

INNOVATION AND CHANGE

- The majority of employees (94%) want to learn new things and ideas and 93% of employees believed that they were able to adapt and/or respond to new challenges quickly.
- Sixty-four per cent of employees believed that they received support from their manager when suggesting new ideas.
- Around half (52%) of employees agreed that their agency encouraged employees to examine what they do and to find ways to do it better.
- Only 36% of employees believed that change is managed well in their agency.

PRODUCTIVITY

- For over a decade now, the APS has had to make considerable cost savings to fund wage increases (around 2% per annum over wage cost indexes) and the efficiency dividend (3.25% effective from 1 March 2008 to 30 June 2009). This compares very favourably with annual labour productivity growth in the economy more broadly.
- Service-wide productivity growth is built on high levels of personal productivity improvement—61% of employees reported that their productivity had improved ‘somewhat’ or ‘markedly’ in the last 12 months.
- To maintain or improve their productivity in the next 12 months, employees most often identified:
 - good working relationships with their manager and colleagues (rated as important by 94% of employees)
 - working to realistic performance expectations (rated as important by 92% of employees)
 - access to information, resources and/or technology needed to perform their job (rated as important by 92% of employees).
- The most common actions nominated by SES and EL2 staff to assist their agency improve efficiency and/or effectiveness were:
 - more streamlined processes within the agency (53%)
 - the recruitment of high quality staff (47%).
 - better internal communication (39%).
- Levels of workplace absence (unscheduled leave) varied across the APS, from 2.9 days per employee to 16.2 days per employee. The median APS-wide absence rate was 10.1 days per employee (up from 9.4 days per employee last year).

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Publications in the 2007–08 State of the Service series are:

- *State of the Service Report 2007–08*
- *State of the Service Employee Survey Results 2007–08*
- *APS Statistical Bulletin 2007–08*.

These publications are available on the Commission’s website at <<http://www.apsc.gov.au>>. Hard copies of the State of the Service report can be obtained by calling our publications line on 02 6293 8383.

NEW DIRECTIONS

There are six key areas in which the APS will need to make significant improvements to meet the challenges ahead.

1. Further embedding ethics and integrity. There are new ethical challenges facing the APS, brought on by: managing in a more fluid environment; changes in the breadth and speed of communication systems; and a need to meet government and stakeholder expectations about collaboration. The key to success is to maintain and improve the quality and consistency of ethical decision making across the APS in the face of these pressures and to better anticipate and manage emerging ethical issues.

2. Improving the performance of all agencies. This year’s employee survey findings show that, while overall the APS is performing well, there are still areas of concern around performance. For some agencies, key employee measures deteriorated during the year, particularly perceptions in the areas of bullying and harassment and the application of the merit principle. It is time for a service-wide look at how agencies are faring and whether they are performing well in all their functions including leadership, strategic capability and implementation capacity.

3. Building a unified highly professional APS. The professional reputation of the APS will be enhanced through both a stronger focus on ethics and integrity, and sound governance structures. Building a more cohesive APS, which is identified as one entity delivering on the Government’s agenda, is central in enhancing the APS’s professional standing. The SES will have a key role to play, as strong ethical leadership will be required. There is also a need to rebuild the concept of “one APS” where all employees are encouraged to seek out, and can enjoy, many different careers within government.

4. Making smarter policy and regulation. Tackling complex problems requires smarter policy making and regulation. Strategic policy making skills that draw on sound evidence are critical. Employees need to be capable of high level connecting, communication and facilitation to effectively engage stakeholders in cooperatively tackling policy issues. Organisational cultures that support an adaptive and innovative approach to policy interventions and a tolerance for exploring what works in practice are essential.

5. Moving citizens to the centre and encouraging innovation. A key driver for building a more cohesive and coordinated APS is the need to interact better with citizens, so they are able to deal with the Government as a single entity. Many agencies have already begun reforms to help move citizens to the centre of service delivery, but there is a need to embed a citizen focus across the APS and ensure citizens have input into the policy and design of new programmes and services.

6. Getting workforce issues right. Fundamental to building a better APS is ensuring we have a workforce that can respond to future challenges—ideally one that reflects the broader diversity of the Australian community. There continue to be several groups of employees in the APS where agencies need to develop more effective strategies to increase the representation and employment experience of these employees—in particular, people with disability, Indigenous Australians and younger people.



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

STATE OF THE SERVICE REPORT

At a Glance

08



FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

At a Glance provides a summary of the highlights from the *State of the Service Report 2007–08*. It lets people know about developments in the Australian Public Service (APS) and the new directions the APS will need to take to meet future challenges.

The findings in this year's report are of particular significance—only 32% of current public servants were employed in the APS at the change of government in 1996. The report looks at who we are, how we have increased productive capacity, measures to reinvigorate Westminster and the progress we are making towards working with stakeholders and moving to more inclusive government.

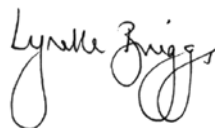
This year's report finds the APS in the midst of a sea change in direction and context. Not only is there a new Government, with an ambitious and far-reaching reform agenda that it is seeking to implement in tandem with other levels of government, but the recent downturn in economic circumstances highlights how closely we are linked into the global economy. Technology too is continuing to accelerate the pace and the way in which we work. The public has much higher expectations than ever before about what the Government and the public service can deliver. The APS must adapt and reform to keep in step with these developments.

We need to think about the design and shape of the APS that will make it the best possible public service in this changing environment. It is therefore very timely for us to consider the key directions in which the APS must move to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Although more rigorous debate around these issues is required, some key areas for improvement are already emerging:

- further embedding ethics and integrity
- improving the performance of all agencies
- building a unified highly professional APS
- making smarter policy and regulation
- moving citizens to the centre and encouraging innovation
- getting workforce issues right.

It is a time of change for the APS—we need to take action in the six key areas identified above to make sure that our agencies and the APS are agile; that we are well-placed to respond to future challenges; and that our working arrangements ensure a highly ethical, professional, cohesive and productive service that continues to be internationally renowned.

I would especially like to thank the almost 6,000 APS employees who took the opportunity to have their say this year. Due to your support, this year's employee survey has been our most successful so far, with a response rate of 65%. I look forward to your continued support again next year.



Lynelle Briggs
27 November 2008

APS WORKFORCE STATISTICS

| As at 30 June | | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total staff | No. | 146,198 | 155,419 | 160,011 |
| Ongoing staff | No. | 134,874 | 143,742 | 147,598 |
| | % | 92.3 | 92.5 | 92.2 |
| Non-ongoing staff | No. | 11,324 | 11,677 | 12,413 |
| | % | 7.7 | 7.5 | 7.8 |
| Full-time (ongoing) | No. | 119,662 | 126,967 | 129,601 |
| | % | 88.7 | 88.3 | 87.8 |
| Part-time (ongoing) | No. | 15,212 | 16,775 | 17,997 |
| | % | 11.3 | 11.7 | 12.2 |
| EEO groups (ongoing only) | | | | |
| Women | No. | 75,294 | 81,337 | 84,346 |
| | % | 55.8 | 56.6 | 57.1 |
| Indigenous staff | No. | 2,934 | 3,108 | 3,059 |
| | % | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| People with disability | No. | 4,886 | 4,820 | 4,636 |
| | % | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.1 |
| NESB1 | No. | 8,008 | 8,612 | 8,804 |
| | % | 5.9 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| Age group (ongoing only) | | | | |
| Under 25 years | No. | 6,038 | 7,158 | 7,198 |
| | % | 4.5 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| 25–34 | No. | 33,529 | 35,785 | 36,232 |
| | % | 24.9 | 24.9 | 24.5 |
| 35–44 | No. | 40,404 | 41,838 | 42,448 |
| | % | 30.0 | 29.1 | 28.8 |
| 45–54 | No. | 40,579 | 42,818 | 44,136 |
| | % | 30.1 | 29.8 | 29.9 |
| 55 and over | No. | 14,324 | 16,143 | 17,584 |
| | % | 10.6 | 11.2 | 11.9 |
| Classification (ongoing only) | | | | |
| APS 1–2 | No. | 6,345 | 7,074 | 6,236 |
| | % | 4.7 | 4.9 | 4.2 |
| APS 3–4 | No. | 48,149 | 49,832 | 49,488 |
| | % | 35.7 | 34.7 | 33.5 |
| APS 5–6 | No. | 45,567 | 48,485 | 50,499 |
| | % | 33.8 | 33.7 | 34.2 |
| EL | No. | 31,032 | 34,161 | 36,999 |
| | % | 23.0 | 23.8 | 25.1 |
| SES | No. | 2,261 | 2,535 | 2,692 |
| | % | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Graduate/Trainee | No. | 1,520 | 1,655 | 1,684 |
| | % | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.1 |

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

- The great majority of employees (82%) are motivated to do their best possible work and almost all employees (96%) are willing to put in extra effort to get the job done.
- Forty-five per cent of employees agreed that their agency was well-managed, and 46% agreed that their agency's leadership was of a high quality.

IDENTITY

- Employees continue to be more likely to primarily consider themselves to be an employee of their agency (58%) than an APS employee (42%).
- The proportion of employees who agreed that they were proud to work in the APS and their agency remained stable this year at 79% and 71% respectively.

JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Overall levels of job satisfaction were relatively high this year in the APS, with 77% of employees generally satisfied with the attributes that they nominated as important.
- The three most important job satisfaction attributes were:
 - good working relationships (86% of relevant employees satisfied)
 - flexible working arrangements (86% of relevant employees satisfied)
 - salary (60% of relevant employees satisfied).
- Two-thirds of employees agreed that their workplace culture supports people to achieve a good work-life balance.
- Seven in ten employees were satisfied with their current work-life balance.

INTERACTIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

- Just under one in five (17%) employees indicated that they had had contact with Ministers and/or their advisers in the last 12 months.
- Only 20% of employees who had had contact reported that they had faced a challenge in balancing the need to be apolitical, impartial and professional, responsive to the Government and openly accountable (as per the APS Values) in dealing with Ministers and/or their advisers.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

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