

## Whole of government

- The majority of SES employees (73%) view themselves definitely or somewhat as part of an APS-wide leadership group, while 42% of EL and APS 1–6 staff viewed their SES as part of this broader group.
- This year almost all SES employees (95%) indicated that their agency head had communicated to them the importance of working collaboratively with other APS agencies—up from 83% in 2005.
- Consistent with last year, over three-quarters (78%) of relevant EL and SES employees believed that their agency's culture encourages a constructive approach to collaboration with other agencies.

## Working with the community

- Half of APS employees were directly involved in delivering services to the general public.
- Most of these employees (83%) agreed that they receive appropriate training and/or information to meet their client service responsibilities.
- Employees involved in service delivery were very positive about the impact of their workplace practices on the public:
  - 94% agreed that confidentiality of information is taken seriously in their workplace
  - 86% agreed that employees in their workplace behave ethically, professionally and fairly when making decisions that affect their clients and customers.

## Developing APS capability

- A higher proportion of agencies this year (58%) indicated that they had policies, strategies and/or frameworks that aimed to ensure they have the skills and capabilities needed for the next 1–5 years.
- Around one-third of agencies reported that shortages in information technology, accounting, and financial management professionals were having a moderate or severe impact on their agencies' organisational capability.
- Six in ten employees (61%) were satisfied with their access to learning and development.
- Two-thirds of employees agreed that their supervisor was effective in managing people—up slightly from 63% last year.
- Consistent with last year's result, three in five employees felt that their productivity in their current job had increased markedly or somewhat in the last 12 months.

## Challenges facing the APS

This year's report demonstrates that the APS is a healthy institution. However, there are areas on which all agencies need to focus to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the APS:

- 1. Developing capability in the senior leadership group.** Agencies need to ensure that they have senior leadership of the highest quality. Depending on the depth and breadth of experience of their SES, different agencies will need to take different approaches to developing their SES. SES employees also need to invest in themselves and plan their careers carefully so they are able to contribute to the maximum extent possible.
- 2. Supporting and developing EL employees—the middle-management and SES feeder group.** Agencies need to ensure they have sufficient capability among their middle-management EL cadre, especially in the areas of strategic thinking and people management. Agencies also need to identify and develop high potential EL employees, who are capable of fulfilling senior leadership roles into the future.
- 3. Positioning the APS as an employer of choice.** The APS must compete effectively for a diverse and sophisticated workforce under tight labour market conditions. To do this, agencies need to market themselves as an employer of choice to a wide-range of people and continue to draw on the full diversity of the workforce. There are continuing challenges in the employment of Indigenous Australians and people with disability.
- 4. Achieving excellence in governance.** Effective governance goes beyond agency driven accountabilities, frameworks and systems, and requires employees to be thoughtful and helpful, as well as active and critical participants in the governance of their agency. There is a need for further work to deliver a governance model that deals effectively with the challenges of a modern APS and alerts executive management to potential problems before they develop into systemic problems.
- 5. Building our organisational capacity to address the challenges of the future.** It is time for the debate around public service reform, and the capacity for the APS to deal with these reforms, to regain momentum. As part of any future reforms, and to deal with emerging challenges, the APS will need to continue to examine ways of working in a whole of government way, along with strengthening relations with external stakeholders and the community. The APS will need to ensure it has both leaders and employees with the necessary capability, and supportive and flexible governance structures to facilitate reform.



Australian Government

Australian Public Service  
Commission

State  
of the  
Service

2005–06

At a Glance

## From the Public Service Commissioner

*At a Glance* is a snapshot of the main findings of the *State of the Service Report 2005–06*.

It lets people know about developments in the Australian Public Service (APS), and about the challenges the public service faces.

The report draws on research findings, especially surveys of APS agencies and employees. I want to thank all those who participated in the surveys. The response rate to this year's employee survey was the highest we have ever achieved—64%.

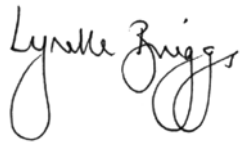
While the APS still has some areas where it could do better, I am delighted that this year's results are very positive. There have been clear improvements in overall performance since the employee survey began in 2003, particularly in terms of familiarity with, and behaviour in relation to, the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

The APS's work achievements are impressive again this year. Public servants can be proud of their achievements and the work they do. But, our roles come with responsibilities too.

Public servants play a really important role in our democratic system of government.

All public servants need to think about the jobs they do—not only how we can all do better, but how we might shape the future public service.

It is up to us all to contribute even more to the strategic direction of public service agencies and to the APS as a whole, and to lead the way in ethical, appropriate and equitable behaviour.



**Lynelle Briggs**  
30 November 2006

## Related publications

Publications in the 2005–06 State of the Service series are:

- *State of the Service Report 2005–06*
- *State of the Service Employee Survey Results 2005–06*
- *APS Statistical Bulletin 2005–06*.

These publications are available on the Commission's website at <<http://www.apsc.gov.au>>. Publications can also be obtained by calling our publications line on 02 6295 4422.

## APS workforce statistics

As at 30 June		2004	2005	2006
<b>Total staff</b>	No.	131,455	133,593	146,434
Ongoing staff	No.	122,466	123,452	134,632
	%	93.2	92.4	91.9
<b>Non ongoing staff</b>	No.	8,989	10,141	11,802
	%	6.8	7.6	8.1
<b>Employment status (ongoing only)</b>				
<b>Full-time</b>	No.	110,043	109,556	119,409
	%	89.9	88.7	88.7
<b>Part-time</b>	No.	12,423	13,896	15,223
	%	10.1	11.3	11.3
<b>EEO groups (ongoing only)</b>				
<b>Women</b>	No.	65,074	66,872	75,114
	%	53.1	54.2	55.8
<b>Indigenous staff</b>	No.	2,934	2,775	2,750
	%	2.4	2.2	2.0
<b>People with disability</b>	No.	4,833	4,718	4,627
	%	3.9	3.8	3.4
<b>NESB1</b>	No.	6,437	6,648	7,544
	%	5.3	5.4	5.6
<b>Age group (ongoing only)</b>				
<b>Under 25 years</b>	No.	5,282	4,987	5,973
	%	4.3	4.0	4.4
<b>25–34</b>	No.	31,285	31,015	33,447
	%	25.5	25.1	24.8
<b>35–44</b>	No.	37,819	37,603	40,334
	%	30.9	30.5	30.0
<b>45–54</b>	No.	36,728	37,427	40,542
	%	30.0	30.3	30.1
<b>55 and over</b>	No.	11,352	12,420	14,336
	%	9.3	10.1	10.6
<b>Classification (ongoing only)</b>				
<b>APS 1–2</b>	No.	7,705	6,295	6,028
	%	6.3	5.1	4.5
<b>APS 3–4</b>	No.	44,854	44,028	48,548
	%	36.6	35.7	36.1
<b>APS 5–6</b>	No.	41,169	42,045	45,464
	%	33.6	34.1	33.8
<b>EL</b>	No.	26,056	27,910	30,914
	%	21.3	22.6	23.0
<b>SES</b>	No.	1,886	2,028	2,253
	%	1.5	1.6	1.7
<b>Graduate/Trainee</b>	No.	796	1,146	1,425
	%	0.6	0.9	1.1

## Abbreviations used

APS	Australian Public Service	No.	Number
EEO	Equal employment opportunity	SES	Senior executive service
EL	Executive level	NESB1	Non-English speaking background

## General perceptions

- The great majority of employees (84%) are motivated to do their best possible work.
- Three-quarters of employees agreed that their manager provides them with the support to do their job.
- Forty-three per cent of employees agreed that their agency was well managed, and 38% agreed their agency's leadership was of the highest quality.
- Half (49%) of employees agreed that their agency had improved its performance over the past year.

## Identity

- Employees were more likely to primarily consider themselves to be an employee of their agency (60%) than an APS employee (40%).
- A higher proportion of employees this year agreed that they were proud to work in the APS (80%) and their agency (71%), compared to 71% and 65% respectively last year.

## Job satisfaction and work-life balance

- The overall level of job satisfaction in the APS this year continues to be high, with 73% of employees generally satisfied with the factors that they nominated as important.
- The two most important job satisfaction factors remained constant with last year. These were:
  - good working relationships (88% of relevant employees satisfied)
  - salary (58% of relevant employees satisfied).
- About two-thirds (63%) of employees agreed that their workplace culture supports people to achieve a good work-life balance, and 68% were satisfied with the work-life balance in their current job.

## Workplace relations

- This year a slightly higher proportion of employees were satisfied with their overall say in decisions that impact on their work (48% compared to 45% last year).
- Over half of employees (54%) agreed that recruitment and selection processes in their agency were fair.