights briefings and publication of agency APS Employee Census results.

The APS Academy continues to build leadership capability at all levels. In 2022, it introduced the Senior Executive Stewardship Program for Band 3 deputy secretaries and agency heads, with a focus on stewardship of the APS. The Strengthening Partnerships program was developed with an expert panel to help every APS employee understand their role, the role of their Minister and ministerial advisers and help build trusted and effective relationships.

In the 2023 APS Employee Census, two-thirds (66%) of respondents reported that their Senior Executive Service manager routinely promoted the use of data and evidence to deliver outcomes.

Building capability in digital and data supports evidence-based advice and decision-making across the APS. The recently released Measuring What Matters: Australia's First Wellbeing Framework provides new opportunities to consider how to better link policies and programs with wellbeing metrics.

### **See also**

[Integrity – Robodebt Royal Commission](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 88.

[Appendix 5 – Public inquiries into the APS and APS agencies](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 203.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022](#), Federal Register of Legislation website, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2023C00686>, accessed 5 October 2023.

# Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours

The Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours was released in August 2022. It sets out the behaviours Secretaries expect of themselves and the Senior Executive Service and want to see in leaders at all levels across the Australian Public Service.



Image: Australian Public Service Commission

In November 2022, the Australian Public Service Commission surveyed a cross sample of over 5,000 APS employees to explore the extent to which these behaviours are being demonstrated by APS managers.

Survey results from direct reports indicate that most managers at all classifications are perceived as demonstrating the behaviours outlined in the charter.

Areas of relative strength include managers treating others with respect, having a positive attitude and listening to others. Certain behaviours such as calling out unacceptable behaviour and engagement

with risk are less commonly observed. This was particularly true for managers at the APS 5 and 6 levels.

These survey findings are listed against each DRIVE behaviour.

*Be Dynamic:* Most respondents agree their manager leads with dynamic behaviours.

- More than three-quarters agree their immediate supervisor demonstrates positivity (84%), problem solving (81%) and innovation (77%).
- Just under two-thirds agree their immediate supervisor engages with risk (64%).
- Those reporting to Executive Level and APS levels showed the lowest levels of agreement, and this was particularly true for innovation and engagement with risk.

*Be Respectful:* Most respondents agree their manager treats people with respect.

- More than three-quarters of respondents agree their immediate supervisor treats people with respect (87%) and actively ensures that everyone can be included to make their best contribution (77%).

*Have Integrity:* Most respondents agree their manager acts with integrity, but there is room for improvement

- Around 4 out of every 5 respondents agree their immediate supervisor is open and honest (82%), accountable (81%), and takes responsibility for what happens in their workgroup (79%).
- Two-thirds of respondents agree that their immediate supervisor calls out unacceptable behaviour (67%).

*Value others:* Most respondents agree their manager values others.

- More than three-quarters of respondents agree their immediate supervisor listens to others (83%), values the contributions and perspectives of others (81%), builds effective relationships (78%), and understands their teams (76%).

*Empower people:* Most respondents agree their manager empowers people.

- Around three-quarters of respondents agree their immediate supervisor uses networks to achieve outcomes (78%), supports people to bounce back (75%), provides enough information to get the job done (73%), and empowers others (73%).

For most DRIVE behaviours, those reporting to APS 5 to APS 6 levels showed the lowest levels of agreement.

The APS Academy conducts programs to build leadership capability at all levels, including the APS Graduate Development Program, Management in Action targeting APS 5 to EL 1s, the Working Effectively series for all APS and EL employees, APS Leadership Edge program for EL 2s and the SES immersive learning programs. There is still room to improve, and work is ongoing to strengthen DRIVE behaviours across the service.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d) [Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/learning-and-development/secretaries-charter-leadership-behaviours), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/learning-and-development/secretaries-charter-leadership-behaviours>, accessed 5 October 2023.



## Senior Executive Service

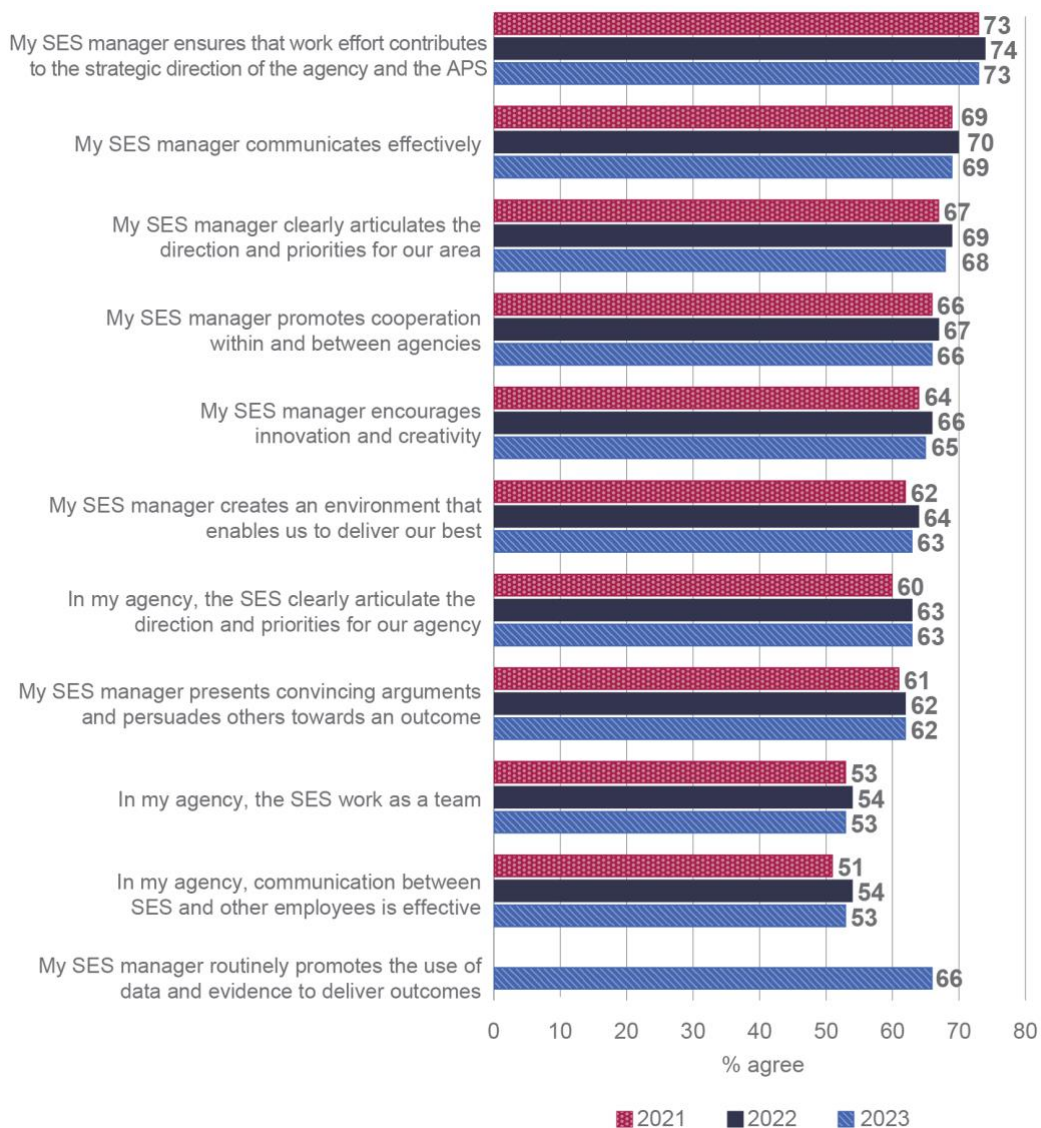
Senior Executive Service performance management is now being standardised across the whole public service, with equal weighting accorded to outcomes and behaviours. This recognises that how things are done is as important as what is achieved. This approach aligns with the Australian Public Service Values and the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours.

In October 2022, the Australian Government asked that behaviours be included in all SES performance assessments. The SES Performance Leadership Framework, released in August 2023, requires all APS agencies to incorporate transparency and accountability into their performance management processes.

In the context of its APS Reform agenda, the Government has also directed that employee perceptions of SES behaviours be published in the State of the Service Report.

APS Employee Census data indicates that, in general, SES leaders are perceived to be performing more strongly in some areas than in others (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1: Employee perceptions of SES leaders (2021 to 2023)**



Source: APS Employee Census



In 2023, perceptions of the SES were most positive in relation to immediate SES managers contributing to the strategic direction for the agency and the APS, and communicating effectively. These ratings have been consistently high for the last 3 years, at 69% or more.

The data on employee perceptions of SES behaviours also helps to identify areas for attention. Over the last 3 years, lowest ratings have been in relation to perceptions of the SES as a group within agencies working as a team, and effectively communicating with each other and with other employees (between 51% and 54%).

The APS Academy's Breakthrough Conversations program supports Executive Level 2 to SES Band 3 officers to conduct conversations across a range of contexts. The program includes an opportunity to practise challenging conversations in complex situations relevant to the situations faced by leaders.

Comparisons using the SES manager leadership index show variations in the way SES behaviours are perceived across agencies. These agency-level variations are shown in the Agency benchmarking section of this report.

### **See also**

[Agency benchmarking – Perceptions of SES leadership](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 142.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Senior Executive Service performance](https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/aps-employees-and-managers/senior-executive-service-ses/ses-performance), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/aps-employees-and-managers/senior-executive-service-ses/ses-performance>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Identifying and developing leadership talent

The Australian Public Service is evolving its approach to identifying internal and external leadership talent and developing a stronger and more diverse talent pipeline for the future.

Strong public sector leadership that has integrity, can navigate complexity and draw on diversity of opinion is critical to deliver the Australian Government's reform agenda. It is also critical to strengthen the APS as an institution.

This is particularly important as the APS responds to the findings of the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme. The APS will need to learn from the findings and systematically focus on identifying leaders capable of delivering for Government, with the right behaviours and approaches for the future, while developing leadership capability at all levels.

The APS has the foundations of a leader-led and system-wide approach to identifying and developing leadership talent in place. The Australian Public Service Commission continues to support the Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council to develop people with the skills, experience and behaviours needed to lead at the most senior levels.

This work has matured in recent years. Half of the Secretaries Board are alumni of the Secretaries Talent Council assessment for Senior Executive Service Band 3s. Almost 20% of the core SES Band 3 cohort are alumni of the Deputy Secretaries Talent Council work for Band 1s and 2s. Many of these leaders are now coaching and mentoring the next group of internal talent as part of the APS leader-led approach to talent development.

Work has also begun to expand the talent pool of those who could compete for senior roles by providing opportunities for more lateral recruitment from outside of the APS. Following the retirement of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in June 2023, the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Australian Public Service Commissioner advertised the role. They called for expressions of interest from talented senior executives to participate in a merit-based recruitment process. This is the first time a Secretary role has been publicly advertised.

The APS Academy delivers a number of programs to build leadership capability at all levels, including SES immersive learning programs for SES Band 1, 2 and 3 levels.

In 2022, the Academy introduced the Senior Executive Stewardship Program for Band 3 deputy secretaries and agency heads. The program provides an opportunity for very senior leaders to focus on their contribution to stewarding the APS, including the importance of the longer-term view.

In 2023, the Academy designed the Leadership Edge program to support Executive Level 2s develop their leadership and management capability. This program uses an innovative social learning approach to support development for large numbers of leaders regardless of their location.

### **See also**

[Capability – APS Academy](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 69.

## Ways of working

Updated guidance on Optimal Management Structures, giving agencies fresh advice on ways of working in a modern Australian Public Service, has been published by the Australian Public Service Commission. The guidance provides for flatter and more responsive structures that empower employees and more effectively use available capability.

Small changes can be transformative, such as examining who is authorised to make decisions in an agency. Proposed changes to the *Public Service Act 1999* introduced to Parliament on 14 June 2023 include the requirement that agency heads create an environment in which decisions can be made at the lowest appropriate classification. This will assist the APS to respond quickly to new challenges and ensure decisions are made by those closest to the issues.

Agencies will use the Optimal Management Structures guidance and other workforce planning resources developed by the APSC to adjust their management structures and business practices, as part of workforce transformation and organisational reform. This will look different for each agency based on their work and operating environment, and recognises no 2 APS agencies are the same.

Progress will be tracked through the APS Agency Survey and Employee Census, to ensure agencies are taking steps towards more modern structures and ways of working.

The Optimal Management Structures guidance addresses findings of the 2022 Hierarchy and Classification Review. The review encouraged a shift to more modern management structures with fewer layers and larger spans of supervision, and acknowledged culture and ways of working must evolve accordingly.

The Optimal Management Structures update is complemented by other work arising from the review. The APSC has developed guidance on better recognising and using specialists in the APS workforce. The APS Academy will offer a new EL2 Leadership Edge program to build management capability in 2023–24.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Optimal Management Structures Guidance 2023](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-workforce-strategy-2025/workforce-planning-resources/optimal-management-structures-guidance-2023), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-workforce-strategy-2025/workforce-planning-resources/optimal-management-structures-guidance-2023>, accessed 23 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Independent hierarchy and classification report](https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-hierarchy-and-classification-review-report), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-hierarchy-and-classification-review-report>, accessed 5 October 2023.

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The work of the Australian Public Service affects all members of the Australian community. The APS can improve and maintain the trust of the community by acting with integrity and being accountable in the way it implements Australian Government policies and programs. The APS is expected to lead the way on respectful and ethical workplaces.

The establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and the introduction of new whistleblower protections are providing new safeguards for integrity and transparency in the broader public sector. The Review into Public Sector Board Appointment Processes will provide advice to the Government on improving public sector appointments. Recommendations of the *Report of the Inquiry into the Appointment of the Former Prime Minister to Administer Multiple Departments* (Bell Inquiry) are also being implemented.

The APS Integrity Taskforce looked at ways to improve integrity and accountability measures across the service. In partnership with APS agencies, the taskforce examined system-wide improvements to support a pro-integrity culture at all levels. Proposed changes to the *Public Service Act 1999* support the work of the taskforce by embedding stewardship as an APS Value, and improving accountability measures, including mandating agency capability reviews and strengthening provisions in relation to ministerial directions on employment matters.

Recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme have been examined by an inter-departmental committee, to support the Government's response. A central team, based at the Australian Public Service Commission, has also been established to inquire into alleged breaches of the APS Code of Conduct arising from the inquiry.

All APS leaders and employees are required to treat everyone with respect. The APS Employee Census indicates that perceived levels of harassment and bullying in the workplace slowly declined between 2015 and 2022 but increased slightly in 2023. However, these levels remain too high, with more than 10% of APS employees perceiving bullying or harassment in 2023. Agencies are now required to publish their APS Employee Census reports and action plans, increasing transparency and accountability of findings.

# National Anti-Corruption Commission

Legislation to establish the National Anti-Corruption Commission was passed by the Australian Parliament on 30 November 2022. The NACC began on 1 July 2023 and is led by former New South Wales Supreme Court Judge, the Hon Paul Brereton AM RFD SC.

Establishing an independent national anti-corruption commission was an election commitment by the Albanese Government. The NACC complements other integrity initiatives across Government, including introducing new corruption prevention measures, improving protections for whistleblowers and establishing and enforcing a Code of Conduct for ministers and for ministerial staff.

Under the NACC Act, a person engages in corrupt conduct if:

- they are a public official and they breach public trust
- they are a public official and they abuse their office as a public official
- they are a public official or former public official and they misuse information they have gained in their capacity as a public official
- they do something that adversely affects a public official's honest or impartial exercise of powers or performance of official duties.

The NACC enhances integrity in the public sector by deterring, detecting and preventing corrupt conduct involving Australian Government public officials. It does this through educating, monitoring, investigating, reporting and referring. The NACC operates independently of government and has broad jurisdiction to investigate serious or systemic corruption. This includes the power to investigate Australian Government public officials, including ministers, parliamentarians and their staff, statutory office holders and employees and contractors of all government entities. It also includes the power to investigate any person who seeks to corrupt a public official.

A Parliamentary Joint Committee oversees the NACC. The Committee will review the NACC's performance and budget. It is responsible for approving the appointments of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners and an independent inspector.

Senior barrister Ms Gail Furness SC has been appointed as the NACC Inspector, with the authority to investigate corruption issues and complaints about the NACC and monitor how it uses its powers.

The Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity became part of the NACC on 1 July 2023.

## **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [National Anti-Corruption Commission](https://www.nacc.gov.au/), NACC website, <https://www.nacc.gov.au/>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Protection for whistleblowers in the public sector

Legislation to implement priority reforms to the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* began on 1 July 2023, to coincide with the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

The reforms improve protections for public sector whistleblowers and witnesses, including by expanding reprisal protections to those taken against a person who could make a public interest disclosure, and to capture indirect threats of reprisal. The reforms also ensure the PID Act is focused on serious integrity wrongdoing, such as fraud and corruption, and enhance oversight of the scheme by the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

Whistleblower protections play an important role in promoting the integrity of public institutions. They ensure public trust and confidence in those institutions by helping bring to light allegations of wrongdoing.

All Australian Public Service portfolios were consulted in the development of the legislation. The Attorney-General's Department, Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security are supporting agencies to implement the reforms. Support includes updated guidance material for agencies and whistleblowers.

Following the passage and implementation of these priority amendments, the Australian Government will begin a broader, second stage of reforms to the public sector whistleblowing framework. This will include public consultation on further reforms to address the underlying complexity of the PID scheme, and the need for additional supports for public sector whistleblowers.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Amendments to the PID Act](https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/public-interest-disclosure-whistleblowing/pid-reform-2023), Commonwealth Ombudsman website, <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/public-interest-disclosure-whistleblowing/pid-reform-2023>, accessed 5 October 2023.

# Robodebt Royal Commission

The Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme delivered its report to the Australian Government on 7 July 2023.

The Royal Commission was established on 18 August 2022 to inquire into the establishment, design and implementation of the debt assessment and recovery scheme known as Robodebt, including the use of third-party debt collectors, concerns raised following the implementation of the scheme, and the intended or actual outcomes of the scheme.

The Government has agreed, or agreed in principle, to all 56 of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

The Royal Commission report notes that changes to the APS are already underway as part of the Australian Government's APS reform agenda. These changes include amendments to the *Public Service Act 1999*, introduced into Parliament on 14 June 2023, to:

- add Stewardship as an APS Value, recognising that the APS builds its capability and institutional knowledge, and supports the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what it does
- mandate that capability reviews be undertaken of public service agencies to build organisational capacity and accountability
- strengthen the provision prohibiting ministers from giving direction on employment matters.

The APS Integrity Taskforce, established in February 2023, submitted its findings to Secretaries Board on 13 September 2023. The Royal Commission report notes that the Taskforce's terms of reference were directed at, in part, framing a comprehensive response to the themes emerging from Royal Commission.

The Australian Public Service Commission is inquiring into 16 alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by APS employees, former APS employees and agency heads arising from the Royal Commission.

## **See also**

[Operating context – APS Reform](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 19.

[Leadership – Frank, honest and evidence-based advice](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 76.

[Integrity – APS Integrity Taskforce](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 89.

[Appendix 5 – Public inquiries into the APS and APS agencies](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 203.

[Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme](#) (n.d) <https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/>, accessed 23 October 2023.



## APS Integrity Taskforce

On 14 February 2023, the Secretaries Board endorsed a joint proposal by Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Public Service Commission for an Australian Public Service Integrity Taskforce.

Announcing the taskforce, the Secretary of PM&C Professor Glyn Davis AC noted the substantial program of work already underway to strengthen integrity across the public sector. This includes the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and new whistleblower protections. The Secretary also acknowledged the significant issues emerging from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.

In partnership with APS agencies, the taskforce brought together information about initiatives underway across the APS and identified opportunities to coordinate and deliver system-wide improvements.

Terms of reference for the taskforce included measures relating to cultural and behavioural practices, leadership, pathways for raising issues or concerns, handling of legal advice and recordkeeping.

The taskforce found varying levels of integrity maturity across Australian Government agencies that highlighted both gaps to address and good practices to cross-pollinate across the APS.

Early taskforce findings were presented to Secretaries Board in May 2023, under the themes of culture, systems and accountability. The final report of the taskforce was submitted to Secretaries Board on 13 September 2023.

The taskforce was led by a First Assistant Secretary from the Attorney-General's Department, supported by employees from PM&C, AGD, APSC and a number of other agencies. There was also a steering committee made up of a number of deputy secretaries from PM&C, AGD, the APSC and the Australian Taxation Office.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Integrity Taskforce Terms of Reference](https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/aps-integrity-taskforce-terms-reference), PM&C website, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/aps-integrity-taskforce-terms-reference>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Bell Inquiry implementation

The recommendations of the *Report of the Inquiry into the Appointment of the Former Prime Minister to Administer Multiple Departments* (the Bell Inquiry), delivered in November 2022, are being implemented by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

It is important for Australia's system of government that the public has trust and confidence in the country's democracy and in those responsible for maintaining its institutions of government.

The implementation of the Bell Inquiry recommendations enhances the transparency and accountability of government. This includes knowing at all times:

- which ministers are administering which departments
- what ministers are responsible for administering
- when an acting arrangement is in place.

PM&C has established a dedicated, up-to-date source of authoritative public information on government administration. This will be supported by the publication of ministerial instruments of appointment on the Federal Register of Legislation every time the Governor-General makes changes to the Ministry, following recommendations made by the Prime Minister.

### **See also**

Australian Government (2023) [Government administration](https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/administration), PM&C website, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/administration>, accessed 5 October 2023.

# Review of Public Sector Board Appointments Processes

Ms Lynelle Briggs AO was appointed to lead a Review into Public Sector Board Appointment Processes, to ensure appointments are based on merit. The Australian Government announced the appointment on 5 February 2023.

As part of the Government's integrity agenda, the review responds to concerns about transparency of appointment processes and observations that mechanisms for the public service to advise on potential appointments could be strengthened.

The focus of the review is to consider and propose appropriate standards for the processes by which board members are appointed to public sector boards. It will not consider current appointments or appointment processes related to specific individuals.

One area the review will consider is how arrangements and processes for the appointment of the members to public sector boards and relevant bodies may be used to enhance integrity and trust in government institutions.

The review's final report to the Government is expected to be published in late 2023.

Part of the Australian Government's Australian Public Service Reform agenda, the review falls under the priority area of an APS that embodies integrity in everything it does.

## **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Review of Public Sector Board Appointment Processes](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/communication/review-public-sector-board-appointments-processes), APS Reform website, <https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/communication/review-public-sector-board-appointments-processes>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Respectful and ethical workplaces

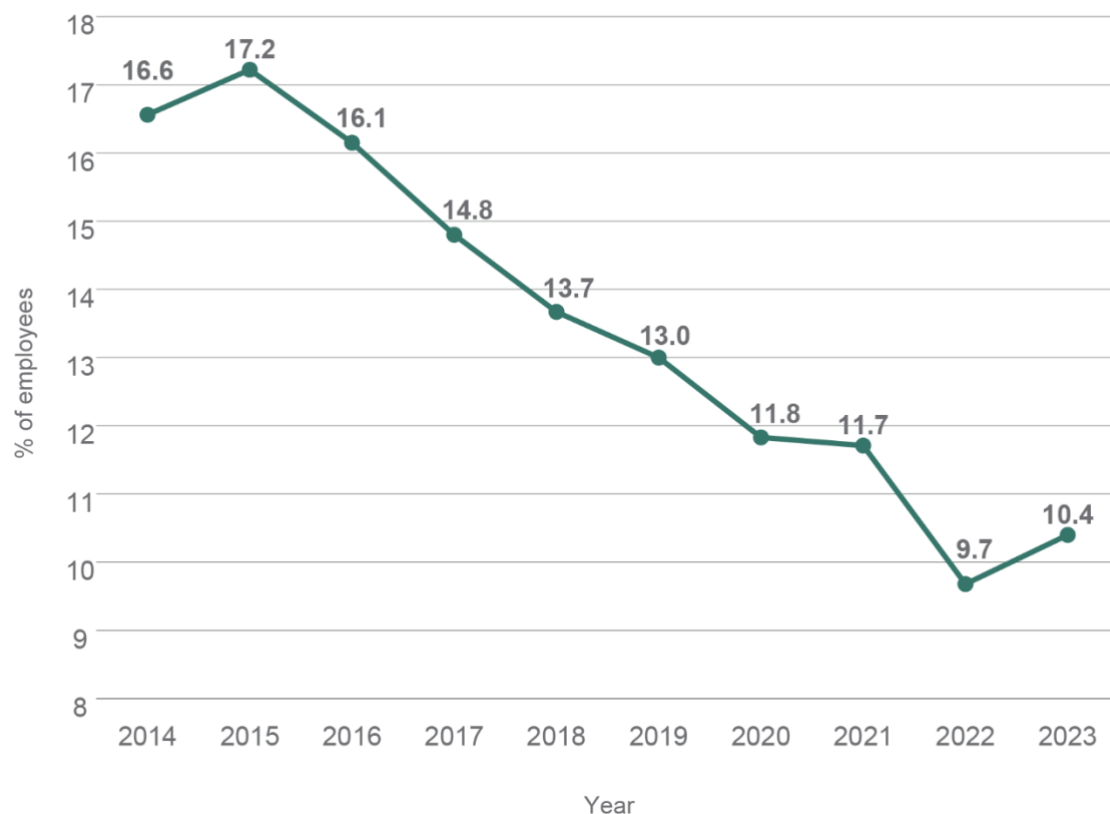
All Australian Public Service employees are required to behave in accordance with the APS Values and Code of Conduct, under the *Public Sector Act 1999*. The APS Employee Census and the APS Agency Survey provide indicators of how well the Values and Code of Conduct are being upheld across the service.

The APS Code of Conduct makes it clear that, in their workplace, all APS employees must treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment. In 2023, 10.4% of respondents to the APS Employee Census indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in the workplace in the last 12 months. This is higher than the 9.7% in 2022. Figure 6.1 shows rates of perceived harassment or bullying in the APS over the past decade.

Reported rates of bullying and harassment are higher for some APS agencies. More information on perceived bullying and harassment rates within agencies is provided in the Agency benchmarking section of this report. From 2023, agencies are required to publish their APS Employee Census reports and action plans. The Australian Public Service Commission provides resources to support agencies in interpreting their employee feedback and identifying key issues for action.

The APSC and agencies analyse APS Employee Census results to understand the experiences of diverse groups within the APS workforce, including perceptions of behaviour such as bullying and harassment. This informs activities to ensure all APS workplaces are respectful for all employees.

**Figure 6.1: Reported perceived rates of harassment or bullying (2014 to 2023)**

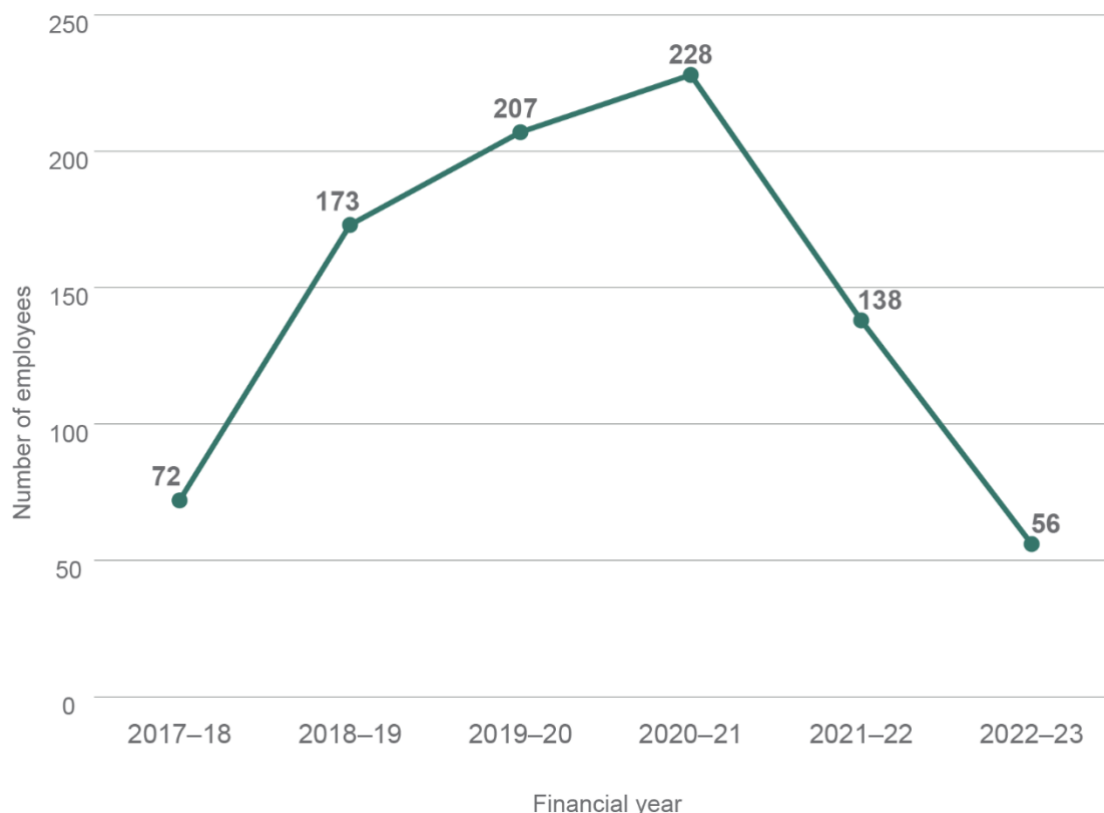


Source: APS Employee Census

The APS Code of Conduct requires that all employees behave honestly and with integrity in connection with their APS employment. In 2022–23, agencies reported formal investigations into 62 employees for conduct that was categorised as corrupt. Of these, 56 employees were found to have

breached the APS Code of Conduct (Figure 6.2) This is a reduction from 138 employees in 2021–22 and continues a downward trend from 2020–21.

**Figure 6.2: Employees found to have breached the Code of Conduct for corrupt behaviour (2018 to 2023)**



Source: APS Agency Survey

Support is provided by the APSC to agencies through services, learning resources, guidelines and face-to-face discussions on integrity matters. It also assists agencies to understand their obligations under the new *Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022*.

The APSC's Ethics Advisory Service provides information, policy advice and guidance to APS employees at all levels on the application of the APS Values and the Code of Conduct to promote ethical decision-making across the public service. In 2022–23, the Ethics Advisory Service received 400 enquiries – 137 from individual APS employees, and 139 from agency human resources areas and managers. The remaining 124 enquiries were from former employees, were anonymous, or out of scope.

APS agencies are collaborating on renewed APS-wide efforts to build and maintain a pro-integrity culture in the APS, responding to the findings of recent inquiries including the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.

### **See also**

[Agency benchmarking – Harassment and bullying](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 137.

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

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# Serving the community



The stories in this section of the State of the Service Report have been contributed by Australian Public Service agencies. Many of them are responses to an APS-wide callout for contributions held during July and August 2023.

They offer insights into the huge diversity of work undertaken by the APS, and the range of ways agencies and their employees serve the community.

A particular focus this year is to show how the service collaborates to get things done across APS agencies and, importantly, across sectors.

APS agencies work extensively with non-government organisations, industries and research institutions to identify and respond to the needs of businesses and communities. They work in every part of Australia, and much of the world.

In 2023, the APS comprised 99 agencies and 5 other entities which employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999*. They undertake policy, operational, regulatory and specialist work. Agencies range in size from Services Australia with around 32,000 staff to specialist organisations with less than 10 staff. A full list of APS agencies is available at Appendix 3.

## Connecting the Pacific with rural and regional Australia

The expansion of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme was announced by the Australian Government in the October 2022 Budget. The expansion supports an additional 500 PALM scheme workers to complete their Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) as part of the Aged Care Expansion (ACE) program.

The Australian Government is working closely with the Pacific family, Timor-Leste and the aged care sector to increase the number of PALM scheme workers in Australia. This will help meet critical labour needs in the sector and ensure aged care residents receive the support they need.



*Kuarenga, a PALM scheme personal care worker from Kiribati, who looks after aged care residents at Bolton Clark in Longreach, Queensland*  
Image: Pacific Labour Facility

Skills development is a core objective of the PALM scheme, to ensure it delivers a skills dividend for the region and contributes to the long-term development of sending countries.

Upskilling also increases productivity for employers and provides skills that help meet workforce shortages in rural and regional Australia.

Ten PALM scheme employers in the aged care sector have been selected to deliver the ACE program in partnership with various registered training organisations. These employers have developed a comprehensive and integrated training program that supports the learning, working and welfare needs of ACE program workers.

Workers from most PALM scheme sending countries are represented in the ACE program. They will be employed in aged care homes in New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. The selection process for the 500 ACE program workers is underway, with workers expected to start their training in 2023.



The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations work in partnership with sending countries, employers, industry, unions and other stakeholders. They do so to increase the number of skilled workers in priority sectors of growth in the Pacific and Timor-Leste, where there are also worker shortages in Australia.

**See also**

[Operating context – Engaging with the region](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 22.

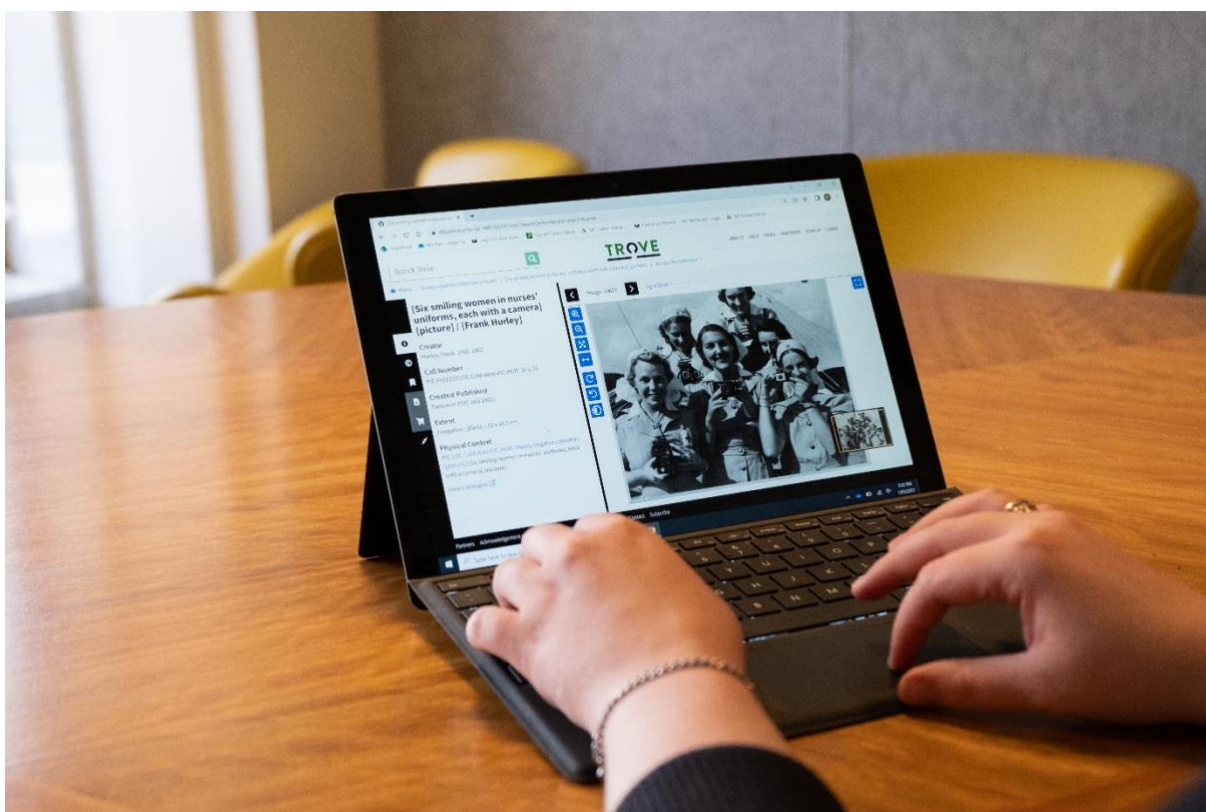
Australian Government (n.d.) [Welcome to the PALM Scheme](#), Pacific Australia Labour Mobility website, <https://www.palmscheme.gov.au/>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Democratising access to Australian cultural heritage

The National Library of Australia's Trove is a free online portal into documentary heritage. For the Australian public, it is a digital public service that offers a single access point to a vast amount of data and information related to the country's cultural and intellectual heritage.

Trove works with Australian collecting institutions, who become Trove Partners, to provide a digital presence alongside their physical footprint.

A total of 814,574 images were digitised and added to Trove in 2022–23. The images were from historical newspapers, as well as manuscript images (including unpublished letters, diaries, organisational records), and books, journals and pictures. Digitisation is funded by the Australian Government, philanthropists and Trove Partners. It informs research and inspires new learning.



*Accessing Australian history online through Trove*

*Image: National Library of Australia*

In late 2022, the media began to report that Trove's future was uncertain as funding to maintain it was in doubt from July 2023. Five parliamentary e-petitions were lodged with the House of Representatives by friends and supporters of Trove in early 2023, totalling almost 30,000 signatures and calling for continued Australian Government funding.

The e-petitions outlined positive impacts of Trove. Common among them was Trove's value as a free and unique resource, furthering research and discoveries of both national and personal significance:

Trove is an online archive that provides access to a huge range of archives free to all Australians. It is the memory house for the nation and imperative for researchers, genealogists, family historians and students.

Since its inception, Trove has become an invaluable resource to those of us in the study of Australian History. It is a resource which many of us have come to depend upon.

Trove is a world leader in concept and material. It is the envy of archives in other countries.

Part of Trove's value is how it democratises access to information, as a free service available online:

A large part of its use is because it's free and easily accessible. This accessibility is of incredible value since many don't have the means to get this information any other way.

Trove gives access to each and every Australian no matter where they live.

In April 2023, the Australian Government announced \$33 million over the next 4 years to maintain Trove, with \$9.2 million ongoing and indexed funding from July 2027. From July 2023, this allowed the National Library to remove membership fees for more than 250 community-led, volunteer-run, rural and regional collecting organisations. These are organisations that upload metadata about their collections to Trove, but do not use any collection management features.

The certainty of this funding decision will allow the National Library to continue to provide this essential service, enrich it with new content, and stabilise and secure the platform, in line with an implementation plan that will be developed to deliver the Trove Strategy.

### **See also**

National Library of Australia (n.d.) [Trove](https://trove.nla.gov.au/), NLA website, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## A unique style of public service during the Kimberley floods, and all year round

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) quickly responded to the changing needs of First Nations people in early 2023, partnering with Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation in Derby, Western Australia. The response was to support First Nations people who lost their homes and community in the Kimberley region floods.

Working collaboratively with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Western Australia Government, AHL supported Emama Nguda to open AHL's Derby facility. This is offering emergency accommodation until homes are restored. Emama Nguda will continue to operate the facility once this immediate need is met. The service will then transition to support students and their families to re-engage with their education, another much needed service in the region.

AHL has been entrusted by families and communities to meet the accommodation needs of First Nations residents for 50 years. Across its 42-hostel network, AHL works in collaboration with local service providers. This includes hospitals, homeless shelters, First Nations organisations and family services.



*Supporting residents young and old, AHL offers a home away from home for First Nations people  
Image: Aboriginal Hostels Limited*

AHL not only provides safe, culturally appropriate and affordable accommodation, it connects residents with the services they need. With a shared commitment to give residents the best experience during their stay, AHL supports them to get to their appointments, connect with Government services and share understanding and pride in culture.

Last financial year, AHL accommodated 17,514 First Nations people. The reasons why people stay with AHL vary greatly. Reasons include to:

- attend medical appointments

- find crisis accommodation or wait for housing
- escape domestic and family violence
- complete their Year 12 certificate.

Whatever the reason for the stay, the commitment by AHL staff to provide excellent customer service is constant. AHL also works to maximise the use of its facilities through partnerships, referrals from First Nations service providers, and active community engagement.

AHL conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey to seek valuable feedback from residents on its services and facilities. In 2023, 89% of responding residents said that staying in hostels had helped their overall health and wellbeing and 91% said their stay supported their cultural wellbeing. This year's feedback included these comments:

Staying here has helped my stress levels, it's given me peace of mind in order for me to think clearly about my healing and wellbeing. I'm moving forward and taking one day at a time. – resident staying at Tony Mundine Hostel

Everyone feels welcome here. All the people who stay are friendly and say hello. – resident staying at Kabalulumana Hostel

I am safe and have a room with a nice clean bed and hot showers, hot meal and a roof over my head. – resident staying at WT Onus Hostel

Being here with other mob has been good for me. One thing I would like to add is that culturally we have different beliefs because we come from different clans around Australia. One of my cultural beliefs is that I do not sweep the floor at night as it is taboo – it disturbs the spirits, I had to remind a staff member about a time this happened, and it was good because he understood and stopped. – resident staying at Tony Mundine Hostel

AHL continually considers the stewardship of the organisation and responds to residents' changing needs. For example, as part of its vital accommodation service, AHL provides a free meal service for all residents, recognising the health benefits and convenience for them in their time of need.

In 2022–23, AHL staff prepared more than 1.2 million meals across its network. Meals are served in dining rooms and in some outdoor courtyard areas. This offers residents a chance to connect with others while away from family and community. A dietitian has been engaged to train AHL's workforce and improve its meal service, particularly for residents impacted by chronic disease.

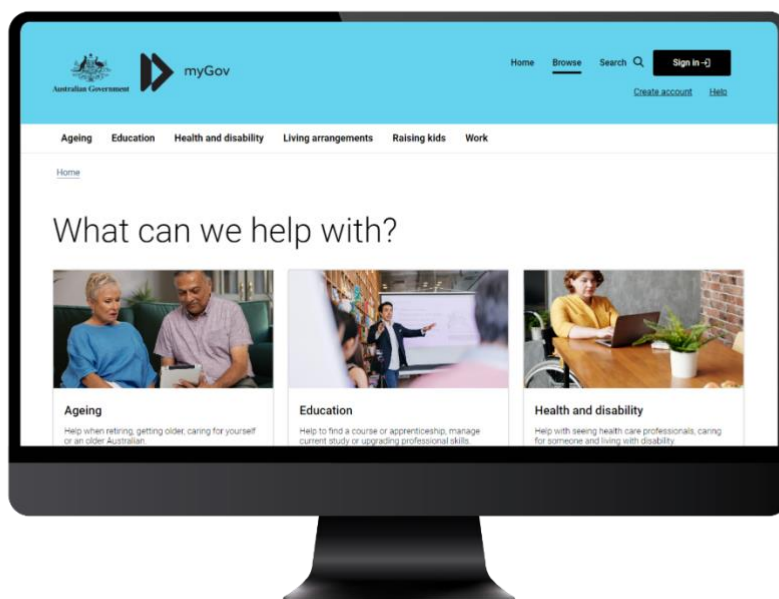
AHL significantly contributes to Closing the Gap initiatives by providing First Nations people with safe and affordable accommodation, improving health outcomes, and supporting educational and employment outcomes.



## A life events approach to Government services

With an average of more than 780,000 visits each day, myGov plays a critical role connecting Australians with information, payments and services.

The myGov website moved to a new digital platform in September 2022. Working with teams from more than 20 Australian and state government agencies, Services Australia brought together information about payments and services structured around the life events of users, rather than the work of individual Government departments.



*The new myGov structures around life events launched in September 2022*

*Image: Services Australia*

The idea of using life events to structure content is built on years of research undertaken by many agencies. The approach allows myGov to act as a digital navigator, helping people discover information relevant to them at a point in time.

Responding to testing the new structure, customers said that:

- it is easy to find relevant information
- content is more engaging and easy to read
- the approach supports them to complete their tasks.

For ongoing improvement to the customer experience on myGov, performance is monitored using web analytics, page polling, surveys and terms used with search and the digital assistant. Operational insights from staff and service delivery are also important to help ensure content meets people's needs.

There is strong evidence of people finding myGov through search engines and referring links on agency websites. People are exploring content and shifting their behaviour from only using myGov as a portal to engaging with information and online services. For example, information about scams, privacy and security, preparing for tax time and planning to go overseas are some topics generating positive page poll responses above 75%.

To develop the content for the new myGov, Services Australia:

- sourced expertise from business, policy, communications, web and content areas from more than 20 partner agencies
- hosted around 35 cross-agency content design sessions and consultations
- established 3 cross agency forums to hold open and robust conversations around the content work program and to collaborate on content design standards
- co-designed the myGov content governance framework and myGov content strategy, using peer review and industry benchmarking processes.

These partnerships have ongoing value for Government and the community, with connections between agencies enabling future content and communication collaboration.

It feels like the door is open and we're demonstrating genuine stakeholder engagement. –  
Department of Health and Aged Care SES

The work we have done together is an example of best practice around collaboration. –  
Department of Social Services SES

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [MyGov](https://my.gov.au/), MyGov website, <https://my.gov.au/>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Working together for the health of the Murray–Darling Basin

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) has partnered with First Nations peoples, farmers, scientists and state governments to deliver around 30 Sydney Harbours' worth of water for the environment in the past 15 years.

The Murray–Darling Basin supports a diverse range of communities and ecosystems, as well as agricultural production. It is home to 40 groups of First Nations peoples, and to 16 internationally significant wetlands.

Known as Australia's food bowl, restoring flows to the Basin's rivers and wetlands is critical for health and sustainability. The health of the rivers underpins the myriad of values the Basin supports.



*Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder meeting with stakeholders in the Macquarie Marshes*

*Image: Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water*

By collaborating with the irrigation sector, the CEWH uses existing infrastructure to get water to wetlands and creeks that would otherwise miss out.

The CEWH continuously builds relationships to support First Nations people to care for Country. For example, in the Murrumbidgee Valley, the CEWH works with the Nari Nari Tribal Council to deliver water to wetlands at Gayini Conservation Area. Over the past 3 years, this has supported large-scale waterbird breeding.

Since 2009, the CEWH has funded more than \$100 million in independent scientific research, providing robust evidence to support its decision-making.

Commonwealth environmental water is water that has been purchased or acquired by the Government under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan to restore rivers and wetlands. This water has supported more than 26,000 kilometres of Basin waterways and inundated more than 420,000 hectares of lakes and floodplains. This includes 11 wetlands of international significance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.



## Helping people in familiar settings

Since August 2022, the Services Australia Community Partnership Pilot has been helping people in difficult circumstances access the services they need. Services Australia has partnered with 18 non-government organisations (NGOs) around Australia to give vulnerable customers, often experiencing homelessness, better access to services and payments.

Experienced service officers, known as Community Partnership Specialist Officers (CPSOs) are embedded in partnering NGOs. They provide onsite wraparound support to customers who have difficulty accessing services online, by phone or in a service centre.



*A Community Partnership Specialist Officer with a customer at Core Community Services  
Image: Services Australia*

Having staff working onsite at these NGOs means the CPSOs can help people in a trusted and familiar setting, where they feel comfortable and safe. Together, the NGOs and CPSOs help break barriers to Government payments and services and help people access other community support.

In 2022–23, CPSOs recorded over 9,000 interactions with NGO service users. Sixty-seven per cent of interactions were with people facing significant barriers to accessing agency payments and services online, by phone or in a service centre. Over 73% were experiencing homelessness or housing issues, and over 43% were experiencing mental health concerns.

Early insights show reduced processing times and an increase in the number of people – who need complex assessments – getting the most appropriate payment for their circumstances.

Services Australia regularly collects feedback from partner NGO staff, customers and other involved organisations. This feedback continues to be highly positive:

Giuseppe was instantly accepted by our guests because he was seen as one of us, and the guests see us as helpful. It's going where people are, dealing with the needs here and now, in the situation here and now. – Reverend Bill Crews of the Bill Crews Foundation, speaking about one CPSO

This pilot has proven to be transformative in the lives of a cohort who often sense that they have been forgotten and left behind by the rest of the community. – Major Brendan Nottle, The Salvation Army Melbourne Project 614

We're connecting with people in a familiar setting, working alongside the organisations they already go to for help. These simple and helpful interactions are building relationships with people that may have been otherwise marginalised from their community. – Minister for Government Services, the Hon Bill Shorten MP

## Measuring and communicating Australia's radiation risk

Scientists are accurately measuring and communicating levels of electromagnetic energy (EME) from 5G telecommunications services across the country. The scientists – from the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) – are doing so in collaboration with other Australian Government agencies, local governments, telecommunication providers and universities.

ARPANSA contributes to research, safety standards and public advice. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates mobile telecommunications. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts provides public information on the research, regulation and safety of EME from telecommunications.



*Dr Chhavi Bhatt from the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency measuring 5G radio waves  
Image: ARPANSA*

ARPANSA collected EME measurements from 50 publicly accessible sites across Melbourne in 2022, with results published in peer-reviewed journal 'Radiation Protection Dosimetry' in March 2023. The key finding was that the general public's exposure to radio waves was less than 0.15% of the safety limit, or more than 700 times below the limit in all measured sites in Melbourne.

The EME checker webpage set up by the ACMA in August 2022 allows the public to check their exposure from nearby mobile phone base stations across Australia.

The ACMA's broader EME measurement program continues, with results released through the checker. As at 30 June 2023, EME measurements had been undertaken at 506 non mmWave 5G enabled base stations around Australia. At 97% of the sites the average EME is less than 1% of ARPANSA's limit. The highest level of EME measured so far is less than 3.2% of ARPANSA's limit.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts has established a resource hub which includes simple-to-understand EME resources such as factsheets, videos, posters and translated materials. These resources provide factual information that

includes ARPANSA's safety standard and ACMA's EME compliance activities. The department is also working with local governments and councils across Australia to equip communities with accurate information on the safety of EME from telecommunications. This information can, in turn, be used to address concerns that arise from telecommunications deployments in local areas.

Through ARPANSA's Talk to a Scientist program, the public can speak directly to a radiation expert. The program receives approximately 800 enquiries each year. The positive impact of communications efforts to counter misinformation is evident. The program is receiving fewer phone calls about 5G, and more about ultraviolet radiation, which better reflects Australians' true radiation risk.

Beyond monitoring EME for human impacts, ARPANSA also works collaboratively with universities, including Swinburne University of Technology, on research looking at the potential health effects of EME exposure on plants and animals.

### **See also**

Australian Communications and Media Authority (2023) [EME Checker](https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2022-08/guide/eme-checker), ACMA website, <https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2022-08/guide/eme-checker>, accessed 6 October 2023.



## Preparing for the dry times

Drought is a matter of when, not if. The Australian Government is preparing, with farmers, for drier times ahead.

For the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), this means working with other Government agencies and stakeholders. The aim is to get drought policies and programs right and then deliver the support and information needed to help farmers withstand drought.



*Field trip to cattle research station featuring climate adaptation technologies and practices*

*Image: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry*

Reviews and research have highlighted the importance of intermediaries in reaching farmers – the closer to the farm gate, the better. These trusted advisers range from local accountants, banks and agricultural industry bodies to charities, farm extension officers and land care groups.

The department is tapping into these networks to help:

- inform its policies
- deliver programs
- share its program communications
- monitor conditions on the ground.

Everyone has a role to play because drought is forecast to become more frequent, severe and longer lasting in many regions as the climate changes.

DAFF engages with Government and its delivery partners through:

- Australian Government interagency meetings
- a state and territory working group
- regional networks, including drought hubs and rural financial counsellors.

The department also works with non-government and industry organisations that farmers and rural communities look to when facing drought.

The Future Drought Fund provides wide-ranging support. This includes for:

- local trials and demonstrations of drought resilient farming practices
- raining and mentoring of rural community leaders
- climate tools agronomists use to help advise their farming clients.

Drought is just one of many business risks that farmers face. But when farmers get ready for drought, they can make their business as a whole more sustainable and build their capacity to withstand other challenges too.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Drought Policy](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/drought-policy), DAFF website, <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/drought-policy>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## Saving and improving lives with a world-class blood supply

Saving and improving lives with a world-class blood supply is the mission of the National Blood Authority (NBA). The NBA manages the national arrangements agreed and funded by the Australian and state and territory governments for this important work. For more than 20 years, the national blood arrangements have successfully delivered an uninterrupted supply of blood and related products and services to Australians who need them.

To achieve this, the NBA plays a critical leadership role with the Australian Government and state and territory governments, the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, domestic and multi-national commercial suppliers, expert clinical committees, patient and other groups, and advisors.



*NBA Chief Executive John Cahill with the New South Wales Governor, Her Excellency the Hon Margaret Beazley, at the official opening of the new Lifeblood Donor Centre at Marrickville, NSW, January 2023*

*Image: National Blood Authority*

The NBA faced challenges in supply and demand management in 2022–23. The pressure on blood inventory is a global issue, not just an Australian one. Through effective management of collection and supply contracts, the NBA navigated challenges in the supply chain resulting from:

- increased demand for red blood cells
- fluctuating levels of blood donations
- unusual patterns of demand during and since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The levels of plasma collection were significantly below targets during 2022–23, resulting in decreased production of domestic immunoglobulin. By analysing data, and drawing on established relationships with stakeholders and suppliers, the NBA could intensively monitor supply, demand and inventory trends to effectively respond to changing patterns.

Using its arrangements with suppliers, the NBA carefully managed product allocation to new patients and, where appropriate and necessary, switched existing patients to equivalent products for uninterrupted clinical treatment.

The NBA has supported Lifeblood to implement measures to increase whole blood and plasma donations. Measures included:

- opening new donor centres
- conducting major advertising and marketing campaigns
- implementing donor retention initiatives such as the Lifeblood Gifts trial
- removing the indefinite deferral for donors who lived in the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 1990s.

As a patient-led charity of which the majority of our cohort are reliant on regular immunoglobulin infusions as replacement therapy to stay alive and as well as possible, we are very grateful to have the National Blood Authority ensuring ongoing and safe supply especially in today's environment of limited global supply. – Jackie Murphy, President AusPIPS, Advocacy and Support for people with Primary Immune Deficiency

We have a positive working relationship with the NBA and have found that they are always willing to provide us with information, meet in-person and be available to present at member events and conferences to ensure that our community is well-informed. – Carolyn Dews, Chief Executive Officer, Immune Deficiencies Foundation Australia

The NBA makes a significant impact on the lives of Australians living with a bleeding disorder, and by ensuring an ongoing supply of best-practice treatment products contributes to them living full and productive lives. – Sharon Caris, Executive Director, Haemophilia Foundation Australia

The NBA has collaborated with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care on the National Safety and Quality Health Service standards to develop the Blood Management Standard. This standard improves outcomes for patients by identifying risks and using strategies that optimise and conserve a patient's own blood and ensuring that the blood and blood products patients receive are safe and appropriate.

As well as securing blood supply in the short and medium term, the NBA invests in longer-term knowledge and innovation development. This investment has the potential to advance the blood sector through better collection, management and supply, and ultimately better outcomes for patients. Since 2015, the NBA has funded 40 research projects through 5 funding rounds, to a value of around \$6 million.



## Preventing misuse and criminal communication through payment text fields

Investigations into serious crime and national security matters to protect the Australian community are being supported by Fintel Alliance, a public–private partnership led by the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC).

The Alliance’s 29 partners include:

- 9 Australian Government agencies
- 7 banks
- 4 remittance and gaming industry services
- 1 university
- 8 law enforcement and security agencies in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The payment reference project was initiated in late 2020. It followed concerns from Fintel Alliance partners that financial transaction payment text fields were being used to harass, stalk or threaten victims.

Fintel Alliance partners recognised the harm this caused the community and began sharing trends, indicators and approaches to better understand the problem. It became evident that payment text fields were being used for a diverse range of technology-facilitated abuse including threats, extortion, circumventing protection orders and criminal communication.

Initial insights and learnings were shared through a financial crime guide which was publicly released in November 2021. The guide includes technology-facilitated abuse indicators, and led to an increase in suspicious matter reporting submitted to AUSTRAC and subsequent referrals to police for action.



*Preventing misuse and criminal communication through payment text fields, November 2021*

*Image: AUSTRAC*

To combat the misuse of payment text fields, financial institutions took these steps:

- initiated safety reporting options for customers being victimised
- blocked payments containing explicit or threatening language
- employed machine-learning models and algorithms to detect offending.

The payment reference project resulted in greater awareness of financial transactions as a communication medium vulnerable to criminal exploitation. Benefits of the project in 2022–23 included:

- offender arrests, including high-risk domestic violence perpetrators for breaches of protection orders
- police interventions to assist members of the public with mental health disorders
- an increase in the quality and quantity of suspicious matter reports submitted to AUSTRAC detailing suspected technology-facilitated abuse
- welfare checks for victims whose safety was compromised
- identification of additional crime types including child exploitation, drug trafficking and identity fraud
- financial institutions implementing controls to block or restrict abusive and offensive messaging.

As a result of the project, Australian policing agencies are now contacting community members about the harassment and abuse they have received through payment text fields and making them aware of

their legal options to prevent future harassment. Police have also reported that the information within AUSTRAC referrals helped confirm breaches of domestic violence-related intervention orders. Acting on this intelligence has been crucial in the case of high-risk offenders and has very likely saved lives.

The payment reference project has significantly improved the ability of financial institutions to support vulnerable customers, through increased reporting to AUSTRAC, education and outreach.

Intelligence from financial institutions, and the methodologies outlined in the financial crime guide, contributed greatly to the enhanced monitoring of payment text fields. Initially targeting only domestic and family violence situations, this uplift in controls and analytical models has allowed banks to monitor other areas of technology-facilitated abuse and better protect their customers.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Fintel Alliance](https://www.austrac.gov.au/partners/fintel-alliance), AUSTRAC website, <https://www.austrac.gov.au/partners/fintel-alliance>, accessed 5 October 2023.

Australian Government (n.d.) [Preventing misuse and criminal communication through payment text fields](https://www.austrac.gov.au/business/how-comply-guidance-and-resources/guidance-resources/payment-text-fields), AUSTRAC website, <https://www.austrac.gov.au/business/how-comply-guidance-and-resources/guidance-resources/payment-text-fields>, accessed 5 October 2023.

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# APS of the future



The Australian Government is challenging, and supporting, the Australian Public Service to improve policy and delivery approaches and help it prepare for the future.

The development of long-term insights briefings has started, to explore specific policy challenges that may affect Australia in the medium and long term. These annual briefings make widely available information and analysis about trends, risks, and opportunities that may affect Australia.

Australia's first wellbeing framework has been released, to track progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous country across 50 indicators. It supplements traditional economic indicators and contributes to community understanding of Australia's wellbeing and opportunities for improvement.

Targeting entrenched disadvantage requires Government to work in partnership with communities and other stakeholders to improve outcomes together. A new whole-of-government framework is being developed to inform how mainstream services can be delivered more flexibly, and how tailored approaches like place-based and outcomes-based contracting can complement universal safety nets.

The APS is also preparing for, and participating in, major transformations such as the transition to a net zero economy and rapid changes in the availability and application of digital technologies.

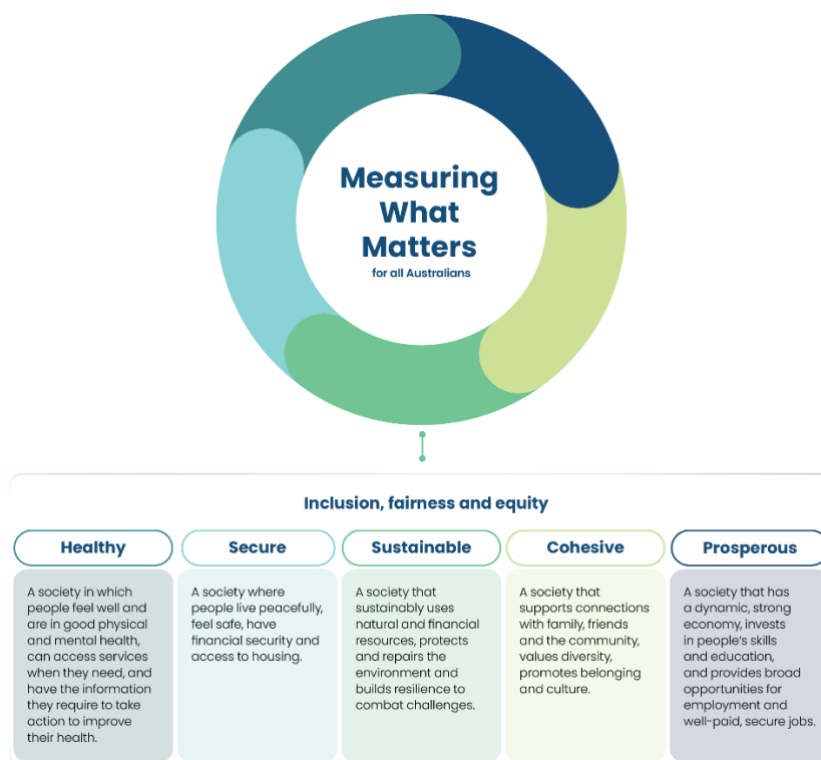
The Net Zero Authority will help investors and companies engage with net zero opportunities, support regions and communities to attract new clean energy industries, and support workers in emissions-intensive sectors to access new employment and skills.

The Data and Digital Government Strategy sets the vision for how the Australian Government will deliver simple, secure and connected public services for all people and business through world-class data and digital capabilities by 2030.

# Measuring What Matters

The Australian Government released Measuring What Matters: Australia's First Wellbeing Framework in July 2023. The framework aims to track progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous Australia.

**Figure 8.1: Measuring What Matters framework**



*Image: The Commonwealth of Australia*

Traditional economic indicators have long been the focus of public debate. While they remain a vital part of measuring progress, they are far from the whole story. Measuring What Matters provides additional metrics to deepen understanding of how Australians are faring. This supports continuing discussions of the type of society Australians want to live in and how this can be achieved.

Internationally, governments have been increasingly recognising the value of broader measures of wellbeing. Countries such as Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales have used wellbeing frameworks to raise the profile of non-economic outcomes and improve policymaking.

The framework – published in July – is the first iteration. Just like other countries around the world, Australia's approach will be iterative and ongoing. It will be moulded through continuous conversation with the community and developments in how Australia collects and captures data.

As the Australian approach is refined in future statements, the Government will consider ways to better link policy decisions with consideration of wellbeing metrics. The framework's impact will also extend beyond the public sector, shaping the community's understanding of Australia's wellbeing and highlighting opportunities for improvement.

The Australian Government set out early ideas on Measuring What Matters as part of the October 2022–23 Budget. The current framework is informed by research and consultation to identify the best available indicators of Australia's wellbeing.

**See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Measuring What Matters Statement](https://treasury.gov.au/publication/p2023-mwm), Department of the Treasury website, <https://treasury.gov.au/publication/p2023-mwm>, accessed 6 October 2023.

## Long-term Insights Briefings

Long-term Insights Briefings are being developed by the Australian Public Service to examine specific policy challenges that may affect Australia in the medium and long term. The Australian Government announced this in October 2022.

The briefings make information and analysis about trends, risks, and opportunities that may affect Australia widely available. They strengthen policy development and planning by helping the APS understand community views, evidence and implications of long-term challenges. They contribute to the stewardship of the APS by building the capability and institutional knowledge of the APS for long-term thinking, and position the APS to support the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what the APS does.

The purpose of the briefings is not to make recommendations or predictions about what will happen in the future. Instead, they provide a base to underpin future policy thinking and decision making on specific policy challenges that may affect Australia and the Australian community in the medium and long term.

Long-term Insights Briefings started with a proof-of-concept pilot. This pilot began in June 2023 and the results were published in October 2023. The pilot briefing explored how artificial intelligence might affect the trustworthiness of public service delivery. This topic was endorsed by the Secretaries Board and brought together expertise from across the APS.

The pilot used community and expert engagement, together with research and futures thinking, to explore how AI could transform public service delivery and the potential impacts of these changes on the trustworthiness of public service delivery. The pilot found the community expects the APS to use AI in ways that demonstrate integrity, competence and empathy, and deliver a clear improvement in public services. It also offers insights into how the APS can ensure AI contributes to high-quality and trustworthy public services in the future:

- AI must be designed and implemented with integrity
- using AI shouldn't come at the expense of empathy
- AI should improve the performance of public services
- supporting people to use AI-enabled services in the long-term is required in order to achieve successful service delivery.

The Long-term Insights Briefings model considers best practice and learnings from other jurisdictions, including New Zealand, but has been designed to work for Australia. This includes by leveraging existing structures within Government.

Long-term Insights Briefings will be developed through genuine partnership and engagement with the Australian community on issues affecting them, as well as with experts from the public service, academia, industry and the not-for-profit sector.

These briefings are part of the Australian Government's APS Reform agenda, particularly putting people and business at the centre of policy and services. Subject to the passage of legislation, the Public Service Amendment Bill 2023 will require the Secretaries Board to commission at least one long-term insights report each financial year.



**See also**

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (n.d.) [Long-term Insights Briefings](https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/long-term-insights-briefings), PM&C website, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/long-term-insights-briefings>, accessed 31 October 2023.

## Place-based approaches

An innovative package of measures is being led by the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Social Services. The measures are designed to build whole-of-government capability to work in partnership with communities, explore innovative funding models, and enable better coordination of investment priorities

Communities are best-placed to understand local needs. Targeting entrenched disadvantage requires Government to work in partnership with communities and other stakeholders to improve outcomes together.



*Logan families – the Logan Together movement is supported by the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative  
Image: Department of Social Services*

In Australia, disadvantage is often clustered in particular places and has proven difficult to shift using traditional approaches.

Positioning Government to be a better partner involves equipping the Australian Public Service to listen to communities – within the right authorising environment – to achieve meaningful improvements on priorities that matter most to communities.

The 2023–24 Budget provided \$199.8 million to identify better ways to address community disadvantage, underpinned by a whole-of-government framework. The framework will focus on building APS capability to put community voice at the centre of policy and service design, and aligning investment to achieve better social and economic outcomes.

In addition, the framework will inform how mainstream services can be delivered more flexibly, and how tailored approaches like place-based and outcomes-based contracting can complement universal safety nets.

Over 6 years, the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative will work in partnership with 6 of its 10 community-led initiatives to resource shared decision-making and local solutions.

The Australian Government will partner with states, territories and social enterprises through a 5-year outcomes fund to tackle disadvantage. Projects will be funded that deliver outcomes in communities, and a social enterprise development initiative will focus on capability-building grants.

The integrated data assets to be developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics will help inform improved outcomes over the long term.

The Government will also partner with philanthropy through the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children, to better coordinate investment and reform efforts that reduce intergenerational disadvantage.

DSS and Treasury will work closely with Australian Government departments and other key partners in designing and implementing this important body of work.

Growth in Government spending on welfare services has outpaced gross domestic product growth over the decade to 2019–20, but many Australians continue to face disadvantage. Evidence suggests that multi-faceted interventions, such as place-based approaches, are needed to address the intersecting causes of disadvantage.

# Data and Digital Government Strategy

An initial Data and Digital Government Strategy was released by the Australian Government in May 2023. This whole-of-government strategy sets the vision for how the Government will deliver simple, secure and connected public services for all people and business through world-class data and digital capabilities by 2030.



*Image: Department of Finance*

To achieve this 2030 vision, the Australian Government will continue to transform itself to be data-informed and digitally-capable to improve effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability to

be fit for the digital age. The strategy will be a blueprint for using and managing data and digital technologies.

The Australian Government will use data and digital technologies to improve its activities, including delivery of services. This strategy will support the Australian Public Service to keep up with technology, invest well, proactively leverage technology and adopt leading-edge data practices.

Following the release of the initial strategy in May 2023, the Department of Finance and the Digital Transformation Agency conducted public consultations in June and July 2023. Fifty engagement sessions were held across all sectors and 117 online submissions and survey responses received. Stakeholder feedback is informing the finalisation of the strategy and will support the development of the initial implementation plan. Both the final strategy and implementation plan are expected to be released by the end of 2023.

The implementation plan will include practical initiatives to drive progress towards the strategy's vision. It will be updated regularly to:

- celebrate successes
- track progress towards the 2030 vision
- respond to emerging issues
- identify initiatives to continue the data and digital transformation.

Australia exists in a rapidly changing world, in which technology touches every part of daily lives. The digital age presents a wealth of opportunities, particularly to:

- enhance the Australian Government's data and digital ecosystem
- improve how it makes decisions
- Improve how it delivers services to provide better outcomes for all people and business.

The growing prevalence of artificial intelligence is a good example of the transformative impact emerging technologies can have on how the government operates, develops policy and delivers services.

The strategy is an initiative under the Government's APS Reform program.

### **See also**

Australian Government (n.d.) [Introducing the Data and Digital Government Strategy](https://www.dataanddigital.gov.au/), Data and Digital Government Strategy website, <https://www.dataanddigital.gov.au/>, accessed 6 October 2023.



## Net Zero economy

A national Net Zero Authority will be legislated to promote orderly and positive economic transformation associated with decarbonisation and energy system change. This is so Australia, its regions and its workers realise and share the benefits of the net zero economy. The Australian Government announced this in May 2023.

More than 150 countries have now committed to net zero by 2050, including almost all major economies and most of Australia's trading partners. This global shift to net zero presents substantial economic opportunities for Australia and its regions.

The Net Zero Authority will help manage this change and realise the opportunities by:

- helping investors and companies engage with net zero transformation
- coordinating programs and policies across Government to support regions and communities to attract and take advantage of new clean energy industries and set these industries up for success
- supporting workers in emissions-intensive sectors to access new employment, skills and support as the net zero transformation continues.



*Net Zero Economy Agency staff visit Orica's ammonium nitrate site, Kooragang Island, New South Wales*

*Image: Josh Cosgrave*

Ahead of the parliamentary processes to establish the Net Zero Authority, a Net Zero Economy Agency started on 1 July 2023, chaired by The Hon Greg Combet AM. An Advisory Board has been

appointed with significant expertise across areas including workplace relations, energy markets, regional development, First Nations engagement and economic development.

The Net Zero Economy Agency is engaging with stakeholders on the detailed design, priorities and strategies for the legislated Net Zero Authority.

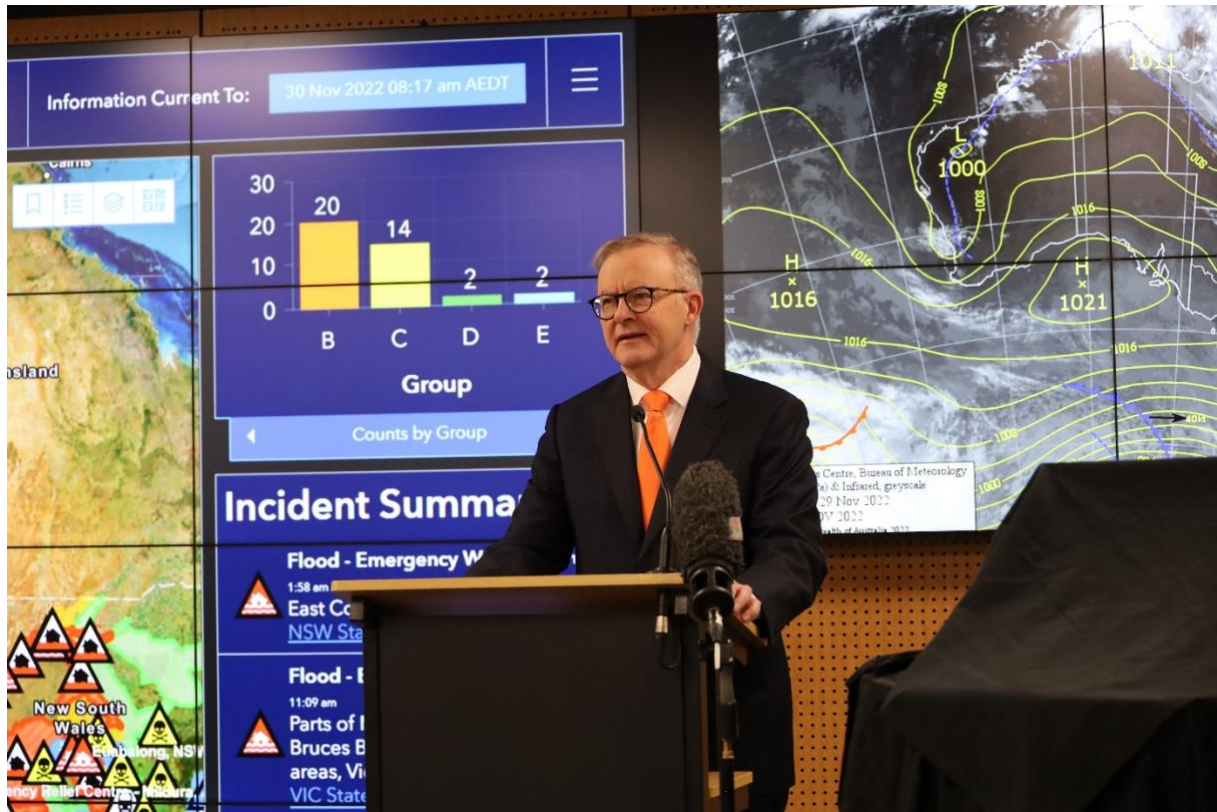
**See also**

[Operating context – APS Net Zero commitment](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 29.

# Supporting the National Situation Room

The Australian Government significantly upgraded its National Situation Room in December 2022.

The Australian Climate Service is playing a key role in improving access to technical and expert information and advice to the National Situation Room, contributing to the improvement of the Government's responses to a range of natural disaster events.



*Prime Minister the Hon Anthony Albanese MP opening the new National Situation Room. The National Joint Common Operating Picture behind the Prime Minister demonstrates some of the data provided by the ACS partnership*

*Image: National Emergency Management Agency*

When there is a natural hazard event, one of the roles the ACS plays is to provide detailed briefings to the National Emergency Management Agency and the National Situation Room.

Through ACS support, weather and hazard services and expertise from the Bureau of Meteorology are embedded in the National Situation Room. This enables access to direct support to help preparedness for and response to natural disaster situations.

Detailed impact briefs provide situational awareness on natural hazards, along with their extent, types of vulnerabilities and impacts that could occur. They serve as a comprehensive synthesis of data, insights and intelligence from various sources. They also draw on specialist expertise across the ACS partnership and present all impact-related information in a practical and accessible format.

These briefings are delivered daily when requested and include available information customised to the situation and needs of decision-makers.

Notable projects like the National Bushfire Intelligence Capability and supply chain analysis through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's (CSIRO) Transport Network Strategic Investment Tool continually enhance their outputs.



Geoscience Australia, by uplifting its situational awareness products, has also contributed to the ongoing improvement of impact briefs by leveraging the best available satellite imagery inputs from across the ACS.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics supports the ACS ability to provide quicker insight development, particularly through overviews of key socio-economic and built characteristics at the local government scale for Australia.

Throughout 2022–23, the ACS provided more than 800 briefings to the National Situation Room, including:

- 229 Daily All Hazards Weather Briefs
- 236 ACS Impact Briefs
- 21 Australian Government Crisis and Recovery Committee Briefings.

The Australian Climate Service is made up of world-leading expertise from the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Geoscience Australia. The partnership draws together the national data, systems and expertise needed to inform climate and natural disaster decision-making.

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# Agency benchmarking



This new section of the State of the Service Report draws on research and data from the Australian Public Service Employment Database, the 2023 APS Employee Census and the Survey of Trust in Australian public services.

It shows how APS agencies are performing in 6 key areas:

- employee engagement – agencies are shown with other agencies of similar size
- employee perceptions of harassment and bullying – agencies are shown with other agencies of similar size
- employee perceptions of Senior Executive Service leadership – agencies are shown with other agencies of similar size
- employment of First Nations staff – in the context of the Australian Government's commitment to increase First Nations employment in the APS to 5% by 2030
- employment of people with disability – in the context of the Australian Government's commitment to increase the employment of people with disability across the APS to 7% of the APS by 2025
- trust and satisfaction with Australian public services – services shown are those selected by survey respondents.

## Employee engagement

The Australian Public Service Commission's model of employee engagement measures the emotional connection and commitment employees have to working for their organisation. In this model, an engaged employee will 'say', 'stay' and 'strive':

- Say – the employee is a positive advocate of the organisation.
- Stay – the employee is committed to the organisation and wants to stay as an employee.
- Strive – the employee is willing to put in discretionary effort to excel in their job and help their organisation succeed.

Ten questions contribute to the Employee Engagement Index. Tables 9.1 to 9.6 report on the index scores for agencies, by agency size, for APS respondents.

**Table 9.1: Employee Engagement Index, by agency size**

Agency size	Employee Engagement Index score
<b>Overall APS</b>	<b>73</b>
Extra-large (10,000+ employees)	71
Large (1,001 to 10,000 employees)	74
Medium (251 to 1,000 employees)	74
Small (101 to 250 employees)	73
Extra-small (20 to 100 employees)	76

**Table 9.2: Employee Engagement Index for extra-large agencies (10,000+ employees)**

Agency	Employee Engagement Index score
<b>Extra-large agencies – overall</b>	<b>71</b>
Australian Taxation Office	74
Department of Defence	73
Department of Home Affairs	69
Services Australia	69

**Table 9.3: Employee Engagement Index for large agencies (1,001 to 10,000 employees)**

Agency	Employee Engagement Index score
<b>Large agencies — overall</b>	<b>74</b>
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	79
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	78
National Disability Insurance Agency	77
Department of the Treasury	76
Attorney-General's Department	76
Department of Health and Aged Care	76
Australian Bureau of Statistics	75
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	75
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	75
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	74
Department of Veterans' Affairs	74
Department of Finance	74
National Indigenous Australians Agency	74
Department of Social Services	73
Bureau of Meteorology	73
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	73
Federal Court of Australia	73
IP Australia	73
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	72
Department of Education	72
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	72
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	72

**Table 9.4: Employee Engagement Index for medium agencies (251 to 1,000 employees)**

Agency	Employee Engagement Index score
<b>Medium agencies – overall</b>	<b>74</b>
Future Fund Management Agency	83
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	81
Murray–Darling Basin Authority	77
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	77
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	77
Clean Energy Regulator	76
National Library of Australia	76
Comcare	76
Australian Electoral Commission	75
Geoscience Australia	75
Fair Work Ombudsman	75
Australian National Audit Office	75
Fair Work Commission	75
Australian War Memorial	73
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	73
Australian Financial Security Authority	73
Australian Digital Health Agency	73
Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions	73
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	73
Australian Public Service Commission	72
National Archives of Australia	72
Defence Housing Australia	72
National Emergency Management Agency	72
Australian Communications and Media Authority	71
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	71
National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission	70
Digital Transformation Agency	70

**Table 9.5: Employee Engagement Index for small agencies (101 to 250 employees)**

Agency	Employee Engagement Index score
<b>Small agencies – overall</b>	<b>73</b>
Office of the Special Investigator	81
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	80
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	78
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	76
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	76
Australian Human Rights Commission	76
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	76
National Health and Medical Research Council	76
Safe Work Australia	75
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	75
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	75
National Museum of Australia	75
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia	74
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	74
Torres Strait Regional Authority	74
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission	74
Sport Integrity Australia	73
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	73
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman	72
Productivity Commission	72
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	71
Australian National Maritime Museum	70
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	70
Australian Research Council	69
Royal Australian Mint	67
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	67
Australian Skills Quality Authority	63

**Table 9.6: Employee Engagement Index for extra-small agencies (20 to 100 employees)**

Agency	Employee Engagement Index score
<b>Extra-small agencies – overall</b>	<b>76</b>
Organ and Tissue Authority	86
Commonwealth Grants Commission	84
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	83
Climate Change Authority	83
Professional Services Review	80
National Portrait Gallery	80
Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House	79
National Health Funding Body	78
Australian Office of Financial Management	78
National Capital Authority	77
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	77
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	77
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	75
National Blood Authority	74
Cancer Australia	74
Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman	73
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	72
Australian Institute of Family Studies	69
National Mental Health Commission	50

**See also**

[Working in the APS – APS employee engagement](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 55.



## Harassment and bullying

The Australian Public Service Employee Census measures employee perceptions of harassment and bullying. Responses to the question 'During the last 12 months, have you been subjected to harassment or bullying in your current workplace?' are summarised here.

For the purposes of the 2023 APS Employee Census, these definitions were used:

**Harassment** — Workplace harassment entails offensive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at an individual or group. The behaviour is unwelcome, unsolicited, usually unreciprocated and usually, but not always, repeated. Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable way is not workplace harassment.

**Bullying** — A worker is bullied at work if, while at work, an individual or group of individuals repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards the worker, or group of workers of which the worker is a member, and that behaviour creates a risk to health and safety. To avoid doubt, this does not apply to reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable way.

Tables 9.7 to 9.12 present Census results, broken down by agency size, for APS respondents.

**Table 9.7: Perceptions of harassment and bullying for all agencies, by agency size**

Agency size	% of respondents who perceived harassment or bullying in their current workplace
<b>Overall APS</b>	<b>10.4</b>
Extra-large (10,000+ employees)	11.0
Large (1,001 to 10,000 employees)	9.6
Medium (251 to 1,000 employees)	9.5
Small (101 to 250 employees)	11.4
Extra-small (20 to 100 employees)	9.3

**Table 9.8: Perceptions of harassment and bullying for extra-large agencies (10,000+ employees)**

Agency	% of respondents who perceived harassment or bullying in their current workplace
<b>Extra-large agencies — overall</b>	<b>11.0</b>
Australian Taxation Office	8.3
Department of Defence	10.8
Services Australia	11.9
Department of Home Affairs	13.0

**Table 9.9: Perceptions of harassment and bullying for large agencies (1,001 to 10,000 employees)**

Agency	% of respondents who perceived harassment or bullying in their current workplace
<b>Large agencies – overall</b>	<b>9.6</b>
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	5.6
Australian Bureau of Statistics	5.8
IP Australia	6.1
Bureau of Meteorology	7.3
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	7.4
Department of Education	7.6
Department of the Treasury	7.7
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	7.7
Attorney-General's Department	7.9
Department of Health and Aged Care	8.0
Department of Finance	8.8
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	9.2
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	9.7
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	10.1
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	10.6
National Disability Insurance Agency	10.7
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	10.8
Federal Court of Australia	11.7
Department of Social Services	11.7
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	12.7
Department of Veterans' Affairs	12.8
National Indigenous Australians Agency	13.1

**Table 9.10: Perceptions of harassment and bullying for medium agencies (251 to 1,000 employees)**

Agency	% of respondents who perceived harassment or bullying in their current workplace
<b>Medium agencies – overall</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Fair Work Ombudsman	2.9
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	5.0
Fair Work Commission	5.0
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	5.5
Future Fund Management Agency	6.2
Murray–Darling Basin Authority	6.9
National Library of Australia	7.2
Australian Public Service Commission	7.2
Australian National Audit Office	7.4
Comcare	7.5
Digital Transformation Agency	8.3
Australian Communications and Media Authority	8.3
Geoscience Australia	8.4
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	8.6
Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions	8.8
Defence Housing Australia	8.9
Clean Energy Regulator	8.9
Australian Electoral Commission	10.1
Australian Financial Security Authority	10.4
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	11.3
Australian Digital Health Agency	13.7
Australian War Memorial	14.0
National Archives of Australia	14.5
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	15.3
National Emergency Management Agency	18.5
National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission	20.3
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	23.2

**Table 9.11: Perceptions of harassment and bullying for small agencies (101 to 250 employees)**

Agency	% of respondents who perceived harassment or bullying in their current workplace
<b>Small agencies – overall</b>	<b>11.4</b>
Office of the Special Investigator	0.0
Safe Work Australia	2.3
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	2.8
Productivity Commission	3.5
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	7.1
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	7.1
Australian Human Rights Commission	7.2
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman	7.5
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission	9.1
National Health and Medical Research Council	9.1
Australian Research Council	9.2
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	10.7
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	11.6
Australian Skills Quality Authority	11.8
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	12.0
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	12.6
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	13.4
Sport Integrity Australia	13.5
Royal Australian Mint	13.5
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	14.7
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	14.9
National Museum of Australia	15.1
Torres Strait Regional Authority	15.5
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	15.8
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia	16.4
Australian National Maritime Museum	19.7
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	21.7

**Table 9.12: Perceptions of harassment and bullying for extra-small agencies (20 to 100 employees)**

Agency	% of respondents who perceived harassment or bullying in their current workplace
<b>Extra-small agencies – overall</b>	<b>9.3</b>
Climate Change Authority	0.0
Organ and Tissue Authority	0.0
Commonwealth Grants Commission	2.9
Cancer Australia	3.0
Professional Services Review	4.2
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	5.3
Australian Office of Financial Management	5.6
Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman	5.6
Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House	5.6
National Health Funding Body	6.3
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	8.3
Australian Institute of Family Studies	8.5
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	11.0
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	11.6
National Portrait Gallery	14.6
National Blood Authority	14.8
National Capital Authority	15.3
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	15.8
National Mental Health Commission	22.2

**See also**

[Integrity – Respectful and ethical workplaces](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 92.

## Perceptions of SES leadership

The Leadership Senior Executive Service Manager Index assesses how employees view the leadership behaviours of their immediate SES manager. The questions in the Australian Public Service Employee Census that form the index are:

- My SES manager clearly articulates the direction and priorities for our area
- My SES manager presents convincing arguments and persuades others towards an outcome
- My SES manager promotes cooperation within and between agencies
- My SES manager encourages innovation and creativity
- My SES manager creates an environment that enables us to deliver our best
- My SES manager ensures that work effort contributes to the strategic direction of the agency and the APS.

Tables 9.13 to 9.18 report on Leadership SES Manager Index scores for agencies, by agency size, for APS respondents. Leadership SES Manager Index scores are not presented for agencies with fewer than two SES officers as at 30 June 2023.

**Table 9.13: Leadership SES Manager Index, by agency size**

Agency size	Leadership SES Manager Index score
<b>Overall APS</b>	<b>69</b>
Extra-large (10,000+ employees)	66
Large (1,001 to 10,000 employees)	72
Medium (251 to 1,000 employees)	70
Small (101 to 250 employees)	67
Extra-small (20 to 100 employees)	72

**Table 9.14: Leadership SES Manager Index for extra-large agencies (10,000+ employees)**

Agency	Leadership SES Manager Index score
<b>Extra-large agencies – overall</b>	<b>66</b>
Australian Taxation Office	70
Department of Defence	66
Department of Home Affairs	65
Services Australia	65

**Table 9.15: Leadership SES Manager Index for large agencies (1,001 to 10,000 employees)**

Agency	Leadership SES Manager Index score
<b>Large agencies — overall</b>	<b>72</b>
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	76
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	76
Department of the Treasury	75
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	75
Attorney-General's Department	75
Department of Finance	75
Department of Health and Aged Care	74
Department of Social Services	73
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	73
Department of Education	72
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	72
National Disability Insurance Agency	72
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	71
National Indigenous Australians Agency	71
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	71
IP Australia	70
Australian Bureau of Statistics	70
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	69
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	69
Department of Veterans' Affairs	68
Bureau of Meteorology	66
Federal Court of Australia	62



**Table 9.16: Leadership SES Manager Index for medium agencies (251 to 1,000 employees)**

Agency	Leadership SES Manager Index score
<b>Medium agencies – overall</b>	<b>70</b>
Future Fund Management Agency	78
Australian National Audit Office	78
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	77
Digital Transformation Agency	75
Clean Energy Regulator	75
Australian Public Service Commission	74
Murray–Darling Basin Authority	73
Fair Work Ombudsman	72
Australian Communications and Media Authority	72
Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions	72
Geoscience Australia	71
National Library of Australia	71
Comcare	70
Australian Electoral Commission	70
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	70
Australian Digital Health Agency	69
Fair Work Commission	69
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	69
National Emergency Management Agency	67
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	67
Australian Financial Security Authority	67
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	66
Australian War Memorial	65
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	64
Defence Housing Australia	63
National Archives of Australia	60
National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission	58

**Table 9.17: Leadership SES Manager Index for small agencies (101 to 250 employees)**

Agency	Leadership SES Manager Index score
<b>Small agencies – overall</b>	<b>67</b>
Office of the Special Investigator	81
Safe Work Australia	78
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	78
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	75
Productivity Commission	75
Australian Research Council	74
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	74
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	73
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	70
National Health and Medical Research Council	70
Australian Human Rights Commission	69
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	69
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	68
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman	67
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia	67
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	65
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	64
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	63
National Museum of Australia	62
Sport Integrity Australia	61
Australian Skills Quality Authority	56

**Table 9.18: Leadership SES Manager Index for extra-small agencies (20 to 100 employees)**

Agency	Leadership SES Manager Index score
<b>Extra-small agencies – overall</b>	<b>72</b>
Organ and Tissue Authority	89
Commonwealth Grants Commission	84
National Capital Authority	80
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	77
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	75
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	72
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	70
Cancer Australia	68
National Blood Authority	63
Australian Institute of Family Studies	62
National Mental Health Commission	51

**See also**

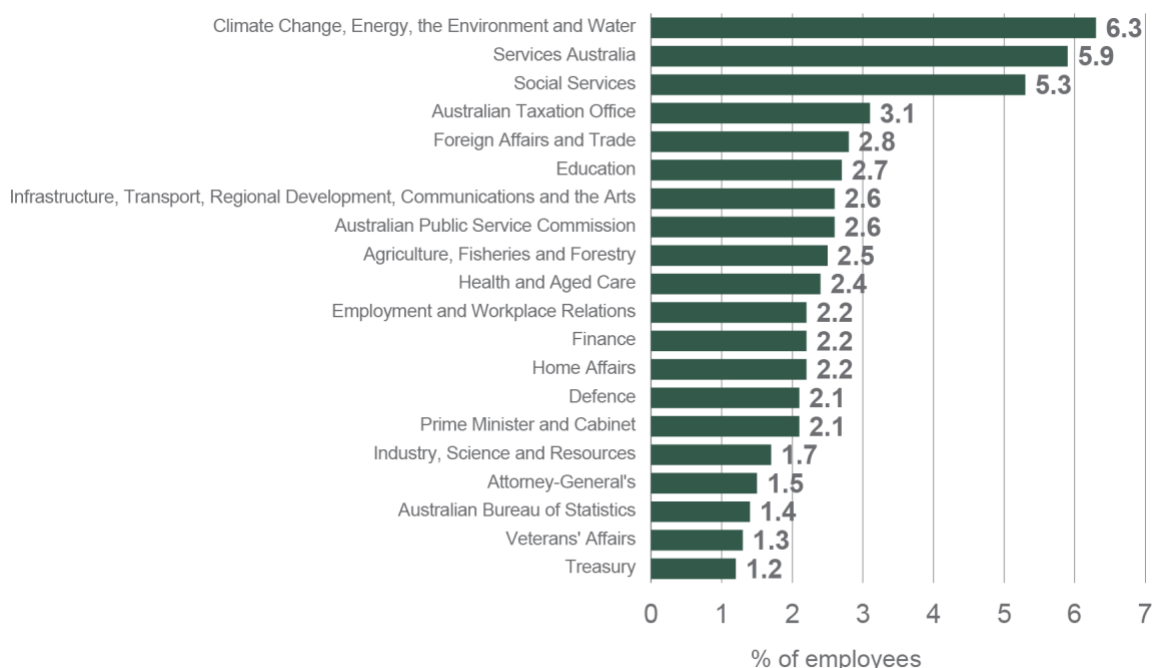
[Leadership – Senior Executive Service](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 80.

## APS First Nations employment

The Boosting First Nations Employment measure outlines the government's commitment to increase First Nations employment in the Australian Public Service to 5% by 2030.

APS agencies collect information on 'Indigenous status' from employees in their human resources information systems. They then report the information to the Australian Public Service Commission's centralised APS Employment Database. Figure 9.19 shows First Nations employees in selected agencies as at 30 June 2023.

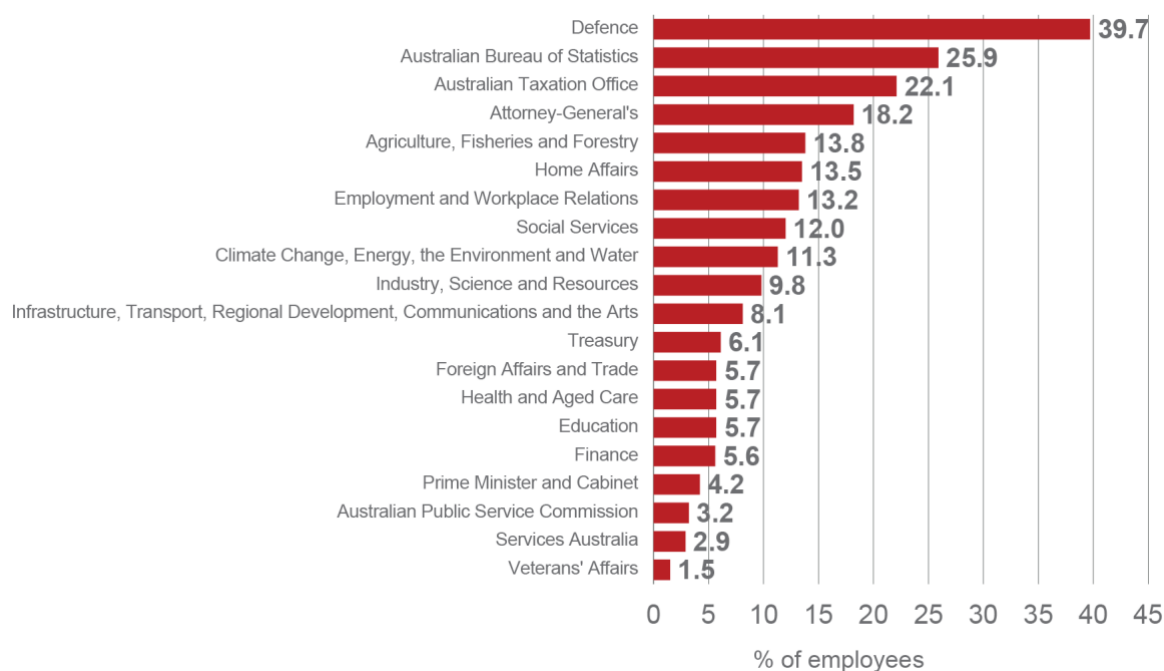
**Figure 9.19: First Nations employees by agency (at 30 June 2023)**



Source: APSED

As diversity fields such as 'Indigenous status' are not mandatory to report, there are some employee records with no Indigenous status in agencies' workforce figures. The number of records with no Indigenous status for some large agencies suggests that the true proportion of First Nations employees in the APS is likely higher than reported figures indicate. Figure 9.20 shows the proportion of employees with no Indigenous status recorded in selected agencies as at 30 June 2023.

**Figure 9.20: No data for Indigenous status by agency (at 30 June 2023)**



Source: APSED

Note: 'No data' includes where employees have selected a 'Choose not to give' option for Indigenous status, or where no Indigenous status data is recorded.

The Boosting First Nations Employment measure seeks to continue to increase First Nations employment in APS agencies over the coming 7 years (to 2030).

Enhancing data quality requires ongoing action to address barriers to reporting. This includes:

- articulating to APS employees the benefit of accurate data, and demonstrating the relevance of this information to their employment
- assuring employees that their reported First Nations status will remain confidential and not be used by employers in any discriminatory or otherwise negative way
- reviewing human resources information systems and processes to optimise data collection and reporting.

### **See also**

[APS profile – Boosting First Nations employment in the APS](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 33.

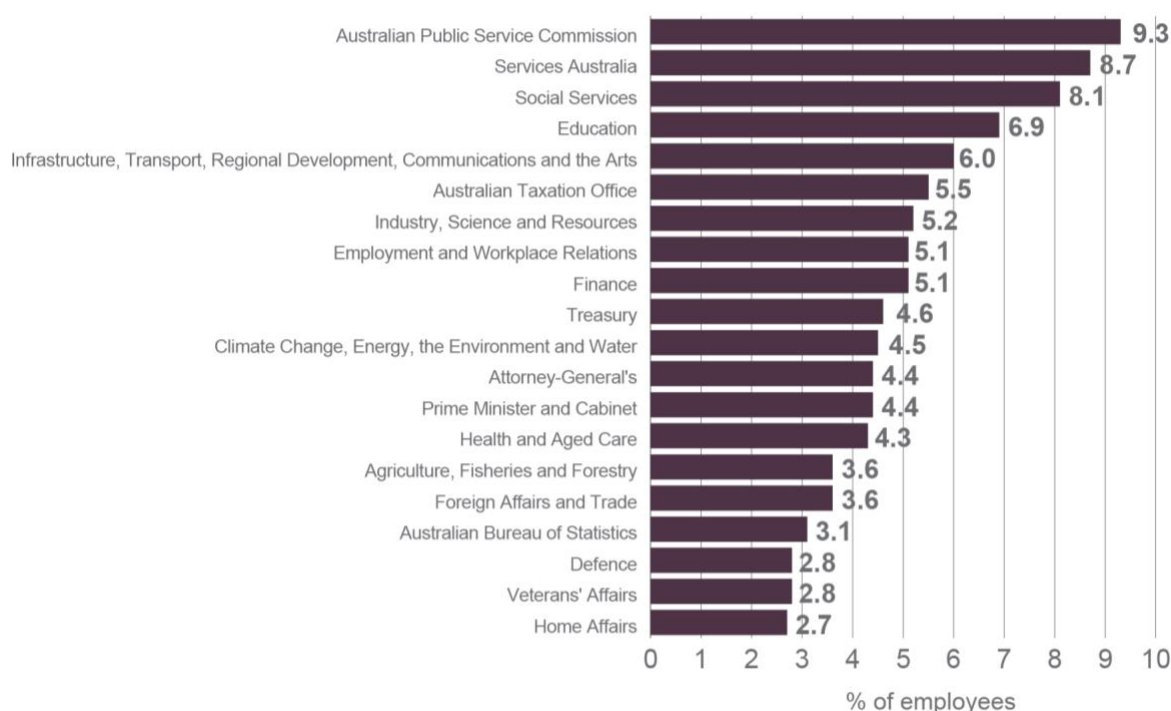
Australian Government [APS Employment Data 30 June 2023](#) (Table 82), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/employment-data/aps-employment-data-30-june-2023>, accessed 5 October 2023.

## APS employment of people with disability

The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25 aims to increase the employment of people with disability to 7% by 2025. It aligns with the national Disability Strategy's Employment Targeted Action Plan.

APS agencies collect information on disability from employees in their human resources information systems, which they then report to the Australian Public Service Commission's centralised APS Employment Database. Figure 9.21 shows APS employees with a disability in selected agencies as at 30 June 2023.

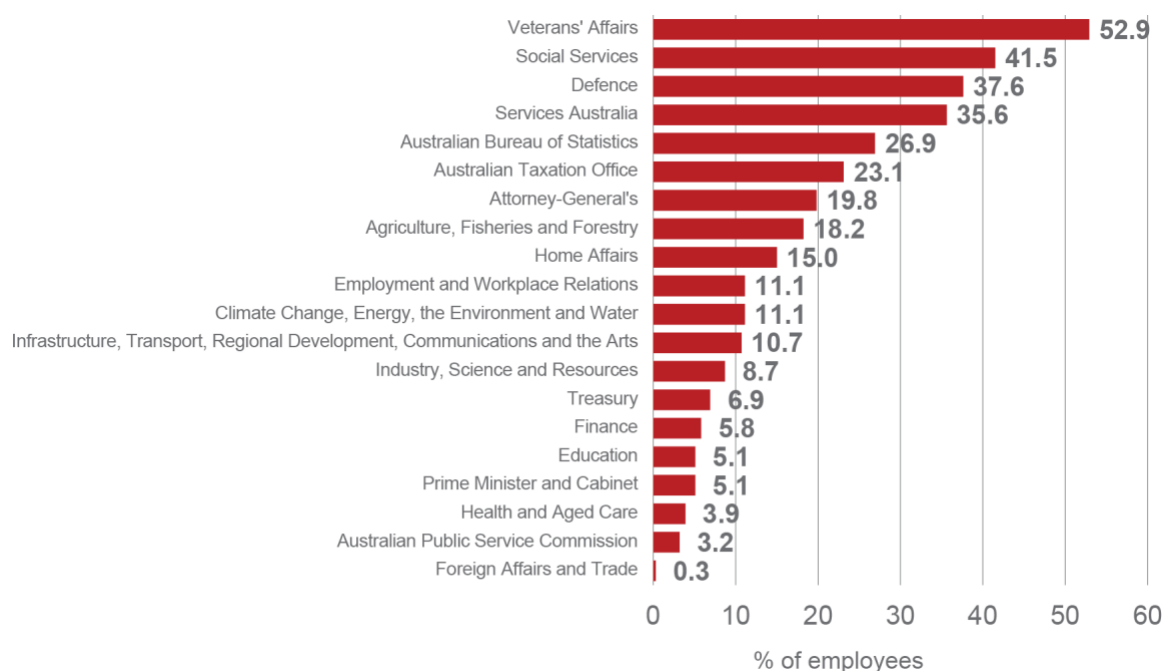
**Figure 9.21: Employees with disability by agency (at 30 June 2023)**



Source: APSED

As disability status is not mandatory to report, there are some employee records with no disability status in agencies' workforce figures. The number of records with no disability status for some large agencies suggests that the true proportion of employees with a disability in the APS is likely higher than reported figures indicate. Figure 9.22 shows proportion of employees with no disability status recorded in selected agencies as at 30 June 2023.

**Figure 9.22: No data for disability status by agency (at 30 June 2023)**



Source: APSED

Note: 'No data' includes where employees have selected a 'Choose not to give' option for disability status, or where no disability status data is recorded.

The APS Disability Employment Strategy seeks to continue to increase the employment of employees with disability in APS agencies over the coming 2 years.

Enhancing data quality requires ongoing action to address barriers to reporting. This includes:

- articulating to APS employees the benefit of accurate data, and demonstrating the relevance of this information to their employment
- assuring employees that their reported disability status will remain confidential and not be used by employers in any discriminatory or otherwise negative way
- reviewing human resource information systems and processes to optimise data collection and reporting.

### **See also**

[APS profile – APS employees with disability](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 42.

[Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 172.

Australian Government (n.d.) [APS Employment Data 30 June 2023](https://www.apsc.gov.au/employment-data/aps-employment-data-30-june-2023) (Table 82), APSC website, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/employment-data/aps-employment-data-30-june-2023>, accessed 5 October 2023.



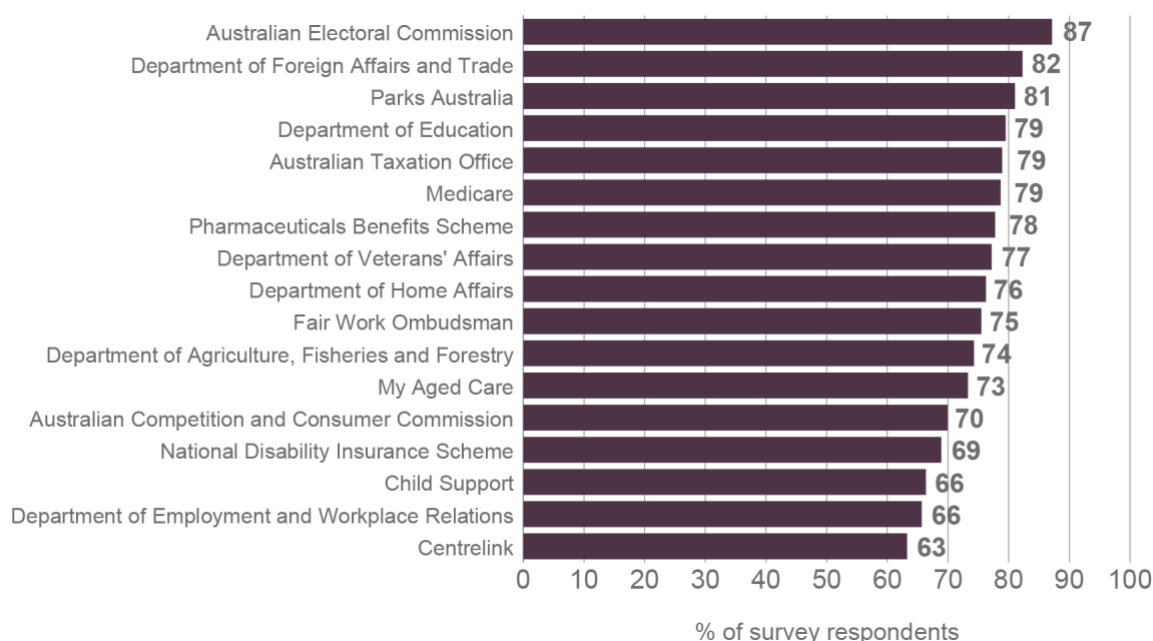
## Trust and satisfaction with Australian public services

The Survey of Trust in Australian public services is a regular, national survey. It is the only tool that provides a whole-of-Australian Public Service measure of public satisfaction, trust and experiences with Australian public services across departments and agencies.

Service-specific results have been published since November 2022 to offer insights into people's experiences with individual services. Publishing these results gives APS agencies a benchmark. This, in turn, helps inform their efforts to improve people's trust in, and satisfaction with, Australian public services.

Figure 9.23 shows the proportion of respondents who reported feeling they can trust each of the services covered in the survey. The Australian Electoral Commission had the highest level of trust in 2022–23 with 87% of survey respondents indicating that they 'strongly trust', 'trust' or 'somewhat trust' the services provided. Fewer respondents (63%) reported the same level of trust in Centrelink, a service provided through Services Australia.

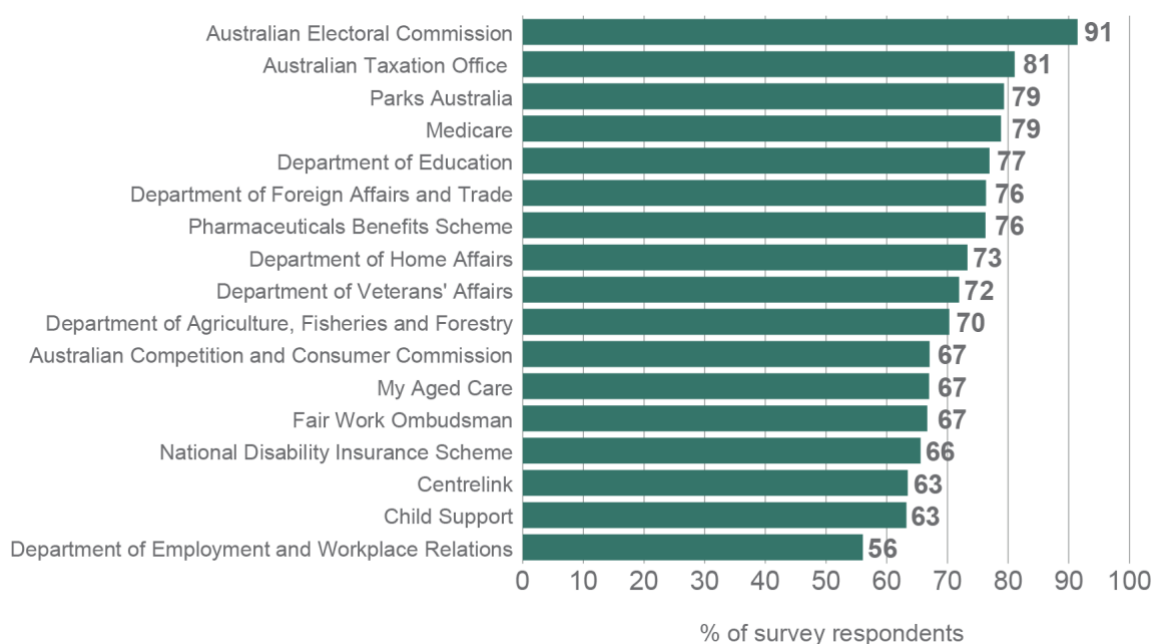
**Figure 9.23: Trust in Australian public services (2022–23)**



Source: *Trust in Australian public services: 2023 Annual Report*

Figure 9.24 shows the proportion of respondents who reported being satisfied with the services they received. The Australian Electoral Commission had the highest proportion of respondents (91%) satisfied with the services they received during 2022–23. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations had the lowest proportion of respondents satisfied (56%).

**Figure 9.24: Satisfaction with Australian public services (2022–23)**



Source: *Trust in Australian public services: 2023 Annual Report*

Note: The Department of Education, Skills and Employment split into the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Education in late 2022. Due to this, data for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations is from August 2022 to June 2023 and data for the Department of Education is from September 2022 to June 2023.

Trust and satisfaction are highly related and affect each other. Trust involves expectations on how well a service will perform given user needs. Satisfaction is a product of how well the service lived up to those expectations, and drives future expectations.

Trust is strongly associated with an individual's circumstances. Challenging life events are among the strongest determinants of trust. For example, people experiencing financial hardship are less likely to trust, and less likely to believe that services will meet their needs.

Satisfaction is associated with both the drivers of trust and the experience received from a service. In 2022–23, people were most satisfied with their experiences with staff and least satisfied with public service processes.

### **See also**

[Operating context – Australian public services – trust and satisfaction](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 26.

[Operating context – Luxembourg Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy](#), *State of the Service Report 2022–23*, page 24.



## List of figures

Figure A1.5	APS job families, by location (at 30 June 2023)	159
Figure A7.1	Example table used to calculate index scores (for one APS employee)	219

## List of tables

Table A1.1	Ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees (2018 to 2023)	156
Table A1.2	Agencies with the largest increases of employees (2022–23)	157
Table A1.3	Agencies with the largest reductions of employees (2022–23)	157
Table A1.4	Location of APS employees at 30 June (2014 and 2023)	158
Table A1.6	Ongoing APS engagements by classification (2013–14 to 2022–23)	160
Table A1.7	Ongoing APS engagements by age group (2013–14 to 2022–23)	161
Table A1.8	Ongoing APS separations by classification (2013–14 to 2022–23)	162
Table A1.9	Number of APS employees by base classification at 30 June (2014 to 2023)	163
Table A1.10	Number of APS employees by age group at 30 June (2014 to 2023)	164
Table A1.11	Gender representation in the APS at 30 June (2014 to 2023)	164
Table A1.12	Gender representation by classification at 30 June (2014 to 2023)	165
Table A1.13	Proportion of APS employees by diversity group at 30 June (2014 to 2023)	166
Table A1.14	Personal and miscellaneous leave rates (2016–17 to 2022–23) by agency size (expressed as an average number of days)	167
Table A1.15	Sick, carer's leave, miscellaneous and personal and miscellaneous leave rate by agency (2021–22 and 2022–23) (expressed as an average number of days)	167
Table A2.1	Number of APS employees investigated and found in breach of elements of the APS Code of Conduct (2022–23)	172
Table A2.2	Type of reports leading to finalised APS Code of Conduct investigations (2022–23)	173
Table A2.3	Outcome of investigations into suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct (2022–23)	174
Table A2.4	Sanctions imposed for breaches of the APS Code of Conduct (2022–23)	174
Table A2.5	Type of harassment or bullying perceived by respondents	175
Table A2.6	Perceived source of harassment or bullying	176
Table A2.7	Reporting behaviour of harassment or bullying	176
Table A2.8	Reasons for not reporting harassment or bullying	177

Table A2.9	Complaints to agencies about harassment and bullying (2022–23)	178
Table A2.10	Employee perceptions of corruption	178
Table A2.11	Type of potential corruption witnessed	179
Table A2.12	Type of discrimination perceived by respondents	180
Table A2.13	Proportion of employees from each cultural background who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination	181
Table A2.14	Respondents with disability who have that information recorded in their agency's human resources information system	182
Table A2.15	Reason respondents did not provide the information they had a disability to agency human resources systems	182
Table A2.16	Proportion of employees within each classification level who considered themselves to be neurodivergent	183
Table A2.17	Proportion of employees by type of work who considered themselves to be neurodivergent	184
Table A2.18	Proportion of employees within each age group who considered themselves to be neurodivergent	185
Table A2.19	Proportion of employees of each gender who considered themselves to be neurodivergent	185
Table A2.20	Proportion of employees with each cultural background who considered themselves to be neurodivergent	186
Table A2.21	Employee perceptions of barriers to temporary moves	186
Table A2.22	Employee perceptions related to work (2020 to 2023)	187
Table A2.23	Employee perceptions of emotional demands	187
Table A2.24	Prior APS experience of new employees	188
Table A2.25	Actions managers carried out to develop their managerial capabilities	188
Table A2.26	Form of leadership training undertaken	189
Table A2.27	Assessments of formal leadership training to improve managerial capability	189
Table A2.28	Assessments of mentoring/coaching to improve managerial capability	189
Table A2.29	Proportion of managers that would take up opportunities to develop their managerial capabilities	190
Table A2.30	Managers' preferred means of developing managerial capabilities	190
Table A2.31	Managerial skills and capabilities managers most want to develop	191
Table A2.32	Employee perceptions of immediate supervisors	192
Table A2.33	Employee perceptions of SES managers (2021 to 2023)	194
Table A2.34	Average proportion of EL 1, EL 2 and SES Band 1 employees with numbers of direct reports	196
Table A2.35	Employee perceptions related role and purpose	196
Table A3.1	List of APS agencies by portfolio	197
Table A4.1	Members of the Secretaries Board 2022–23	201
Table A6.1	Number and proportion of agencies that identified critical skills shortages	209

Table A6.2	Number and proportion of agencies with specific critical skills shortages	209
Table A6.3	Proportion performing each type of work who identified data as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup	210
Table A6.4	Proportion performing each type of work who identified ICT or digital as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup	211
Table A6.5	Changing core skill needs of APS employees	212
Table A6.6	Number and proportion of agencies that have a current workforce plan or strategy	213
Table A6.7	Number and proportion of agencies that utilised APSC workforce data or products to develop and assess workforce policies and practices	213

## Appendix 1 – APS workforce trends

This appendix summarises Australian Public Service overall workforce trends for 2022–23 and over the past 10 years. The primary source of data is the Australian Public Service Employment Database.

The APS is a diverse workforce spanning 596 locations across Australia and overseas in 99 agencies. As at 30 June 2023, the APS had increased to 170,332 employees, working across 239 job roles in fields such as service delivery, research, regulation, project management and policy development. This growth reflects an additional 11,041 employees joining the APS during 2022–23, and overall increase in size of 6.9%.

### APS employment trends

As at 30 June 2023, there were 170,332 employees in the APS, comprising:

- 151,055 ongoing employees, up by 7.3% from 140,829 ongoing employees in June 2022
- 19,277 non-ongoing employees, up by 4.4% from 18,462 non-ongoing employees in June 2022.

Table A1.1 shows how this distribution has changed from 2018 to 2023. Non-ongoing employees in the APS are employed for a specific term, or for the duration of a specified task, or to perform duties that are irregular or intermittent (casual). Of all non-ongoing employees at 30 June 2023:

- 11,544 (59.9%) were employed for a specified term or the duration of a specified task
- 7,733 (40.1%) were employed on a casual basis.

The increase in non-ongoing employees was due to an increase in specified term or task non-ongoing employees (+ 2,292) during 2022–23. Casual employees decreased by 1,477 during the same period.

During 2022–23:

- 22,031 ongoing employees were engaged by the APS, up by 22.3% from 18,010 ongoing engagements in 2021–22
- 11,798 ongoing employees separated from the APS, up by 5.9% from 11,144 separations of ongoing employees in 2021–22.

Tables A1.2 and A1.3 show the agencies with the largest increases and reductions in employees.

**Table A1.1: Ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees (2018 to 2023)**

Year	Ongoing APS employees	Non-ongoing APS employees
June 2023	151,055 (88.7%)	19,277 (11.3%)
June 2022	140,829 (88.4%)	18,462 (11.6%)
June 2021	133,962 (87.2%)	19,680 (12.8%)
June 2020	132,249 (87.9%)	18,126 (12.1%)
June 2019	132,236 (90.1%)	14,521 (9.9%)
June 2018	136,206 (90.6%)	14,051 (9.4%)

Source: APSED

**Table A1.2: Agencies with the largest increases of employees (2022–23)**

Figures represent the net change and the percentage change from 30 June 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Agency	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Total
Department of Defence	+1,431 (+8.6%)	+79 (+29.3%)	+1,510 (+8.9%)
Department of Home Affairs	+1,086 (+8.3%)	+285 (+38.4%)	+1,371 (+9.9%)
Department of Veterans' Affairs	+444 (+24.1%)	+290 (+57.8%)	+734 (+31.3%)
National Disability Insurance Agency	+809 (+17.9%)	-227 (-41.3%)	+582 (+11.5%)
Australian Taxation Office	+846 (+4.6%)	-398 (-20.7%)	+448 (+2.2%)

Source: APSED

Note: Agencies that had a significant restructure in 2022–23 due to Machinery of Government changes are excluded from this table.

**Table A1.3: Agencies with the largest reductions of employees (2022–23)**

Figures represent the net change and the percentage change from 30 June 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Agency	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Total
Australian Bureau of Statistics	+17 (+0.7%)	-159 (-28.0%)	-142 (-4.5%)
Australian Electoral Commission	+71 (+9.7%)	-169 (-7.0%)	-98 (-3.1%)
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	-150 (-2.9%)	+60 (+12.6%)	-90 (-1.6%)
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	+10 (+1.5%)	-88 (-40.0%)	-78 (-8.6%)
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	-51 (-4.2%)	+14 (+11.7%)	-37 (-2.8%)

Source: APSED

Note: Agencies that had a significant restructure in 2022–23 due to Machinery of Government changes are excluded from this table.

## Location

At 30 June 2023, the largest number of Australian Public Service employees were located in the Australian Capital Territory (64,983), which represented 38.1% of the APS. This is a slight decrease from 38.4% in 2014. Collectively, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria made up 78,378 (46.0%) of the APS workforce. The proportion of APS employees based in regional Australia dropped from 13.7% in 2014 to 12.8% in 2023. Table A1.4 shows these changes.

**Table A1.4: Location of APS employees at 30 June (2014 and 2023)**

Location	2014		2023	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
ACT	60,651	38.4	64,943	38.1
NSW	30,071	19.0	28,285	16.6
Sydney	20,187	12.8	19,495	11.4
Regional NSW	9,884	6.3	8,790	5.2
VIC	25,575	16.2	28,536	16.8
Melbourne	22,028	13.9	23,805	14.0
Regional VIC	3,547	2.2	4,731	2.8
QLD	17,309	11.0	21,557	12.7
Brisbane	11,729	7.4	15,550	9.1
Regional QLD	5,580	3.5	6,007	3.5
SA	9,464	6.0	11,259	6.6
Adelaide	9,026	5.7	10,898	6.4
Regional SA	438	0.3	361	0.2
WA	7,274	4.6	8,144	4.8
Perth	6,157	3.9	7,446	4.4
Regional WA	1,117	0.7	698	0.4
TAS	3,972	2.5	4,187	2.5
Hobart	3,404	2.2	3,562	2.1
Regional TAS	568	0.4	625	0.4
NT	2,288	1.4	2,014	1.2
Darwin	1,805	1.1	1,365	0.8
Regional NT	483	0.3	649	0.4
Overseas	1,337	0.8	1,407	0.8
<b>Total Capital Cities</b>	<b>134,987</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>147,064</b>	<b>86.3</b>
<b>Total Regional</b>	<b>21,617</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>21,861</b>	<b>12.8</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>157,941</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>170,332</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: APSED

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.



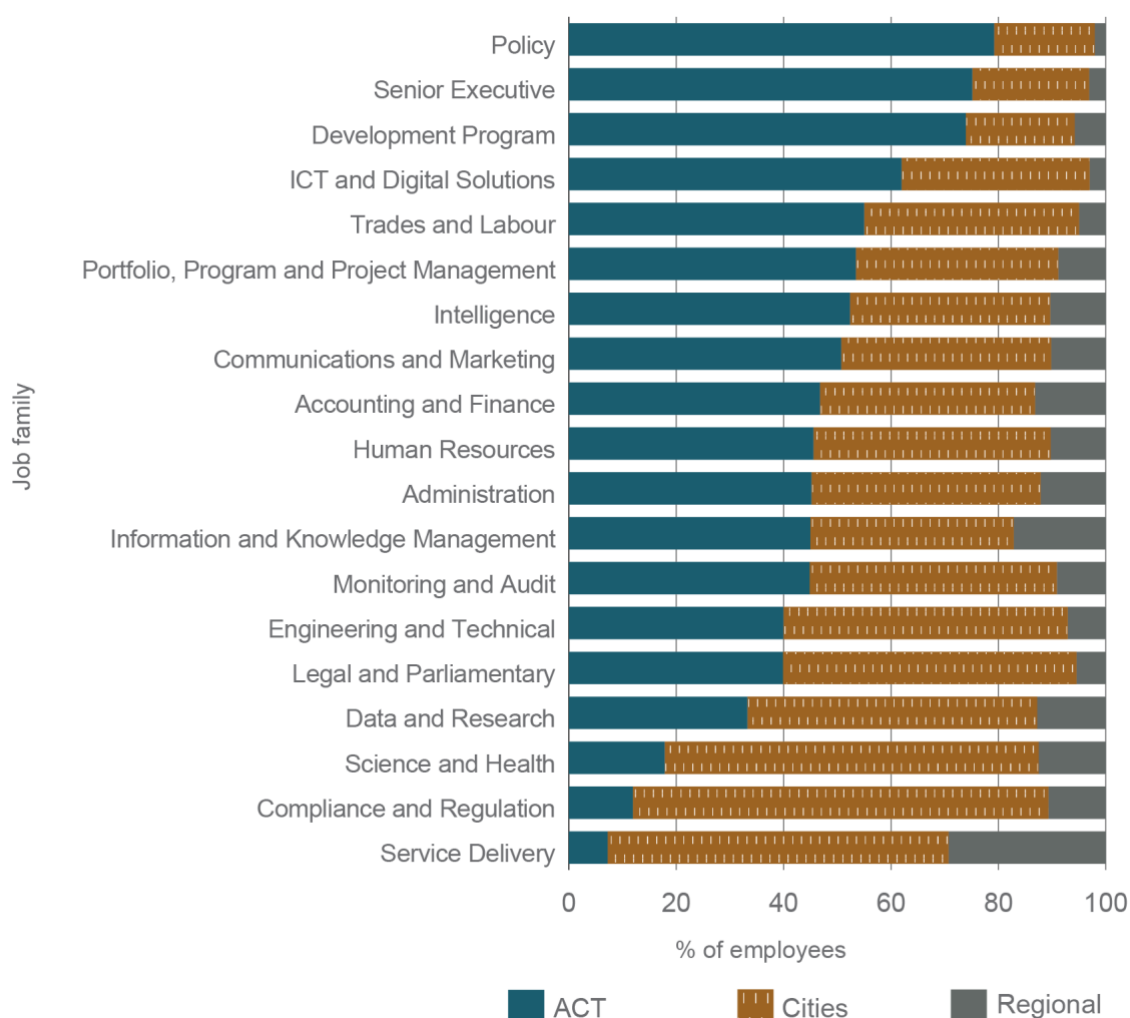
## Job families

The Australian Public Service Job Family Model groups functionally similar jobs that perform related tasks and require similar or related skills and knowledge. The model classifies jobs at 3 levels – family, function and role. The 19 job families are broken into clusters of job functions and further into job roles.

As at 30 June 2023, 48 agencies supplied job family data relating to 145,077 (85.2%) of APS employees.

Figure A1.5 presents the location of APS job families across Canberra, other cities and regions across Australia.

**Figure A1.5: APS Job families, by location (at 30 June 2023)**



Source: APSED

## Engagements and separations

Engagement numbers of ongoing employees in the Australian Public Service have fluctuated over the last 10 years. This ranges from 2,367 in 2014–15 during the APS-wide recruitment freeze, up to 22,031 in 2022–23.

Tables A1.6 and A1.7 cover ongoing APS engagements by classification and by age group respectively.

**Table A1.6: Ongoing APS engagements by classification (2013–14 to 2022–23)**

Classification	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Trainee	251	130	585	558	641	443	505	572	914	605
Graduate	1,151	1,037	1,436	1,484	1,247	1,205	1,392	1,381	1,798	1,863
APS 1	181	36	48	57	44	46	62	80	117	115
APS 2	282	151	485	456	172	165	194	388	395	717
APS 3	534	247	2,493	1,632	2,086	773	1,560	1,261	2,663	4,868
APS 4	462	142	2,022	1,547	1,520	1,566	1,660	1,586	3,685	4,581
APS 5	427	157	1,316	1,066	1,072	1,528	1,388	1,650	2,911	3,554
APS 6	673	241	1,321	1,305	1,213	1,634	1,793	1,797	3,126	3,356
EL 1	467	140	787	686	673	797	851	1,007	1,749	1,790
EL 2	185	58	360	292	268	323	342	388	564	475
SES 1	24	17	158	47	47	57	46	67	66	73
SES 2	12	9	31	17	26	15	25	19	19	22
SES 3	1	2	9	6	5	10	2	2	3	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>2,367</b>	<b>11,051</b>	<b>9,153</b>	<b>9,014</b>	<b>8,562</b>	<b>9,820</b>	<b>10,198</b>	<b>18,010</b>	<b>22,031</b>

Source: APSED

**Table A1.7: Ongoing APS engagements by age group (2013–14 to 2022–23)**

Age group (years)	2013– 14	2014– 15	2015– 16	2016– 17	2017– 18	2018– 19	2019– 20	2020– 21	2021– 22	2022– 23
Under 20	108	75	157	169	126	149	143	160	306	443
20-24	1,095	701	2,022	1,813	1,750	1,478	1,785	1,960	3,050	3,557
25-29	1,034	633	2,532	2,101	1,938	1,835	2,128	2,143	3,577	3,906
30-34	674	317	1,795	1,362	1,429	1,288	1,465	1,549	2,685	3,107
35-39	470	166	1,299	1,001	1,095	1,046	1,238	1,280	2,383	3,008
40-44	380	163	1,062	874	880	861	952	966	1,906	2,613
45-49	340	130	894	718	746	773	854	861	1,556	2,049
50-54	254	102	685	592	534	560	637	637	1,299	1,627
55-59	187	55	425	379	342	373	429	426	802	1,042
60 and over	108	25	180	144	174	199	189	216	446	679
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>2,367</b>	<b>11,051</b>	<b>9,153</b>	<b>9,014</b>	<b>8,562</b>	<b>9,820</b>	<b>10,198</b>	<b>18,010</b>	<b>22,031</b>

Source: APSED

Table A1.8 covers ongoing APS separations by classification. In 2022–23, there were 11,798 separations of ongoing APS employees. The number increased from 11,144 in 2021–22. Unlike engagements, separations have remained relatively steady since 2013–14.

**Table A1.8: Ongoing APS separations by classification (2013–14 to 2022–23)**

Classification	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Trainee	44	38	59	61	75	120	80	70	93	166
Graduate	60	38	42	60	59	91	114	59	96	108
APS 1	100	85	59	61	69	51	49	24	26	24
APS 2	328	331	279	241	306	246	249	213	240	207
APS 3	1,273	1,139	991	1,190	1,219	1,048	911	821	1,076	1,377
APS 4	1,800	1,748	1,553	1,689	1,886	2,225	1,573	1,511	1,944	2,219
APS 5	1,422	1,391	1,285	1,434	1,478	1,785	1,292	1,233	1,752	1,789
APS 6	2,272	2,302	1,911	2,122	2,319	2,886	2,248	2,058	2,644	2,607
EL 1	2,375	2,191	2,274	1,757	1,734	2,225	1,851	1,490	2,083	2,094
EL 2	1,363	1,148	1,082	882	920	1,175	1,249	780	949	965
SES 1	189	170	177	174	160	178	148	177	172	163
SES 2	78	72	70	65	65	64	71	59	49	61
SES 3	13	13	14	20	18	15	13	14	20	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,317</b>	<b>10,666</b>	<b>9,796</b>	<b>9,756</b>	<b>10,308</b>	<b>12,109</b>	<b>9,848</b>	<b>8,509</b>	<b>11,144</b>	<b>11,798</b>

Source: APSED

## Classification structures

As at 30 June 2023, the most common classification in the Australian Public Service was APS 6. This continued the trend of the last decade, during which this level has consistently been the most common classification (Table A1.9).

**Table A1.9: Number of APS employees by base classification at 30 June (2014 to 2023)**

Classification	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Trainee	346	221	582	619	765	566	616	640	982	688
Graduate	1,317	1,196	1,571	1,686	1,487	1,452	1,602	1,565	1,988	1,513
APS 1	4,945	4,351	3,901	2,903	2,676	2,841	2,202	1,565	2,954	2,704
APS 2	5,074	4,674	5,003	4,605	4,701	4,413	6,251	4,731	4,168	4,441
APS 3	19,203	19,398	20,764	18,420	17,209	15,320	15,716	16,809	14,741	16,664
APS 4	30,708	30,637	30,578	29,491	29,482	28,094	27,316	28,294	27,389	28,451
APS 5	21,239	20,671	20,930	21,236	20,852	20,591	21,146	21,697	22,342	24,222
APS 6	32,406	31,247	32,668	33,123	32,973	32,971	33,979	34,321	36,130	39,017
EL 1	27,568	25,853	25,484	25,543	25,656	26,015	26,943	28,496	31,625	34,358
EL 2	12,544	11,524	11,491	11,665	11,753	11,726	11,813	12,673	13,938	15,068
SES 1	1,919	1,822	1,966	1,978	2,025	2,050	2,062	2,090	2,235	2,368
SES 2	551	530	543	558	553	580	597	626	659	682
SES 3	121	116	126	121	125	138	132	135	140	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,941</b>	<b>152,240</b>	<b>155,607</b>	<b>151,948</b>	<b>150,257</b>	<b>146,757</b>	<b>150,375</b>	<b>153,642</b>	<b>159,291</b>	<b>170,332</b>

Source: APSED

## Age profile

As at 30 June 2023, the average age of Australian Public Service employees decreased to 43.1, from 43.4 at 30 June 2022. The proportion of APS employees under 30 years of age continued a slow upwards trend to 15.3%, up from 14.3% in June 2022 (Table A1.10).

**Table A1.10: Number of APS employees by age group at 30 June (2014 to 2023)**

Age group (years)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Under 20	469	458	577	406	456	430	572	582	672	839
20-24	5,643	5,237	5,885	5,508	5,526	5,315	6,297	6,744	7,391	8,581
25-29	15,835	14,394	14,322	13,650	12,946	12,583	13,131	13,701	14,720	16,659
30-34	21,029	20,148	20,259	19,176	18,431	17,213	17,051	17,119	17,665	19,003
35-39	21,144	20,588	21,309	21,260	21,126	20,679	20,986	21,371	21,495	22,607
40-44	22,440	22,087	21,980	21,282	20,853	20,752	20,965	21,580	22,459	24,103
45-49	21,835	21,057	21,706	21,789	21,907	21,710	22,011	21,890	22,053	22,976
50-54	23,184	22,352	22,172	21,260	20,631	19,974	20,147	20,819	21,889	23,139
55-59	15,582	15,409	16,169	16,360	16,698	16,402	16,758	16,815	16,988	17,431
60 and over	10,780	10,510	11,228	11,257	11,683	11,699	12,457	13,021	13,959	14,994
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,941</b>	<b>152,240</b>	<b>155,607</b>	<b>151,948</b>	<b>150,257</b>	<b>146,757</b>	<b>150,375</b>	<b>153,642</b>	<b>159,291</b>	<b>170,332</b>

Source: APSED

## Gender

The proportion of women has continued to grow over the past decade. During this period, the proportion of women has grown from 58.1% to 60.4% (Table A1.11).

**Table A1.11: Gender representation in the APS at 30 June (2014 to 2023)**

Gender	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Men	66,204	63,210	63,686	62,274	61,480	59,150	60,098	61,013	62,729	66,877
Women	91,687	88,977	91,863	89,611	88,701	87,511	90,167	92,440	96,254	102,913
X	.	.	.	63	76	96	110	189	308	542
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,941</b>	<b>152,240</b>	<b>155,607</b>	<b>151,948</b>	<b>150,257</b>	<b>146,757</b>	<b>150,375</b>	<b>153,642</b>	<b>159,291</b>	<b>170,332</b>

Source: APSED

The proportion of women is higher than that of men from the APS 1 classification up to and including Senior Executive Service Band 2. This is the first time there are more women at the SES Band 2 classification than men. A slightly lower proportion of women remains at the SES Band 3 level, although their number continues to rise (Table A1.12).

**Table A1.12: Gender representation by classification at 30 June (2014 to 2023)**

Classification	Gender	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Trainee	Men	152	112	276	321	406	253	296	298	483	417
	Women	194	109	306	297	357	312	320	336	490	268
Graduate	Men	677	628	791	832	754	743	812	774	1,016	791
	Women	639	568	779	850	731	702	785	786	962	714
APS 1	Men	1,726	1,451	1,219	969	898	908	716	521	871	784
	Women	3,218	2,899	2,680	1,934	1,778	1,932	1,481	1,036	2,071	1,909
APS 2	Men	1,931	1,803	1,975	1,833	1,866	1,746	2,420	1,803	1,699	1,930
	Women	3,142	2,870	3,027	2,770	2,831	2,660	3,823	2,921	2,452	2,497
APS 3	Men	6,443	6,505	7,000	6,237	5,823	5,250	5,297	5,769	5,182	6,035
	Women	12,755	12,889	13,758	12,179	11,375	10,053	10,411	10,997	9,489	10,415
APS 4	Men	9,554	9,575	9,386	9,054	9,183	8,728	8,506	8,869	8,472	9,144
	Women	21,144	21,049	21,180	20,423	20,280	19,349	18,785	19,386	18,848	19,197
APS 5	Men	8,600	8,317	8,339	8,380	8,172	7,910	7,977	8,152	8,182	8,828
	Women	12,631	12,346	12,585	12,851	12,674	12,672	13,154	13,520	14,125	15,336
APS 6	Men	14,456	13,818	14,256	14,234	14,079	13,698	14,101	14,168	14,643	15,436
	Women	17,938	17,417	18,397	18,872	18,878	19,253	19,853	20,119	21,436	23,504
EL 1	Men	13,851	12,900	12,513	12,466	12,426	12,284	12,482	12,912	13,925	14,853
	Women	13,709	12,944	12,962	13,068	13,221	13,720	14,448	15,570	17,676	19,472
EL 2	Men	7,259	6,636	6,420	6,434	6,377	6,144	6,038	6,324	6,806	7,170
	Women	5,281	4,883	5,065	5,224	5,369	5,577	5,770	6,344	7,126	7,890
SES 1	Men	1,120	1,055	1,092	1,103	1,083	1,057	1,034	1,002	1,027	1,070
	Women	799	767	874	875	942	992	1,027	1,085	1,204	1,295
SES 2	Men	351	336	338	340	340	352	347	346	349	338
	Women	200	194	205	218	213	228	250	280	309	342
SES 3	Men	84	74	81	71	73	77	72	75	74	81
	Women	37	42	45	50	52	61	60	60	66	74

Source: APSED

## Diversity

Table A1.13 presents the proportion of Australian Public Service employees identifying in each diversity group within their agency's human resources system.

**Table A1.13: Proportion of APS employees by diversity group at 30 June (2014 to 2023)**

Diversity group	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)	2017 (%)	2018 (%)	2019 (%)	2020 (%)	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	2023 (%)
Women	58.1	58.4	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.6	60.0	60.2	60.4	60.4
First Nations	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.5
People with disability	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.1
Born outside of Australia	22.2	22.2	22.3	22.3	22.3	22.3	22.3	22.7	23.1	23.9
First language spoken not exclusively English	20.7	21.0	21.3	21.6	21.9	22.2	22.3	22.9	23.4	24.4

Source: APSED

## Personal and miscellaneous leave

Australian Public Service agencies provide aggregated figures on personal leave (that is, sick and carer's leave) and miscellaneous leave (that is, bereavement, compassionate and emergency leave). These figures include instances of leave with or without a supporting medical certificate, whether paid or unpaid. Previously this form of leave has been reported in the State of the Service Report as *unscheduled absences*. As some of this leave is scheduled, a more accurate term is *personal and miscellaneous leave*.

The personal and miscellaneous leave measure incorporates the headcount of agencies when calculating the absence rate. In practice, every agency's personal and miscellaneous leave days and full-time equivalent (FTE) are summed, and the personal and miscellaneous leave rate is calculated by dividing the total number of personal and miscellaneous leave days by the total FTE of the APS.

$$\text{APS personal and miscellaneous leave rate} = \frac{\text{Total days of personal and miscellaneous leave across the APS}}{\text{Total FTE of the APS}}$$



Table A1.14 compares the personal and miscellaneous leave rate since 2016–17 across the whole-of-APS and broken down by agency size. During 2022–23, personal and miscellaneous leave rates increased across the APS and in each agency size group. This reverses the lower rates seen across the 2 previous financial years. This increase may reflect working conditions post-COVID, with many employees returning to the office.

**Table A1.14: Personal and miscellaneous leave rates (2016–17 to 2022–23) by agency size (expressed as an average number of days)**

Year	APS	Small	Medium	Large
2016–17	13.1	11.5	12.0	13.3
2017–18	13.3	11.0	11.9	13.5
2018–19	13.4	11.0	11.7	13.7
2019–20	13.1	11.2	11.4	13.3
2020–21	12.2	9.8	10.5	12.5
2021–22	12.8	10.1	11.1	13.1
2022–23	13.2	11.3	11.9	13.4

Table A1.15 provides personal and miscellaneous leave use and rates by agency for 2021–22 and 2022–23 (expressed as an average number of days). Note that for small agencies, a small number of individuals with a large amount of leave taken can influence the personal and miscellaneous leave rate substantially.

**Table A1.15: Sick, carer's leave, miscellaneous and total personal and miscellaneous leave rate by agency (2021–22 and 2022–23) (expressed as an average number of days)**

Agency name	Sick leave 2022–23	Carer's leave 2022–23	Miscellaneous leave 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2021–22
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	13.8	1.9	0.6	16.3	15.1
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	9.6	1.5	0.5	11.6	8.8
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	9.5	1.6	0.7	11.8	9.6
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	10.8	2.1	0.5	13.3	13.9
Attorney-General's Department	8.6	1.6	0.3	10.6	10.1
Australian Bureau of Statistics	10.0	1.9	0.5	12.4	11.9
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	8.3	3.6	0.5	12.4	8.5
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission	6.2	1.5	0.3	8.0	9.6
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	6.7	1.1	0.3	8.1	7.3
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	7.9	2.0	1.7	11.6	10.5

Agency name	Sick leave 2022–23	Carer's leave 2022–23	Miscellaneous leave 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2021–22
Australian Communications and Media Authority	9.8	2.4	0.5	12.6	11.3
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	6.7	1.7	3.4	11.8	9.5
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	7.0	1.8	2.6	11.5	12.2
Australian Digital Health Agency	10.3	1.5	0.4	12.2	9.7
Australian Electoral Commission	10.0	1.8	0.3	12.0	11.8
Australian Financial Security Authority	9.2	1.8	0.3	11.2	13.0
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	6.9	1.7	0.3	8.8	9.6
Australian Human Rights Commission	4.0	1.0	1.0	6.0	7.9
Australian Information Commissioner	7.7	0.0	1.3	9.0	8.5
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	10.5	2.3	1.3	14.1	12.1
Australian Institute of Family Studies	4.7	1.0	3.6	9.3	9.4
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	7.3	1.8	0.4	9.5	9.3
Australian National Audit Office	10.7	2.2	0.3	13.1	10.3
Australian National Maritime Museum	5.9	1.7	0.5	8.1	7.8
Australian Office of Financial Management	6.8	2.1	1.5	10.3	8.2
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	7.2	1.8	0.3	9.3	9.2
Australian Public Service Commission	7.9	1.8	0.5	10.1	9.2
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	6.8	2.0	0.7	9.5	4.9
Australian Research Council	7.4	2.2	2.3	11.9	11.5
Australian Skills Quality Authority	10.7	1.7	0.3	12.8	11.2
Australian Taxation Office	10.0	1.7	0.3	12.0	10.8
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	4.5	1.1	0.2	5.8	8.8
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	7.4	1.7	0.4	9.5	9.5
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	9.3	2.1	0.4	11.8	10.1
Australian War Memorial	9.1	3.0	0.3	12.4	12.7

Agency name	Sick leave 2022–23	Carer's leave 2022–23	Miscellaneous leave 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2021–22
Bureau of Meteorology	6.9	2.2	0.2	9.2	9.2
Cancer Australia	1.1	13.7	0.4	15.2	5.9
Clean Energy Regulator	11.3	2.3	0.3	13.8	12.7
Climate Change Authority*	7.3	1.3	0.1	8.7	-
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water*	4.8	0.4	0.2	5.4	-
Comcare	10.5	1.7	0.8	13.1	11.8
Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions	7.2	1.4	0.2	8.8	8.0
Commonwealth Grants Commission	6.7	1.0	0.9	8.6	7.7
Commonwealth Ombudsman	11.5	1.7	1.5	14.7	13.0
Defence	10.4	1.7	0.3	12.4	11.5
Defence Housing Australia	9.1	2.5	0.3	11.8	12.6
Digital Transformation Agency	8.5	2.2	0.5	11.1	11.3
Education	8.5	1.3	0.3	10.0	12.0
Employment and Workplace Relations*	8.9	1.9	0.3	11.1	-
Fair Work Commission	9.4	1.3	0.4	11.1	9.2
Fair Work Ombudsman	9.1	1.7	0.5	11.3	12.2
Federal Court of Australia	11.8	0.0	0.2	12.0	7.7
Finance	8.5	2.1	0.3	10.9	9.9
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	10.1	0.6	0.7	11.4	9.9
Foreign Affairs and Trade	7.9	2.6	0.2	10.7	10.9
Future Fund Management Agency	3.5	1.2	0.1	4.9	4.9
Geoscience Australia	8.4	2.5	0.3	11.2	12.4
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	10.6	2.8	0.5	13.9	10.5
Health	9.8	1.5	0.6	12.0	10.8
Home Affairs	12.1	2.9	0.3	15.4	15.7
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	14.8	1.2	0.1	16.0	15.1
Industry, Science and Resources	7.6	1.2	0.2	9.1	11.7

Agency name	Sick leave 2022–23	Carer's leave 2022–23	Miscellaneous leave 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2021–22
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	10.1	2.0	0.3	12.4	11.3
Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	13.8	2.0	0.8	16.5	10.5
Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman	4.5	2.5	0.1	7.2	9.4
IP Australia	9.0	2.2	0.4	11.6	8.3
Murray–Darling Basin Authority	10.6	2.5	0.2	13.2	14.0
Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House	9.5	1.3	0.5	11.3	13.2
National Archives of Australia	14.0	2.0	0.0	16.0	15.0
National Blood Authority	10.3	3.0	0.4	13.7	12.6
National Capital Authority	4.2	0.7	0.1	5.0	8.5
National Disability Insurance Agency	12.3	1.9	0.4	14.6	15.2
National Emergency Management Agency*	6.7	1.1	2.8	10.6	-
National Film and Sound Archive	8.9	1.8	0.4	11.0	7.2
National Health and Medical Research Council	9.2	2.1	0.3	11.6	10.3
National Health Funding Body	6.3	0.5	0.2	7.0	7.5
National Indigenous Australians Agency	12.5	2.5	0.5	15.6	15.2
National Library of Australia	1.8	12.1	0.7	14.7	12.8
National Mental Health Commission	11.6	0.8	0.5	13.0	9.5
National Museum of Australia	11.6	2.2	0.3	14.1	13.8
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	8.4	1.6	0.4	10.4	10.6
National Portrait Gallery	10.6	1.3	1.1	13.1	11.4
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	9.6	1.3	1.3	12.2	9.8
Office of National Intelligence	7.5	3.5	0.2	11.2	8.0
Organ and Tissue Authority	8.8	2.0	0.7	11.5	10.8
Parliamentary Counsel	11.2	2.1	0.4	13.6	7.2
Prime Minister and Cabinet	8.1	1.3	0.3	9.7	10.7
Productivity Commission	7.3	1.5	0.2	9.0	10.2

Agency name	Sick leave 2022–23	Carer's leave 2022–23	Miscellaneous leave 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2022–23	Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate 2021–22
Professional Services Review*	8.4	0.4	0.4	9.2	-
Royal Australian Mint	12.3	1.4	4.0	17.7	14.1
Safe Work Australia	13.2	2.0	0.6	15.8	12.6
Services Australia	14.5	2.4	0.7	17.6	16.5
Social Services	12.7	1.9	0.4	15.0	11.8
Sport Integrity Australia	8.2	1.0	0.4	9.5	5.9
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	8.8	1.2	0.3	10.3	5.7
Torres Strait Regional Authority	19.5	3.6	2.1	25.2	14.1
Treasury	8.7	1.6	0.4	10.8	10.3
Veterans' Affairs	11.6	1.7	0.5	13.7	12.5
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	8.0	1.4	0.5	9.8	7.4
<b>Australian Public Service</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>

*\*Total personal and miscellaneous leave rate for 2021–22 was unavailable due to Machinery of Government changes or non-reporting of leave data.*

## Appendix 2 – State of the service additional data

This appendix presents additional data that supports the content included in this report.

### Code of Conduct

In the 2023 Australian Public Service Agency Survey, agencies reported that 555 employees were the subject of an investigation into a suspected breach of the APS Code of Conduct that was finalised in 2022–23. Table A2.1 presents the number of APS employees investigated by agencies for suspected breaches of individual elements of the APS Code of Conduct and the number of breach findings in 2022–23. One employee can be investigated for multiple elements of the Code of Conduct of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

**Table A2.1: Number of APS employees investigated and found in breach of elements of the APS Code of Conduct (2022–23)**

Element of Code of Conduct	Investigated	Breached
Behave honestly and with integrity in connection with APS employment, s 13(1)	195	162
Act with care and diligence in connection with APS employment, s 13(2)	67	55
When acting in connection with APS employment, treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment, s 13(3)	98	66
When acting in connection with APS employment comply with all applicable Australian laws, s 13(4)	20	13
Comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the employee's Agency who has authority to give the direction, s 13(5)	100	87
Maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that the employee has with any Minister or Minister's member of staff, s 13(6)	2	0
Take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent), and disclose details of any material personal interest of the employee, in connection with the employee's APS employment, s 13(7)	39	29
Use Commonwealth resources in a proper manner and for a proper purpose, (s 13(8)	57	51
Not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes in connection with the employee's APS employment, s 13(9)	43	35
Not make improper use of: inside information, or the employee's duties, status, power or authority, in order to: a) gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the employee or any other person; or b) cause, or seek to cause, a detriment to the employee's Agency, the Commonwealth or any other person, s 13(10)	48	35
At all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and APS Employment Principles, and the integrity and good reputation of the employee's Agency and the APS, s 13(11)	447	389

Element of Code of Conduct	Investigated	Breached
While on duty overseas, at all times behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of Australia, s 13(12)	2	2
Comply with any other conduct requirement that is prescribed by the regulations, s 13(13)	4	4

Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey

Table A2.2 presents the number of APS employees investigated for suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct during 2022–23 that resulted from each type of report.

**Table A2.2: Type of reports leading to finalised APS Code of Conduct investigations (2022–23)**

Type of report	Number of employees
A report generated by a compliance/monitoring system (e.g. audit)	278
A report made to a central conduct or ethics unit or nominated person in a human resources area	149
A report made to an email reporting address	85
A report made to a fraud prevention and control unit or hotline	21
A Public Interest Disclosure	10
A report made to an employee advice or counselling unit	2
A report made to another hotline	1
Other	21

Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey

Note: Individual employees may have been reported through multiple avenues.

Table A2.3 presents the outcomes for APS employees investigated for suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct during 2022–23.

**Table A2.3: Outcome of investigations into suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct (2022–23)**

Outcome	Number of employees
Breach found and sanction applied	287
Breach found but no sanction applied: employee resigned prior to sanction decision	112
Breach found but no sanction applied: other reason	80
No breach found (for any element of the Code)	47
Investigation discontinued: employee resigned	18
Investigation discontinued: other reason	11

*Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey*

Table A2.4 presents the sanctions applied to APS employees found to have breached the APS Code of Conduct during 2022–23.

**Table A2.4: Sanctions imposed for breaches of the APS Code of Conduct (2022–23)**

Sanction	Number of employees
Reprimand	199
Reduction in salary	102
Deductions from salary by way of a fine	92
Termination of employment	52
Re-assignment of duties	10
Reduction in classification	10

*Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey*



In the 2023 APS Employee Census, 10.4% of respondents indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census. Table A2.5 presents the types of behaviour perceived by respondents.

**Table A2.5: Type of harassment or bullying perceived by respondents**

Type of behaviour	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census
Verbal abuse (e.g. offensive language, derogatory remarks, shouting or screaming)	41.3
Interference with work tasks (e.g. withholding needed information, undermining or sabotage)	41.2
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules (e.g. performance management, access to leave, access to learning and development)	30.1
Deliberate exclusion from work-related activities	26.5
Cyberbullying (e.g. harassment through IT, or the spreading of gossip/materials intended to defame or humiliate)	8.7
Physical behaviour	4.1
Interference with your personal property or work equipment	4.0
Sexual harassment	3.6
'Initiations' or pranks	2.5
Other	19.0

*Source: 2023 APS Employee Census*

*Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.*

Table A2.6 presents the perceived source of the harassment or bullying indicated by respondents in 2023.

**Table A2.6: Perceived source of harassment or bullying**

Perceived source	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census
Co-worker	38.0
Someone more senior (other than your supervisor)	30.0
A previous supervisor	26.9
Your current supervisor	17.5
Someone more junior than you	8.4
Client, customer or stakeholder	4.5
Contractor	2.7
Consultant / service provider	0.9
Representative of another APS agency	0.9
Minister or ministerial adviser	0.2
Unknown	1.7

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A2.7 presents the reporting behaviour of respondents who had perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census.

**Table A2.7: Reporting behaviour of harassment or bullying**

Reporting behaviour	% who perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace during the previous 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census
I reported the behaviour in accordance with my agency's policies and procedures	34.8
It was reported by someone else	8.0
I did not report the behaviour	57.2

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace.

Table A2.8 presents the reasons for not reporting harassment or bullying given by respondents who had perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and who did not report the behaviour.

**Table A2.8: Reasons for not reporting harassment or bullying**

Reason	% who perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace during the 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census and did not report the behaviour
I did not think action would be taken	47.5
I feared possible retaliation or reprisals	46.1
I did not want to upset relationships in the workplace	39.4
It could affect my career	36.7
I did not think it was worth the hassle of going through the reporting process	33.9
Managers accepted the behaviour	30.7
I did not think the harassment or bullying was serious enough	17.0
I did not have enough evidence	15.4
The matter was resolved informally	8.4
I did not know how to report it	5.0
Other	9.4

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace and did not report the behaviour. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A2.9 presents the number of recorded complaints of harassment and bullying made by APS employees within APS agencies during 2022–23.

**Table A2.9: Complaints to agencies about harassment and bullying (2022–23)**

Type of behaviour	Number of complaints
Verbal abuse (e.g. offensive language, derogatory remarks, shouting or screaming)	305
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules (e.g. performance management, access to leave, access to learning and development)	238
Sexual harassment	129
Interference with work tasks (e.g. withholding needed information, undermining or sabotage)	113
Cyberbullying (e.g. harassment through IT, or the spreading of gossip/materials intended to defame/humiliate)	37
Physical behaviour	24
Interference with personal property or work equipment	9
Initiations or pranks	1
Other	534

*Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey*

Table A2.10 presents the proportion of respondents who, during the previous 12 months, had witnessed another APS employee within their agency engaging in behaviour they considered may be serious enough to be viewed as corruption.

**Table A2.10: APS employee perceptions of corruption**

Potential corruption witnessed	%
Yes	3.2
No	90.7
Not sure	3.8
Would prefer not to answer	2.3

*Source: 2023 APS Employee Census*

Of those who had witnessed potential corruption, the types of corruption are presented in Table A2.11.

**Table A2.11: Type of potential corruption witnessed**

Type of potential corruption witnessed	% who had witnessed potential corruption
Cronyism-preferential treatment of friends, such as appointing them to positions without proper regard to merit	62.0
Nepotism-preferential treatment of family members, such as appointing them to positions without proper regard to merit	24.0
Acting (or failing to act) in the presence of an undisclosed conflict of interest	19.7
Fraud, forgery or embezzlement	12.4
Green-lighting	10.5
Theft or misappropriation of official assets	6.4
Unlawful disclosure of government information	4.1
Perverting the course of justice	2.9
Bribery, domestic and foreign-obtaining, offering or soliciting secret commissions, kickbacks or gratuities	2.2
Insider trading	1.1
Blackmail	1.4
Colluding, conspiring with, or harbouring criminals	0.7
Other	12.5

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they witnessed potential corruption. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

In the 2023 APS Employee Census, 10.4% of respondents indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment.

Table A2.12 presents the types of discrimination perceived by respondents during the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment.

**Table A2.12: Type of discrimination perceived by respondents**

Category	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment
Gender	29.3
Age	25.6
Race	22.1
Caring responsibilities	19.8
Disability (e.g. loss of hearing or sight, incomplete use of limbs, or mental health issues)	14.6
LGBTIQA+	4.8
Religion	4.7
Identification as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	4.0
Other	20.5

*Source: 2023 APS Employee Census*

*Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they had perceived discrimination during the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.*

Table A2.13 presents the proportion of respondents identifying with each cultural background who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment.

**Table A2.13: Proportion of employees from each cultural background who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination**

Cultural background	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the 2023 APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	23.3
Maori, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian, and Polynesian	15.7
Sub-Saharan African	14.7
North African and Middle Eastern	14.6
North-West European (excluding Anglo-European)	13.5
Southern and Central Asian	12.9
South and Central American and Caribbean Islander	12.2
North American	12.1
Southern and Eastern European	11.5
Anglo-European	11.5
New Zealander (excluding Maori)	11.2
South-East Asian	10.8
North-East Asian	9.6
Australian (excluding Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)	9.1

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: Respondents could select more than one cultural background.

## APS employees with disability

Table A2.14 presents the proportion of respondents with an ongoing disability who have that information recorded in their agency's human resource information system.

**Table A2.14: Respondents with disability who have that information recorded in their agency's human resources information system**

Is the information that you have an ongoing disability recorded in your agency's human resources information system (i.e. have you informed your agency that you have a disability)?	% of those with an ongoing disability
Yes	45
No	30
Not sure	24

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Table A2.15 presents the reasons respondents with an ongoing disability provided for not having the information they have an ongoing disability recorded in their agency's human resource information system.

**Table A2.15: Reason respondents did not provide the information they had a disability to agency human resources systems**

Why is the information that you have an ongoing disability not recorded in your agency's human resources information system?	% with an ongoing disability who did not have that information recorded in their agency's human resources information system
I do not require any adjustments to be made to perform my role	36
I do not see any reason for or benefit in sharing this information with my agency	36
I am concerned about being discriminated against	34
It is private information I do not wish to share	28
My disability is not relevant to my employment	23
I have never been asked for this information	20
Other reason	10

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.



## Understanding neurodiversity in the APS

Table A2.16 presents the proportion of respondents within each classification level in the APS who considered themselves to be neurodivergent.

**Table A2.16: Proportion of employees within each classification level who considered themselves to be neurodivergent or who were not sure**

Classification level	% who considered themselves to be neurodivergent	% who were not sure
Trainee/Apprentice	11.8	21.7
Graduate	11.5	13.5
Cadet	9.2	15.3
APS 1 to APS 2	10.1	15.9
APS 3 to APS 4	8.6	15.4
APS 5 to APS 6	8.5	11.8
EL 1	6.6	9.0
EL 2	4.6	7.0
SES Band 1	3.7	4.0
SES Band 2 to SES Band 3	2.5	3.2

*Source: 2023 APS Employee Census*

Table A2.17 presents the proportion of respondents performing each type of work who considered themselves to be neurodivergent.

**Table A2.17: Proportion of employees by type of work who considered themselves to be neurodivergent**

Type of work	% who considered themselves to be neurodivergent
Accounting and finance	5.5
Administration	6.9
Communications and marketing	9.0
Compliance and regulation	5.7
Data and research	10.5
Engineering and technical	7.7
Human resources	8.0
Information and communications technology and digital solutions	9.1
Information and knowledge management	11.4
Intelligence	6.3
Legal and parliamentary	6.8
Monitoring and audit	7.8
Policy	8.4
Portfolio, program and project management	7.9
Science and health	6.7
Senior executive	4.0
Service delivery	7.9
Trades and labour	7.4

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Table A2.18 presents the proportion of respondents within each age group who considered themselves to be neurodivergent.

**Table A2.18: Proportion of employees within each age group who considered themselves to be neurodivergent**

Age group	% who considered themselves to be neurodivergent
Under 20 years	12.0
20 to 24 years	12.7
25 to 29 years	12.8
30 to 34 years	11.6
35 to 39 years	8.6
40 to 44 years	6.9
45 to 49 years	6.1
50 to 54 years	5.1
55 to 59 years	4.1
60 to 64 years	2.8
65 years or older	2.4
Prefer not to say	6.5

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Table A2.19 presents the proportion of respondents of each gender who considered themselves to be neurodivergent.

**Table A2.19: Proportion of employees of each gender who considered themselves to be neurodivergent**

Gender	% who considered themselves to be neurodivergent
Man or male	6.8
Woman or female	7.6
Non-binary	58.2
I use a different term	35.0
Prefer not to say	10.7

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Table A2.20 presents the proportion of respondents identifying with each cultural background who considered themselves to be neurodivergent.

**Table A2.20: Proportion of employees with each cultural background who considered themselves to be neurodivergent**

Cultural background	% who considered themselves to be neurodivergent
Australian (excluding Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)	8.5
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	12.5
New Zealander (excluding Maori)	12.2
Maori, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian, and Polynesian	7.9
Anglo-European	12.1
North-West European (excluding Anglo-European)	13.1
Southern and Eastern European	8.1
South-East Asian	3.5
North-East Asian	4.1
Southern and Central Asian	3.1
North American	13.7
South and Central American and Caribbean Islander	7.6
North African and Middle Eastern	7.3
Sub-Saharan African	6.9

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

## Mobility in the APS

Table A2.21 presents the proportion of respondents who perceived barriers to temporary moves.

**Table A2.21: Employee perceptions of barriers to temporary moves**

Are there barriers to you seeking a temporary move?	% in 2021	% in 2022	% in 2023
Yes	29	28	22
No	38	45	43
Not sure	33	28	35

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

## APS employee engagement

Table A2.22 presents perceptions held by Australian Public Service Employee Census respondents between 2020 and 2023.

**Table A2.22: Employee perceptions related to work (2020 to 2023)**

Statement	Level of agreement	% in 2020	% in 2021	% in 2022	% in 2023
Overall, I am satisfied with my job	Agree	75	73	74	73
	Neither agree nor disagree	15	15	15	15
	Disagree	10	11	11	12
My job inspires me	Agree	57	56	61	61
	Neither agree nor disagree	27	27	25	25
	Disagree	16	17	14	14
The work I do gives me a sense of accomplishment	Agree	79	78	76	76
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	12	15	15
	Disagree	9	9	9	9
I feel a strong personal attachment to my agency	Agree	66	65	61	60
	Neither agree nor disagree	22	22	26	26
	Disagree	12	13	13	14
I would recommend my agency as a good place to work	Agree	69	68	69	68
	Neither agree nor disagree	20	19	19	19
	Disagree	11	13	12	12

Source: 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 APS Employee Census

## Supporting mental health and wellbeing

Table A2.23 presents employee perceptions of emotional demands.

**Table A2.23: Employee perceptions of emotional demands**

Question	Level of agreement	%
To what extent is your work emotionally demanding?	To a very large/large extent	29
	Somewhat	39
	To a small/very small extent	33

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

## Attracting and retaining employees

Table A2.24 presents the previous Australian Public Service experience of respondents prior to commencement.

**Table A2.24: Prior APS experience of new employees**

Prior to most recently commencing in the APS, what previous experience have you had with the APS?	% in 2023
Previously worked as an ongoing employee in an APS agency	15
Previously worked as a non-ongoing or casual employee in an APS agency	23
Previously worked as a contractor or consultant to an APS agency	17
No prior experience with the APS	52
Other	3

Source: 2023 New Starters Survey

Note: As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

## Experience and capability of APS managers

Table A2.25 presents the proportion of responding managers who had taken each action to develop their managerial capabilities.

**Table A2.25: Actions managers carried out to develop their managerial capabilities**

What actions have you carried out to develop your managerial capabilities?	%
Sought advice or support from your manager	85
Reflected on experiences to grow and learn	79
Sought advice or support from a colleague	74
Sought feedback from those you manage	74
Actively sought out new and/or challenging opportunities to apply your managerial skills	65
Completed formal leadership training	62
Received mentoring/coaching	59
Consulted books, websites or podcasts	42
Completed self-directed online learning	37
Attended conferences or similar speaking events	33
Other	4

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they currently manage employees or have managed employees in the past. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A2.26 presents the forms of formal leadership training undertaken by responding managers.

**Table A2.26: Form of leadership training undertaken**

What form did your formal leadership training take?	%
A course offered by my agency	66
A course provided by an external training provider	48
A formal tertiary qualification	23
A course offered by the APS Academy or Australian Public Service Commission	23
Other	5

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who indicated they had completed formal leadership training. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A2.27 presents perceptions of how helpful the formal leadership training was in improving managerial capabilities.

**Table A2.27: Assessments of formal leadership training to improve managerial capability**

How helpful was your most recent instance of formal leadership training in improving your managerial capabilities?	%
Very helpful/Extremely helpful	51
Slightly helpful/Moderately helpful	46
Not at all helpful	2

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who indicated they had completed formal leadership training.

Table A2.28 presents perceptions of how helpful their most recent period of mentoring and/or coaching was in improving managerial capabilities.

**Table A2.28: Assessments of mentoring/coaching to improve managerial capability**

How helpful was your most recent period of mentoring/coaching in improving your managerial capabilities?	%
Very helpful/Extremely helpful	63
Slightly helpful/Moderately helpful	34
Not at all helpful	3

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who indicated they had received mentoring/coaching.

Table A2.29 presents the proportion of responding managers who would take up opportunities to develop their managerial capabilities.

**Table A2.29: Proportion of managers that would take up opportunities to develop their managerial capabilities**

Would you take up opportunities to develop your managerial capabilities?	%
Yes	80
No	7
Not sure	13

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who said they currently manage employees or have managed employees in the past.

Table A2.30 presents the ways responding managers preferred to develop their managerial capabilities.

**Table A2.30: Managers' preferred means of developing managerial capabilities**

How would you most like to develop your managerial capabilities?	%
Formal leadership training	58
Mentoring/coaching	56
New and/or challenging opportunities to apply your managerial skills	56
Advice or support from your manager	51
Reflect on experiences to grow and learn	43
Attend conferences or similar speaking events	41
Seek feedback from those you manage	40
Advice or support from a colleague	35
Self-directed online learning (e.g. EdX, Coursera, LinkedIn Learning)	30
Consult books, websites or podcasts	23
Other	2
Not interested or unsure	20

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who indicated they would take up opportunities to develop managerial capabilities. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.



Table A2.31 presents the skills and capabilities responding managers most wanted to develop.

**Table A2.31: Managerial skills and capabilities managers most want to develop**

What managerial skills and capabilities would you most like to develop?	%
Skills and abilities to manage underperformance	50
Conflict resolution and mediation skills	46
The ability to persuade and influence	41
The ability to motivate others	38
Analytical and strategic thinking	35
Communication skills – verbal, non-verbal and listening skills	32
The ability to manage talent and high performers	31
Coaching and mentoring skills	29
Problem-solving and decision-making skills	28
Techniques for managing hybrid teams or remote employees	25
Resilience	24
Self-awareness	22
The ability to delegate	17
Other	2
Not interested or unsure	21

Source: APS Management Survey

Note: Percentages are based on respondents who indicated they would take up opportunities to develop managerial capabilities. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

## Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours

Table A2.32 presents Australian Public Service employee perceptions of the behaviours of their immediate supervisors.

**Table A2.32: Employee perceptions of immediate supervisors**

Statement		Overall (%)	Classification level of supervisor			
			APS 5 to APS 6 (%)	EL 1 (%)	EL 2 (%)	SES (%)
My supervisor is willing to be innovative	Agree	77	73	80	77	81
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	16	12	13	10
	Disagree	10	12	9	10	9
My supervisor engages with risk	Agree	64	51	67	70	75
	Neither agree nor disagree	22	30	21	18	13
	Disagree	14	19	12	13	11
My supervisor has a positive attitude	Agree	84	80	85	85	88
	Neither agree nor disagree	9	11	10	8	7
	Disagree	7	9	5	7	6
My supervisor identifies and works to solve problems	Agree	81	78	84	82	83
	Neither agree nor disagree	10	11	9	9	10
	Disagree	9	11	7	9	7
My supervisor treats people with respect	Agree	87	84	89	88	89
	Neither agree nor disagree	7	8	7	7	6
	Disagree	6	8	4	5	5
My supervisor actively ensures that everyone can be included to make their best contribution	Agree	77	74	81	78	76
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	14	11	11	12
	Disagree	10	11	8	11	11
My supervisor is open and honest	Agree	82	79	85	84	84
	Neither agree nor disagree	11	13	9	10	10
	Disagree	7	8	6	6	7

Statement		Overall (%)	Classification level of supervisor			
			APS 5 to APS 6 (%)	EL 1 (%)	EL 2 (%)	SES (%)
My supervisor is accountable	Agree	81	76	83	82	84
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	15	11	11	10
	Disagree	8	9	6	7	7
My supervisor takes responsibility for what happens in our workgroup	Agree	79	74	82	81	82
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	15	12	10	11
	Disagree	9	11	7	9	8
My supervisor calls out unacceptable behaviour	Agree	67	65	68	66	71
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	24	24	23	20
	Disagree	10	11	8	11	9
My supervisor listens to others	Agree	83	79	85	84	85
	Neither agree nor disagree	10	12	10	9	8
	Disagree	7	9	5	7	7
My supervisor values the contributions and perspectives of others	Agree	81	77	84	82	82
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	15	10	10	11
	Disagree	7	9	6	7	7
My supervisor understands our team	Agree	76	73	81	76	73
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	14	10	12	14
	Disagree	11	13	9	12	13
My supervisor builds effective relationships with others	Agree	78	74	81	78	81
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	15	12	13	10
	Disagree	9	11	8	9	9
My supervisor empowers others	Agree	73	67	75	74	76
	Neither agree nor disagree	16	20	15	15	13
	Disagree	12	14	10	11	11

Statement		Overall (%)	Classification level of supervisor			
			APS 5 to APS 6 (%)	EL 1 (%)	EL 2 (%)	SES (%)
When my supervisor sets work they provide the information I need to get the job done	Agree	73	70	75	71	73
	Neither agree nor disagree	16	18	15	16	16
	Disagree	11	12	10	12	10
My supervisor uses networks to achieve outcomes	Agree	78	70	79	81	83
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	23	15	14	12
	Disagree	6	7	5	5	6
When I make mistakes, my supervisor supports me to bounce back	Agree	75	73	77	75	74
	Neither agree nor disagree	18	18	17	17	19
	Disagree	8	9	6	8	7

Source: APS Management Survey

## Senior Executive Service

Table A2.33 presents attitudes towards Senior Executive Service managers by Australian Public Service Employee Census respondents between 2021 and 2023.

**Table A2.33: Employee perceptions of SES managers (2021 to 2023)**

Statement		% in 2021	% in 2022	% in 2023
My SES manager ensures that work effort contributes to the strategic direction of the agency and the APS	Agree	73	74	73
	Neither agree nor disagree	20	20	21
	Disagree	7	6	6
My SES manager communicates effectively	Agree	69	70	69
	Neither agree nor disagree	19	20	20
	Disagree	12	11	11
My SES manager clearly articulates the direction and priorities for our area	Agree	67	69	68
	Neither agree nor disagree	21	21	21
	Disagree	12	10	11
My SES manager promotes cooperation within and between agencies	Agree	66	67	66
	Neither agree nor disagree	27	27	27
	Disagree	7	6	7

Statement		% in 2021	% in 2022	% in 2023
My SES manager encourages innovation and creativity	Agree	64	66	65
	Neither agree nor disagree	26	25	26
	Disagree	10	9	10
My SES manager creates an environment that enables us to deliver our best	Agree	62	64	63
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	24	24
	Disagree	13	12	12
In my agency, the SES clearly articulate the direction and priorities for our agency	Agree	60	63	63
	Neither agree nor disagree	26	24	23
	Disagree	14	13	14
My SES manager presents convincing arguments and persuades others towards an outcome	Agree	61	62	62
	Neither agree nor disagree	29	29	29
	Disagree	10	9	10
In my agency, the SES work as a team	Agree	53	54	53
	Neither agree nor disagree	32	32	32
	Disagree	15	14	15
In my agency, communication between SES and other employees is effective	Agree	51	54	53
	Neither agree nor disagree	29	28	27
	Disagree	20	19	20
My SES manager routinely promotes the use of data and evidence to deliver outcomes	Agree	-	-	66
	Neither agree nor disagree	-	-	27
	Disagree	-	-	8

Source: 2021, 2022 and 2023 APS Employee Census

## Ways of working

Table A2.34 presents the average proportion of Executive Level 1, EL 2 and Senior Executive Service Band 1 employees with numbers of direct reports.

**Table A2.34: Average proportion of EL 1, EL 2 and SES Band 1 employees with numbers of direct reports**

Number of direct reports	Average % of EL 1 employees	Average % of EL 1 employees	Average % of SES Band 1 employees
No direct reports	45	16	5
One to 3 direct reports	42	47	23
Four to 6 direct reports	9	27	45
More than 6 direct reports	3	9	27

Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey

## Service to Australians

Table A2.35 presents perceptions held by Australian Public Service Employee Census respondents in 2023.

**Table A2.35: Employee perceptions related to role and purpose**

Statement		%
I understand how my role contributes to achieving an outcome for the Australian public	Agree	92
	Neither agree nor disagree	6
	Disagree	2
I believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of the APS	Agree	84
	Neither agree nor disagree	13
	Disagree	2

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

## Appendix 3 – APS agencies

This appendix covers a range of information about Australian Public Service agencies.

Table A3.1 lists all APS agencies and employee numbers and reflects data in the APS Employment Database as at 30 June 2023. These are headcount numbers and include ongoing, non-ongoing and casual (intermittently engaged) employees.

APS agencies are grouped into ‘functional clusters’ to allow comparisons to be made between agencies with similar primary functions. The functional clusters applied to APS agencies are:

- Policy – agencies involved in the development of public policy.
- Smaller operational – agencies with fewer than 1,000 employees involved in the implementation of public policy.
- Larger operational – agencies with 1,000 employees or more involved in the implementation of public policy.
- Regulatory – agencies involved in regulation and inspection.
- Specialist – agencies providing specialist support to Government.

**Table A3.1: List of APS agencies by portfolio**

This list contains 99 agencies and 5 Category E entities (bodies which employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999* and operate with some degree of independence). This list can also be found at [APS Agencies – size and function](https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-agencies-size-and-function), <https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-agencies-size-and-function>

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Larger operational	5,474
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	Regulatory	174
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	Regulatory	199
Attorney-General's	Policy	2,470
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	Smaller operational	710
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	Specialist	147
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	Specialist	867
Australian Financial Security Authority	Smaller operational	422
Australian Human Rights Commission	Specialist	185
Australian Law Reform Commission	Policy	13
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	Regulatory	487
Federal Court of Australia	Specialist	1,479
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	Regulatory	183
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman	Specialist	265
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Specialist	451
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	Specialist	42
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	Specialist	110
Office of the Special Investigator	Regulatory	4

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Policy	4,511
Bureau of Meteorology	Larger operational	1,797
Clean Energy Regulator	Regulatory	390
Climate Change Authority	Specialist	62
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Specialist	249
Murray–Darling Basin Authority	Policy	323
North Queensland Water Infrastructure Authority	Specialist	3
Defence	Larger operational	18,391
Defence Housing Australia	Smaller operational	590
Education	Policy	1,502
Australian Research Council	Specialist	175
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	Regulatory	104
Employment and Workplace Relations	Policy	3,497
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency	Specialist	21
Australian Skills Quality Authority	Regulatory	208
Comcare	Smaller operational	666
Fair Work Commission	Smaller operational	331
Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman	Regulatory	1,012
Safe Work Australia	Policy	108
Finance	Policy	1,925
Australian Electoral Commission	Smaller operational	3,037
Digital Transformation Agency	Smaller operational	244
Future Fund Management Agency	Specialist	271
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	Specialist	65
Foreign Affairs and Trade	Policy	4,785
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	Specialist	55
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	Specialist	831
Health and Aged Care	Policy	5,984
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	Regulatory	1,161
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	Specialist	100
Australian Digital Health Agency	Smaller operational	302
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Specialist	581
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	Specialist	159



Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Cancer Australia	Specialist	77
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	Regulatory	111
National Blood Authority	Specialist	79
National Health and Medical Research Council	Specialist	230
National Health Funding Body	Specialist	33
National Mental Health Commission	Specialist	45
Organ and Tissue Authority	Specialist	31
Professional Services Review	Regulatory	36
Sport Integrity Australia	Regulatory	389
Home Affairs	Larger operational	15,223
National Emergency Management Agency	Policy	354
Industry, Science and Resources	Policy	3,212
Geoscience Australia	Specialist	671
IP Australia	Larger operational	1,197
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	Regulatory	158
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	Policy	2,062
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Regulatory	526
Australian National Maritime Museum	Specialist	105
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	Specialist	115
High Speed Rail Authority	Specialist	8
National Archives of Australia	Specialist	386
National Capital Authority	Specialist	63
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia	Specialist	200
National Library of Australia	Specialist	382
National Museum of Australia	Specialist	281
National Portrait Gallery of Australia	Specialist	51
Old Parliament House	Specialist	118
Screen Australia	Specialist	4

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Prime Minister and Cabinet	Policy	1,306
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Smaller operational	500
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	Specialist	159
Australian National Audit Office	Specialist	402
Australian Public Service Commission	Policy	378
National Indigenous Australians Agency	Policy	1,501
Office of National Intelligence	Specialist	333
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Specialist	135
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	Specialist	50
Social Services	Policy	2,816
Australian Institute of Family Studies	Specialist	97
National Disability Insurance Agency	Larger operational	5,649
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	Regulatory	522
Services Australia	Larger operational	32,403
Treasury	Policy	1,611
Royal Australian Mint	Specialist	259
Commonwealth Grants Commission	Specialist	44
Australian Office of Financial Management	Specialist	49
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Specialist	3,021
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	Regulatory	1,571
Australian Taxation Office	Larger operational	20,628
Inspector-General of Taxation	Specialist	29
Productivity Commission	Specialist	190
Veterans' Affairs	Larger operational	3,082
Australian War Memorial	Specialist	328
All		170,332

Source: APSED 30 June 2023

## Appendix 4 – Secretaries Board

Established under the *Public Service Act 1999*, the Secretaries Board is responsible for stewardship of the Australian Public Service, including:

- identifying strategic priorities and issues that affect the APS
- developing and implementing strategies to improve the APS
- drawing together advice from senior leaders in government, business and the community.

The Secretaries Board achieves this while working collaboratively and modelling leadership behaviours.

The Chair of the Secretaries Board is the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C). Its membership comprises secretaries of all Australian Government departments and the Australian Public Service Commissioner. The Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency is co-opted to board meetings to report on First Nations reforms and any related agenda items.

Since October 2022, the Secretaries Board has published communiques following meetings to increase transparency of its priorities and decisions. These are available on the PM&C website.

At 30 June 2023, the Secretaries Board had these subcommittees:

- Chief Operating Officers Committee
- Future of Work Committee
- Secretaries' Digital and Data Committee
- Partnerships Priorities Committee
- Strategic Leadership Group.

**Table A4.1: Members of the Secretaries Board 2022–23**

For 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, members of the Secretaries Board were:

Board position	APS title	Member
Chairman	Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Professor Glyn Davis AC
Deputy Chair	Australian Public Service Commissioner	Mr Peter Woolcott AO (to 10 May 2023) Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM (from 11 May 2023)
Member	Secretary of APS Reform	Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM (to 10 May 2023)
Member	Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO
Member	Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department	Ms Katherine Jones PSM
Member	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Mr David Fredericks PSM
Member	Secretary of the Department of Defence	Mr Greg Moriarty

Board position	APS title	Member
Member	Secretary of the Department of Education	Ms Michele Bruniges (to 3 April 2023) Mr Tony Cook (from 4 April 2023)
Member	Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	Ms Natalie James (from 11 July 2022)
Member	Secretary of the Department of Finance	Ms Rosemary Huxtable PSM (to 8 August 2022) Ms Jenny Wilkinson PSM (from 9 August 2022)
Member	Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Ms Jan Adams AO PSM
Member	Secretary of the Department of Health and Aged Care	Professor Brendan Murphy AC
Member	Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs	Mr Michael Pezzullo AO
Member	Secretary of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources	Ms Meghan Quinn PSM (from 22 August 2022)
Member	Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	Mr Jim Betts (from 11 July 2022)
Member	Secretary of the Department of Social Services	Mr Ray Griggs AO CSC
Member	Secretary of the Department of the Treasury	Dr Steven Kennedy PSM
Member	Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs	Ms Elizabeth Cosson AM CSC (to 22 Jan 2023) Ms Alison Frame (from 23 Jan 2023)
Other	Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency	Ms Jody Broun

### **See also**

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (n.d.) [Secretaries Board corporate reporting](https://www.pmc.gov.au/about-us/accountability-and-reporting/corporate-reporting/secretaries-board) PM&C website, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/about-us/accountability-and-reporting/corporate-reporting/secretaries-board>, accessed 11 October 2023.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (n.d.) [Secretary appointments to departments of state](https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/administration/secretary-appointments), PM&C website, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/administration/secretary-appointments>, accessed 11 October 2023.

## Appendix 5 – Public inquiries into the APS and APS agencies

This appendix refers to royal commissions, parliamentary inquiries and public inquiries established by the Australian Government that were announced, conducted or have reported during 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, and are of particular note for the Australian Public Service.

Information is current at 30 June 2023.

### Royal commissions

A list of current and recent royal commissions can be found at: [Current Royal Commissions](https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/), <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/>.

#### ***Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme***

The Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme was established on 18 August 2022 to inquire into:

- the establishment, design and implementation of the scheme
- the use of third-party debt collectors under the scheme
- concerns raised after the implementation of the scheme
- the intended or actual outcomes of the scheme.

The report was released on 7 July 2023.

More information can be found at: [Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme](https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/), <https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/>.

#### ***Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability***

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was established in April 2019 in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence against, and the neglect, abuse and exploitation of, people with disability.

The Commission investigated and reported on experiences and conditions in all settings and contexts, including:

- schools
- workplaces
- jails and detention centres
- secure disability and mental health facilities
- group homes or boarding houses
- family homes
- hospitals
- day programs.

The Commission published progress reports at intervals of approximately 6 months.

An interim report was published on 30 October 2020. The final report was released on 29 September 2023.

More information can be found at: [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/), <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>.

### ***Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide***

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide was established on 8 July 2021 to inquire into the high rates of suicide in Defence and veteran communities and make recommendations to the Australian Government.

An interim report was delivered on 11 August 2022. A final report is due to be delivered to the Government by 17 June 2024.

More information can be found at: [Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/](https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/)

### **Parliamentary inquiries**

A list of current parliamentary inquiries can be found at [Current Inquiries, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Current\\_Inquiries](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Current_Inquiries)

### **Parliamentary inquiries – Senate inquiries**

#### ***Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023***

The Senate referred the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023 for inquiry and report by 16 March 2023.

The report has been released.

More information can be found at: [Workplace Gender Equality Amendment \(Closing the Gender Pay Gap\) Bill 2023, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance\\_and\\_Public\\_Administration/WorkplaceGenderEquality](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/WorkplaceGenderEquality)

#### ***Inquiry into management and assurance of integrity by consulting services (Consulting services)***

On 9 March 2023, the Senate referred an inquiry into the management and assurance of integrity by consulting services provided for the Australian Government to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee for report by 26 September 2023.

On 16 June 2023, the Senate agreed to extend the presentation of the final report until 30 November 2023.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into management and assurance of integrity by consulting services \(Consulting services\), https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance\\_and\\_Public\\_Administration/Consultingservices](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Consultingservices)

#### ***The operation of Commonwealth Freedom of Information (FOI) laws***

On 28 March 2023, the Senate referred an inquiry into the operation of Commonwealth Freedom of Information (FOI) laws to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee.

The reporting date is 7 December 2023.

More information can be found at: [The operation of Commonwealth Freedom of Information \(FOI\) laws,](#)

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal\\_and\\_Constitutional\\_Affairs/CommonwealthFOI2023](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/CommonwealthFOI2023)

## **Parliamentary inquiries – Joint Committee inquiries**

### ***Capability and Culture of the NDIA***

The Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme is inquiring into the capability and culture of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

An interim report was published in March 2023.

More information can be found at: [Capability and Culture of the NDIA](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme/CapabilityandCulture),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Disability\\_Insurance\\_Scheme/CapabilityandCulture](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme/CapabilityandCulture)

### ***Inquiry into Commonwealth grants administration***

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit inquired into and reported on Commonwealth grants administration with a view to strengthening the integrity and administration of grants.

The final report was released on 29 June 2023.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into Commonwealth grants administration](https://www.aph.gov.au/CommonwealthGrants)  
<https://www.aph.gov.au/CommonwealthGrants>

### ***Commonwealth procurement: Inquiry into Auditor-General Reports 6, 15, 30, 42 (2021–22) and 5 (2022–23)***

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit is conducting an inquiry into Commonwealth procurement, with a view to improving the culture of how procurement rules and guidelines are implemented across the Australian Public Service.

The report was released on 9 August 2023.

More information can be found at: [Commonwealth procurement: Inquiry into Auditor-General Reports 6, 15, 30, 42 \(2021–22\) and 5 \(2022–23\)](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Accounts_and_Audit/CommonwealthProcurement),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Public\\_Accounts\\_and\\_Audit/CommonwealthProcurement](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Accounts_and_Audit/CommonwealthProcurement)

### ***Public Service Amendment Bill 2023***

On 22 June 2023, the Selection of Bills Committee referred the provisions of the Public Service Amendment Bill 2023 to the committee for inquiry.

The report was delivered on 30 August 2023.

More information can be found at: [Public Service Amendment Bill 2023](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/PSABill2023),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance\\_and\\_Public\\_Administration/PSABill2023](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/PSABill2023)

### ***Inquiry into procurement at Services Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency***

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit is conducting an inquiry into procurement at Services Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), with a particular focus on the matters contained in or related to the Independent Review of Services Australia and NDIA Procurement and Contracting (Watt Review).

An interim report was released on 13 September 2023.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into procurement at Services Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Accounts_and_Audit/SAandNDIA),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Public\\_Accounts\\_and\\_Audit/SAandNDIA](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Accounts_and_Audit/SAandNDIA)

### ***Ethics and Professional Accountability: Structural Challenges in the Audit, Assurance and Consultancy Industry***

On 22 June 2023, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services resolved to start an inquiry into recent allegations of, and responses to, misconduct in the Australian operations of the major accounting, audit and consultancy firms (including but not exclusive to the 'Big Four').

The committee intends to report to the Parliament by mid-2024.

More information can be found at: [Ethics and Professional Accountability: Structural Challenges in the Audit, Assurance and Consultancy Industry](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations_and_Financial_Services/ConsultancyFirms),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations\\_and\\_Financial\\_Services/ConsultancyFirms](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations_and_Financial_Services/ConsultancyFirms)

### ***Inquiry into ASIC's capacity and capability to respond to reports of alleged misconduct***

On 27 October 2022, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services began an inquiry into ASIC's capacity and capability to respond to reports of alleged misconduct.

The committee currently intends to table a report in both Houses of the Parliament by June 2024.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into ASIC's capacity and capability to respond to reports of alleged misconduct](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations_and_Financial_Services/ASICAllegedmisconduct),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations\\_and\\_Financial\\_Services/ASICAllegedmisconduct](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations_and_Financial_Services/ASICAllegedmisconduct)

### ***Inquiry into the operation of the National Redress Scheme***

On 28 November 2022, the Joint Committee on the National Redress Scheme resolved to inquire into and report upon the operations of the scheme.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into the operation of the National Redress Scheme](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Redress_Scheme_Standi ng/Redress47),  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Redress\\_Scheme\\_Standi ng/Redress47](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Redress_Scheme_Standi ng/Redress47)



### ***Inquiry into probity and ethics in the Australian Public Sector***

On 27 June 2023, the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit initiated an inquiry into probity and ethics in the Australian Public Sector, with a view to examining whether there are systemic factors contributing to poor ethical behaviour in Government agencies, and identifying opportunities to strengthen government integrity and accountability.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into probity and ethics in the Australian Public Sector, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Public\\_Accounts\\_and\\_Audit/AustralianPublicSector](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Accounts_and_Audit/AustralianPublicSector)

## **Public inquiries**

Public inquiries listed here are discrete and temporary bodies established by Executive Government. They draw membership from outside of Government and have public processes of review and reporting.

### ***The Inquiry into the Appointment of the Former Prime Minister to Administer Multiple Departments***

The Inquiry into the Appointment of the Former Prime Minister to Administer Multiple Departments was announced by the Australian Government on 26 August 2022.

A report was provided to Government and published 25 November 2022.

More information can be found at: [Inquiry into the Appointment of the Former Prime Minister to Administer Multiple Departments, https://www.ministriesinquiry.gov.au/](https://www.ministriesinquiry.gov.au/)

### ***The Independent Review of Services Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Procurement and Contracting***

The Independent Review of Services Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Procurement and Contracting examined the procurement processes leading to the award of contracts to Synergy 360 and associated entities.

Reports by the independent reviewer and the taskforce were released on 6 March 2023.

More information can be found at: [NDIS Review of procurement and contracting, https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/review-procurement-and-contracting](https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/review-procurement-and-contracting)

### ***National Disability Insurance Scheme Review***

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review was announced by the Australian Government on 18 October 2022, to examine the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS. It will also look at ways to make the market and workforce more responsive, supportive and sustainable.

The Minister has appointed an Independent Review Panel. The panel committed to deliver a final report to the Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting in October 2023.

More information can be found at: [Working together to deliver the NDIS, https://www.ndisreview.gov.au/](https://www.ndisreview.gov.au/)

### ***Review of Public Sector Board Appointments Processes***

The Review of Public Sector Board Appointments Processes was announced by the Australian Government on 5 February 2023, to consider and propose appropriate standards for the processes by which Board members are appointed to Government Boards.

The review's final report to the Government will be published later in 2023.

More information can be found at: [Review of Public Sector Board Appointments Processes](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/communication/review-public-sector-board-appointments-processes)  
<https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/communication/review-public-sector-board-appointments-processes>

### **Other reports**

Under Australian Government reporting guidelines, the annual reports of all Government agencies must include particulars on any report on the agency made by:

- the Auditor-General, other than a report under section 43 of the Act (which deals with the Auditor-General's audit of the annual financial statements for Commonwealth entities)
- a Committee of either or both Houses of the Parliament
- the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
- any capability reviews of the entity released during the reporting period.

Annual reports are found on the [Transparency Portal](https://www.transparency.gov.au/), <https://www.transparency.gov.au/>

## Appendix 6 – APS workforce planning

This appendix captures information on Australian Public Service workforce planning.

Table A6.1 presents the number and proportion of APS agencies that identified critical skills shortages in the 2021 and 2023.

**Table A6.1: Number and proportion of agencies that identified critical skills shortages**

Has your agency identified any critical skills shortages?	2021		2023	
	Number of agencies	%	Number of agencies	%
Yes	67	71	87	88
No	28	29	12	12

Source: 2021 and 2023 APS Agency Survey

Table A6.2 presents the number and proportion of agencies that have identified specific critical skills shortages in 2021 and 2023.

**Table A6.2: Number and proportion of agencies with specific critical skills shortages**

What are the critical skills shortages that have been identified in your agency?	2021		2023	
	Number of agencies	%	Number of agencies	%
Digital and Information Communications Technology (ICT)	54	81	66	76
Data	47	70	64	74
People management and leadership	23	34	45	52
Portfolio, program or project management	21	31	38	44
Change management	22	33	34	39
Policy or strategic policy	11	16	33	38
Procurement and contracting*	-	-	32	37
Legal*	-	-	30	34
Science and/or engineering	3	4	22	25
Collaboration and stakeholder engagement	8	12	21	24
Regulatory	7	10	19	22
Communicating with influence	14	21	18	21
Risk management	12	18	16	18
Understanding the APS environment	5	7	14	16
Information and knowledge management/ records management	14	21	13	15
Agile or agile working	10	15	10	11
Delivery and implementation	6	9	9	10

What are the critical skills shortages that have been identified in your agency?	2021		2023	
	Number of agencies	%	Number of agencies	%
Economics, including behavioural economics	6	9	8	9
Creativity and innovation	3	4	5	6
Learning agility and curiosity	4	6	5	6
Integrity	2	3	4	5
Problem solving	6	9	4	5

Source: 2021 and 2023 APS Agency Survey

Note: Percentages are based on agencies which had identified critical skills shortages. As agencies could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

\*'Procurement and contracting' and 'Legal' were asked in 2023, but not 2021.

Table A6.3 presents the proportion of 2023 APS Employee Census respondents performing each type of work who identified data as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup.

**Table A6.3: Proportion performing each type of work who identified data as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup**

Type of work	% who selected data as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup
APS Overall	23
Data and research	50
Intelligence	34
Monitoring and audit	34
Senior executive	32
Policy	31
Portfolio, program and project management	30
Human resources	29
Information and knowledge management	28
Compliance and regulation	23
Accounting and finance	22
Science and health	19
Communications and marketing	18
Administration	15
Engineering and technical	15
Legal and parliamentary	15
ICT and digital solutions	14

Type of work	% who selected data as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup
Service delivery	14
Trades and labour	11

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: APS Overall refers to the proportion of all APS employees. Proportions are based on the number of respondents who identified a skill or capability gap within their immediate workgroup.

Table A6.4 presents the proportion of 2023 APS Employee Census respondents performing each type of work who identified ICT or digital as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup.

**Table A6.4: Proportion performing each type of work who identified ICT or digital as a skill or capability missing from their immediate workgroup**

What skills or capability are missing within your immediate workgroup?	% of each job role who selected ICT or digital as a missing skill or capability
APS Overall	30
ICT and digital solutions	58
Information and knowledge management	42
Intelligence	42
Science and health	35
Data and research	34
Engineering and technical	31
Communications and marketing	29
Compliance and regulation	28
Portfolio, program and project management	28
Monitoring and audit	27
Service delivery	27
Accounting and finance	26
Human resources	26
Administration	26
Senior executive	25
Legal and parliamentary	23
Policy	20
Trades and labour	18

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census

Note: APS Overall refers to the proportion of all APS employees. Proportions are based on the number of respondents who identified a skill or capability gap within their immediate workgroup.

Table A6.5 describes the changing core skills required by APS employees, as advised by the APS Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning.

**Table A6.5: Changing core skill needs of APS employees**

Green skills	Regulating a digital economy	Non-technical skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability and environmental research, planning and project delivery</li> <li>• Environmental stewardship and leadership</li> <li>• Indigenous cultural land knowledge</li> </ul> <p><b>Emerging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science and health</li> <li>• Data and research</li> <li>• Engineering and technical</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhanced</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio, program and project</li> <li>• Compliance and regulation</li> <li>• Accounting and finance</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data literacy and digital fluency, software use and development</li> <li>• Knowledge and application of AI, data and privacy laws and frameworks</li> <li>• Cyber security and awareness</li> </ul> <p><b>Future and emerging APS job roles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algorithm bias auditor</li> <li>• AI researcher</li> <li>• Data regulation officer</li> <li>• Data business partner</li> <li>• Privacy case manager</li> <li>• Citizen's rights advisor</li> </ul>	<p>Essential non-technical skills public servants will need to effectively deliver in their roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning agility and critical thinking</li> <li>• Creativity, agile thinking and imagination</li> <li>• Ability to rapidly translate knowledge and skills to new contexts and problems</li> <li>• Collaboration, empowering others and working cross-culturally</li> <li>• Self-awareness, resilience, and coping with uncertainty</li> <li>• Working transparently and building trust</li> </ul>
Observations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There continues to be an increase in agencies identifying shortages in critical 'core APS' skills including policy, people management and project management.</li> <li>• Heightened focus on building a digitally enabled and net zero government to oversee a digital and green economy will also require investment in building up digital, data and green literacy skills, in addition to technical expertise in these areas.</li> <li>• Efforts to upskill staff in key emerging capabilities areas may be undermined if staff are unaware of emerging skill needs.</li> </ul>		

Source: APS Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning

Table A6.6 presents the number and proportion of agencies that currently have a workforce plan or workforce strategy.

**Table A6.6: Number and proportion of agencies that have a current workforce plan or strategy**

Does your agency have a current agency-level workforce plan or workforce strategy?	2021		2023	
	Number of agencies	%	Number of agencies	%
Yes	32	34	33	33
In development	36	38	52	53
No	27	28	14	14

Source: 2021 and 2023 APS Agency Survey

Table A6.7 presents the number and proportion of agencies that, during 2022–23, utilised Australian Public Service Commission workforce data or products to develop and assess workforce policies and practices.

**Table A6.7: Number and proportion of agencies that utilised APSC workforce data or products to develop and assess workforce policies and practices**

During 2022–23, did your agency utilise the following APSC workforce data or products to develop and assess workforce policies and practices?	Number of agencies	%
APS Employee Census	96	97
State of the Service Report	89	90
APS Remuneration Report	84	85
APS Workforce Strategy 2025	69	70
APS Workforce Planning Guide	62	63
APS Employment Database internet interface (APSEDii)	59	60
APS Learning and Development Strategy and Action Plan	50	51
APS Data Release	42	42
APS Framework for Optimal Management Structures	34	34
Cohort analysis produced by the APS Workforce Planning Centre of Excellence	30	30
APS Talent Management Guide and Toolkit	30	30
Other	20	20
None of the above	2	2

Source: 2023 APS Agency Survey

Note: As agencies could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

## Appendix 7 – Methodology

This appendix presents additional information that supports the content included in this report.

### APS Employment Database

The Australian Public Service Employment Database contains employment, diversity and education details for people employed in the Australian Public Service under the authority of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Information on staffing, including trends in the size, structure and composition of the APS, contributes to research and evaluation work on the changing nature of the service. This, in turn, assists agencies to formulate their people management policies and practices.

APSED is the definitive source of APS employment data, supporting strong, evidence-based APS workforce policy, people management and advice.

#### ***APSED scope and collection methodology***

APSED stores the employment data of all current and former APS employees. The database was established in 1999 but contains data on APS employees from 1966. The most recent snapshot, conducted on 30 June 2023, contains records relating to 170,332 employees.

APSED is maintained by the Australian Public Service Commission. Data is supplied to APSED from the human resource systems of APS agencies.

Two types of data files are used to update and maintain APSED – movement files and snapshot files. In general, both file types contain the same data items, but they differ in purpose.

1. Movement files are provided to the APSC from each agency every month. They are used to document changes in employment history (for example, engagements, promotions and maternity leave) for all people employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* on a monthly basis.  
Changes in employment characteristics every month are recorded using movement codes. Movement files contain a record for every movement relevant to updating and maintaining employee records in APSED that has been processed in an agency's HR system during the month. Therefore, if an employee undertakes multiple movements within a reference period, the corresponding movement files will contain multiple records for that employee. Conversely, if an employee has no movements during the reference period, they will not appear in the movement file.
2. Snapshot files are provided to the APSC from each agency on a 6-monthly basis. They are used to verify that all the information stored in APSED is correct and current at 31 December and 30 June each year. Snapshot files contain a single record for every APS employee employed by a particular agency on 31 December and 30 June.

#### ***APSED items***

Agency HR systems supply APSED with unit records containing this personal information:

- personal particulars – Australian Government staff number, name and date of birth
- diversity data – gender, Indigenous identification, country of birth, year of arrival, first and main languages spoken, parents' first languages, disability status



- employment data – classification, email address, date of engagement, employment status, standard hours, workplace postcode, any movement details and dates, operative status, previous employment, job family, job function, job role, current and previous agencies
- educational qualifications and main fields of study.

Under section 54(1) of the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022, an agency head must ensure measures are in place to collect information from each employee in the agency and give collected information to the APS Commissioner. While individuals do not explicitly consent to the collection of their movement and employment data, they can choose to supply or withhold all diversity data except gender data. An agency head must allow APS employees to provide a response of 'choose not to give this information'.

### ***Management and administration***

Agency HR systems collect relevant data items and supply these to the APSC through secure or encrypted means. Agencies are responsible for the collection, security, quality, storage, access, use, and disclosure of their HR data. They are also responsible for compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles. While agency HR systems capture detailed information on each APS employee's pay, leave history and entitlements, these are out of scope for APSED. Only data fields supplied to the APSC are in scope.

Upon receipt, each data file is corrected in an iterative process. Once validated and transferred to the APSC, error checks on the new files are performed by the APSC against the extant data in APSED. The APSC and the agency work together to resolve these differences. Once resolved, cleaned data is incorporated into APSED.

APSED data is stored on a secure information technology system that is password protected and accessible only by a team in the APSC who have been granted access by team supervisors and trained in protecting and using these collections. Standard operating procedures dictate when personal information can be added or changed. All changes to the database are logged in an audit file.

### ***Privacy and confidentiality***

APSED complies with the APSC's privacy policy, which sets out the kinds of information collected and held, how this information is collected and held, its purposes, and authority for its collection. The full APSC privacy policy, which includes specific information related to APSED collection, is available at [Privacy | Australian Public Service Commission \(apsc.gov.au\)](https://www.apsc.gov.au/privacy), <https://www.apsc.gov.au/privacy>. The APSC has undertaken a detailed privacy impact assessment in relation to APSED, concluding that it complies with all relevant Australian Privacy Principles.

## **APS Employee Census**

The APS Employee Census is an annual employee perception survey of the Australian Public Service workforce. All eligible personnel employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* are invited to participate. The Employee Census has been conducted since 2012 and collects APS employee opinions and perspectives on a range of topics, including employee engagement, wellbeing, leadership and general impressions of the APS.

### ***APS Employee Census collection methodology***

In 2023, the APS Employee Census was administered to eligible APS employees during 8 May to 9 June 2023. This timing was consistent with all past Employee Census administrations apart from

2020. The Employee Census was postponed to October in 2020 due to the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic.

Although participation is encouraged, the APS Employee Census is voluntary. If a respondent chooses to participate, only a limited number of demographic-type questions must be answered. The remaining questions do not require a response.

### ***APS Employee Census design***

Questions from previous years were used as the basis for the 2023 APS Employee Census questionnaire to maintain a reliable longitudinal dataset. Questionnaire content was evaluated, reviewed and updated. New questions were included to address topical issues or to improve the quality of data collected. The underlying framework initially applied in 2021 was maintained. This model from the field of organisational psychology continued to define core question sets and direct the interpretation and reporting of results. While a standardised questionnaire was employed, agencies could ask their employees a limited number of additional questions.

### ***APS Employee Census development***

The 2023 APS Employee Census questionnaire included 143 individual questions. These questions were grouped into sections addressing key aspects of working for an APS agency.

Each year the content of the APS Employee Census is reviewed to ensure each question has value and meets a specific purpose. The Australian Public Service Commission researches and consults broadly to develop and select questions for inclusion. In 2023, the APSC:

- considered strategic-level priorities coming from the Secretaries Board and other senior-level committees to ensure the Employee Census would capture appropriate information to inform these priorities
- consulted with subject matter experts from within the APSC and other APS agencies to seek their input to question design and information requirements for supporting APS-level policies and programs
- researched contemporary understanding of issues and options for questionnaire content
- provided participating agencies with an opportunity to give feedback and input to questionnaire design.

The resulting questionnaire covered numerous themes and measures.

### ***APS Employee Census delivery***

In 2023 the APS Employee Census, employees were offered a number of collection methods:

- online, through a unique link provided to each employee by email
- telephone surveys with employees who did not have available supportive information technology to provide reasonable adjustment for their disability
- paper-based surveys for employees who did not have access to an individual email account or did not have suitable access to the internet.

### ***Sampling and coverage***

The population for the APS Employee Census is provided by participating agencies. It is up to individual agencies to set their eligibility criteria. For example, some agencies remove employees on

long-term leave, while others contact employees on long-term leave to ask if they would like to participate.

The 2023 APS Employee Census covered eligible ongoing and non-ongoing employees from 103 APS agencies. Two APS agencies elected not to participate. Invitations to participate in the 2023 APS Employee Census were sent to employees from 8 May 2023. The number of invitations was adjusted as new employees were added, separations processed, and incorrect email addresses corrected. The deadline for survey completion was 9 June 2023.

The final sample size for the 2023 APS Employee Census was 159,539. A total of 127,436 APS employees responded, giving a response rate of 80%.

### ***Management and administration***

The APS Employee Census is managed and coordinated by the APSC's People Insights Branch. The APSC contracts an external service provider to support survey administration and reporting activities. Ipsos (formerly Big Village) was this service provider in 2023.

### ***Public release***

The public release of agency Employee Census data is aggregated and de-identified to protect individual's privacy. The release complies with the *Privacy Act 1988*, and the principles and codes under the Act.

Participating APS agencies are required to publicly release their Employee Census results and an action plan on their respective websites after this report is tabled. These results can also be centrally accessed on the APSC website.

### ***Privacy***

The APSC employs specific rules around how results are reported. Such rules protect the privacy of respondents and individual agency results.

De-identification of data is undertaken in accordance with guidance provided by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

More information about how privacy is maintained can be found within the APSC Privacy Policy: [Privacy | Australian Public Service Commission \(apsc.gov.au\)](https://www.apsc.gov.au/privacy), <https://www.apsc.gov.au/privacy>.

### ***Communication Index***

The 2023 APS Employee Census addressed communication through a set of dedicated questions that contribute to an index score. The Communication Index assesses communication at individual, group and agency levels.

### ***Employee Engagement Index***

The APS Employee Census uses a model of employee engagement developed by the external service provider. This model addresses 3 attributes associated with employee engagement and measures the emotional connection and commitment employees have to working for their organisation. In this model, an engaged employee will:

- Say – the employee is a positive advocate of the organisation.
- Stay – the employee is committed to the organisation and wants to stay as an employee.

- Strive – the employee is willing to put in discretionary effort to excel in their job and help their organisation succeed.

First introduced in 2017, the Say, Stay, Strive employee engagement model is flexible and the APSC has tailored questions for the APS context.

### ***Enabling Innovation Index***

The 2023 APS Employee Census addressed innovation through a set of dedicated questions that contribute to an index score. This Enabling Innovation Index score assesses whether employees feel willing and able to be innovative, and whether their agency has a culture that enables them to be so.

### ***Leadership Senior Executive Service Manager Index***

In 2022, the APS Employee Census introduced the Leadership SES Manager Index. This index assesses how employees view the leadership behaviours of their immediate SES manager in line with the APS Leadership Capability Framework.

### ***Leadership Immediate Supervisor Index***

In 2022, the APS Employee Census introduced the Leadership Immediate Supervisor Index. Similar to the Leadership SES Manager Index, this index assesses employee views of the leadership behaviours of their immediate supervisor as described in the APS Leadership Capability Framework.

### ***Wellbeing Policies and Support Index***

The Wellbeing Policies and Support Index in the APS Employee Census measures both the practical and cultural elements that allow for a sustainable and healthy working environment. The APS has long been focused on the wellbeing of its employees. As employers, APS agencies have obligations under work health and safety legislation. Together with these obligations is an acknowledgement that high performance of employees and organisations cannot be sustained without adequate levels of employee wellbeing.

### ***Calculating and interpreting index scores***

The questions comprising all APS Employee Census indices were asked on a 5-point agreement scale (Figure A7.1). To calculate the index score, each respondent's answers to the set of questions were recoded to fall on a scale of between 0% and 100%. Recoded responses were then averaged across the 5 or more index questions to provide the index score for that respondent. An individual only receives an index score if they have responded to all questions comprising that index.

**Figure A7.1: Example table used to calculate index scores (for one APS employee)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Score (%)
Weight	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%	
Example question 1		✓				75
Example question 2		✓				75
Example question 3			✓			50
Example question 4				✓		25
Example question 5	✓					100
Sum of question weights for this employee						325
Index score for this example respondent (325/5)						65

Index scores for groups of respondents are calculated by averaging the respondent scores comprising that group.

An index score on its own can provide information about the group to which it relates. Index scores, however, have the most use when compared with scores over time or between work units, organisations and demographic groups.

#### ***Treatment of responses of ‘don’t know’ and ‘not applicable’***

Specific questions included within the 2023 APS Employee Census enabled respondents to provide responses of ‘don’t know’, ‘not applicable’ or similar. Responses of this nature were typically excluded from the calculation of results for inclusion within this report. This was so that results reflected respondents who expressed an informed opinion to the relevant question.

Depending on intent, other products generated from the 2023 APS Employee Census may not apply these same rules. The method in analysis and reporting will be made clear within these products.

## **APS Agency Survey**

The Australian Public Service Agency Survey is conducted annually and collects information on a range of workforce initiatives, strategies and compliance matters, including the number and type of APS Code of Conduct breaches. APS agencies with at least 20 APS employees complete the survey. The information collected through the APS Agency Survey is used to inform workforce strategies and for other research and evaluation purposes.

Since 2002, the APS Agency Survey has been administered to APS agencies with employees employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. The survey assists the APS Commissioner to fulfil a range of duties as specified in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- informing the annual State of the Service Report
- strengthening the professionalism of the APS and facilitating continuous improvement in its workforce management

- monitoring, reviewing and reporting on APS strategies, initiatives and policies.

### ***APS Agency Survey collection methodology***

In 2023, the APS Agency Survey was administered to 99 agencies from 19 June to 28 July 2023. The response rate for 2023 was 100%, which is typical for this survey.

Each year the APS Agency Survey is sent to the contact officers nominated for each agency. These contact officers are responsible for coordinating the input from relevant areas and uploading responses to the survey. The survey requires each agency head to verify their agency's submission for completeness and accuracy of responses.

### ***APS Agency Survey management and administration***

The People Insights Branch of the Australian Public Service Commission manages and coordinates the APS Agency Survey. The APSC contracts an external service provider to support survey administration. Ipsos (formerly Big Village) was the service provider in 2023.

### ***Privacy***

All APS Agency Survey data are stored in a secure password-protected environment. Where results are included in reporting, agency results are de-identified or aggregated.

### ***Collection of diversity data***

Concise demographic information enables the APS to produce accurate workforce descriptions to support the management of its workforce. The APSC collects personal data including diversity information concerning employees employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. On engagement to the APS, employees provide personal information to their employing agencies. This information is provided to the APSC to enable the execution of the APS Commissioner's functions.

With the exception of gender, the provision of diversity data is voluntary for APS employees. As a result, diversity rates represent the proportion of employees who identify as belonging to that diversity group, and actual diversity rates may be underestimated. The APS Employee Census, in which responses are de-identified, records higher rates for some diversity groups.

This difference is historically largest for the proportion of employees with ongoing disability. The Employee Census likely attracts higher disclosure rates as responses are not readily identifiable to individual employees, unlike the more formal human resource system. Many people are likely to regard their diversity information as sensitive information and it has long been established that people avoid reporting details they regard as sensitive. Employees may decide to withhold information when they believe it does not affect their ability to carry out their role. Some may have concerns about possible impacts to their future employment or how it will affect them socially within the workplace. The APS takes pride in its ability to foster inclusive workplaces but also respects employees' rights to privacy regarding personal information.

### ***Collecting gender information***

Individuals may identify and be recognised within the community as a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth or during infancy, or as a gender which is not exclusively male or female. Therefore, where gender information is collected and recorded in a personal record, individuals should be given the option to select M (Male), F (Female) or X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified).

From 2014 to 2020, respondents to the APS Employee Census could identify their gender as X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified). From 2021, this question was aligned with the updated ABS standard. This standard better provides all employees the opportunity to more accurately describe their gender as man or male, woman or female, non-binary or that they use a different term.