Australian Government

Delivering for Tomorrow:
APS Workforce Strategy 2025

Contents

Commissioner's
Foreword

Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025 signals a new era for how the Australian Public Service will align its efforts and investment across the system to grow, build and shape our workforce as one APS.

The APS enterprise is at its best when it comes together to deliver for the Australian people. This was never more on show than in 2020. Our country faced several crises and the APS was at the centre supporting the Government's response to take decisive action. Critical to our success in managing an effective response was our workforce and willingness to work as one APS. We moved skills and expertise to critical areas of need, broke down traditional silos and adapted quickly to shifting priorities.

Our purpose is clear. We are committed to service and to supporting the Government in securing the wellbeing, safety and living standards of all Australians. To do this, we need to continue to develop our key asset – our people and the skills they bring.

Rapid change, the shifting technological landscape and accelerated demand for skills and talent are all impacting the APS workforce. This is not unique to us. All major employers are facing the same challenges. Most workforces are seeing the need for a renewed focus on citizen-centric services, rapid delivery with rising expectations and the value of ongoing evaluation and evolution. What sets us apart from others is the sheer range of tasks that we need to perform and the criticality of ensuring we have the capability and joined up systems to make sure this country always gets the best from us. This Strategy delivers a plan to do just that.

Building on *Delivering for Australians – a world-class Australian Public Service: the Government's APS reform agenda* (2019), this Strategy takes a whole-of-enterprise view. It identifies the priorities for shaping our workforce to tackle immediate and emerging challenges. It focuses on a range of workforce management domains, including how we recruit the right people, grow our people through learning and development, and ensure our leadership and performance remains of the highest standards expected by the Government and the Australian people.

Bringing this Strategy together has been a significant exercise. It reflects the valued contribution of many stakeholders both within and outside the APS. I thank all those that have shaped this thinking during the extensive consultation and engagement processes. This Strategy sets out a clear vision to assist all APS agencies to build their workforces for the future. This is a living document and we all have a role to ensure it is a success.

I look forward to working with the Secretaries Board and across the APS to now implement this Strategy. We all have a crucial part to play in ensuring our APS remains fit for the future and continues to deliver for all Australians.

Mr Peter Woolcott AO
Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we operate. I pay my respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging, acknowledging their history and continued connection to Country.

Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025

Australian Government

Change is impacting the context in which the APS delivers services to all Australians and the skills it needs across its workforce. These changes include:

- Changing community demographics, different expectations of responsive and digital government services and changing trust in public institutions
- Digital transformation is driving policy and service delivery responses, and the demand for rapid development and implementation of solutions tailored to business and community needs
- Increasing demand for emerging and specialist skills and talent in an increasingly dynamic labour market
- Changing workforce profiles, altering work structures and employee expectations of work and workplaces
- Geopolitical challenges, requiring collaborative, adaptive and rapid responses by government, industry and citizens

The objective of the APS Workforce Strategy

For the APS to operate as one enterprise, with a high-performing workforce to deliver effectively and efficiently for the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public.

Our workforce will operate in accordance with the APS Values and Code of Conduct:

Impartial | Committed to Service | Accountable | Respectful | Ethical

To be positioned for the future we need our workforce to be:

- Agile, collaborative, responsive and able to navigate complexity
- Skilled, knowledgeable and committed to life-long learning
- Maximising data and technology, and digital engagement
- Professional, engaged and committed to integrity
- Citizen-centred in approach, inclusive and representative of our diverse communities

Our Action Plan – To build towards our vision for the APS workforce we are committed to three areas of action:

Attract, build and retain skills, expertise and talent

We will recruit and develop the capabilities and skills needed to be a diverse, high-performing workforce that facilitates career pathways across an outcomes-focused enterprise

Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models

We will lead digital transformation and deploy skills, expertise and talent to where it is needed to deliver the outcomes that the Government and Australians expect

Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership

We will ensure that our leadership continues to shape our behaviour, our purpose and our delivery of outcomes, and that the APS is highly regarded for our integrity and citizen-centric focus

Diversity and inclusion underpins all actions we undertake through implementation of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy, the APS Disability Employment Strategy and the Gender Equality Strategy

Development for whole-of-enterprise capabilities through Professional Streams and the APS Academy

Workforce insights and planning

To support our objectives and actions, agencies will have modern, data-driven workforce management practices integrated as a key component of business planning

Short-term measures of success

- A workforce focused on developing strong capabilities aligned to current and emerging enterprise-wide requirements
- A strong learning culture and growth mindset, and commitment to continuous development
- Compelling EVP that is well positioned to attract top Australian talent to choose a career with the APS
- One APS workforce that is seamlessly mobilised to respond to shifts in government priorities
- A high-performing workforce, actively seeking out and embracing technology development to work more innovatively and efficiently in a digital world
- Strong and capable leadership pipelines for APS leadership roles, and a commitment to succession planning and development
- An APS workforce that models and promotes a pro-integrity culture

Longer-term measures of success

- A workforce demonstrating our defined future-ready characteristics
- A highly skilled, high-performing, effective and efficient workforce evidenced through the delivery and quality of government services
- A workforce that delivers high-quality outcomes and trustworthy experiences for the community
- A workforce that maximises data and technology for decision making, policy and service design and delivery
- Flexible and responsive workforce models that are able to be deployed quickly to adapt to changes in our operating environment

Delivering for Tomorrow:
A Workforce Strategy for the APS

Why an APS-wide Workforce Strategy?

To build and develop our future workforce, and operate efficiently and effectively, we must ensure strong links between our workforce, our business needs and government priorities.

Change is impacting the context in which we deliver services, with digital transformation driving the need for more tailored, data-informed solutions, changing citizen expectations of government services and demanding different workforce models as employee expectations are changing. Our operating environment and the challenges we face are ever changing and the responsiveness of our services is more critical than ever. Recent crisis management experiences through the 2019–20 bushfire season and the COVID–19 pandemic have reinforced the need for the APS to be flexible, work as one and respond to the best evidence available.

The APS workforce performs a range of critical functions for Government and the Australian community. This includes designing, delivering and operating services, providing advice and implementing policy and regulation in areas of increasing complexity. To continue to be successful and highly regarded the APS needs to adopt an integrated, whole-of-enterprise approach to delivering outcomes. The Government reiterated the importance of an APS-wide Workforce Strategy, the first of its kind, in response to the 2019 Independent Review of the APS.[1]

Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025

Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025 (the Strategy) establishes a whole-of-APS approach to building and maintaining a high-performing, diverse and flexible workforce mobilised where and when needed. The Strategy aims to provide a strategic and integrated approach for APS workforce management at all levels, enabling the APS to better plan for and develop the workforce and capabilities it needs for the future.

The Strategy is built on the foundation of the Public Service Act 1999 (PS Act) which outlines the objective of our public service to be 'an apolitical public service that is efficient and effective in serving the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public'.[2]

Objective of the APS Workforce Strategy

The Objective of this Strategy is:

For the APS to operate as one enterprise, with a high-performing workforce to deliver effectively and efficiently for the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public.

This Strategy organises implementation of our workforce initiatives under three areas of action:

Attract, build and retain skills, expertise and talent – we will recruit and develop the capabilities and skills needed to be a diverse, high-performing workforce that facilitates career pathways across an outcomes-focused enterprise.

Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models – we will lead digital transformation and deploy skills, expertise and talent to where it is needed to deliver the outcomes that the Government and Australians expect.

Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership – we will ensure that our leadership continues to shape our behaviour, our purpose and our delivery of outcomes, and that the APS is highly regarded for our integrity and citizen-centric focus.

Workforce initiatives to be implemented under the Strategy will be designed to address the areas of action and plan for our future workforce. A dynamic approach to implementation will be taken to ensure the Strategy remains flexible and adaptive to changes in our operating environment.

Secretaries and other key governance bodies such as the Chief Operating Officers' Committee will play a key role in assessing outcomes of planned benefits through continuous evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

The APS working as one enterprise

In the near term the Strategy aims to ensure that the APS workforce is positioned to support Australia's management and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In the longer term, the Strategy's focus is to build our capability, capacity and operational efficiency to maximise our people's performance and enhance the beneficial impacts the APS has on citizens.

Our agencies are diverse in their role, the services they deliver, their size and geographical footprint, the roles they require and the workforce they employ.

Through the efficient and effective management of our workforce, we will foster greater collaboration and partnership across the APS. The Strategy aims to position the APS to operate as one enterprise, working towards the same objectives.

To support agencies to adopt, adapt and embed the APS Workforce Strategy into local level workforce strategies and plans, and workforce management initiatives, the APSC — through its Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning — will strengthen APS workforce planning capability and build our enterprise workforce planning ecosystem. An outline of the Centre of Excellence is included in the Implementation and Realising Success section (see page 37).

Monitoring and review of this Strategy's implementation and evaluation will ensure the actions and outcomes of planned benefits continue to respond to the operating environment and remain dynamic throughout the life of the Strategy.

Health and safety of our employees

The APS is committed to safeguarding the health and safety of its employees, workers and visitors and takes its responsibility seriously by providing and maintaining a safe working environment. This includes supporting and promoting the holistic wellbeing of our employees. The environment we operate in is central to maintaining an engaged workforce and building a compelling employee value proposition to attract top Australian talent across the enterprise.

Change is shaping our workforce and how we deliver

Alongside many other public and private sector institutions across the world, the APS workforce is being impacted by rapid change, both domestically and internationally. This includes:[3]

- changing citizen demographics and expectations of government services and trust in public institutions
- digital transformation shaping policy and service delivery responses, and the demand for rapid solutions
- increasing demand for skills and talent in a highly competitive labour market
- changing workforce profiles, altering work structures and employee expectations
- geopolitical challenges, requiring collaborative and adaptive responses by government, industry and citizens.

> "

'The context and challenges of the public sector are changing at a rapid pace and the capabilities of public servants and those that lead them must keep up'[4]

- OECD

The APS workforce and workplace in a changing environment

The APS employs approximately 150,000 people working in 100 agencies across a variety of locations, from the Northern Territory to Antarctica, in capital cities, regional areas and overseas.

Figure 1. APS workforce across Australia

NT
1.3%
1.0%

WA
4.6%
10.5%

QLD
11.8%
19.5%

NSW
17.8%
31.9%

ACT
37.7%
1.9%

Overseas
0.8%

SA
6.4%
6.7%

VIC
17.2%
26.5%

TAS
2.5%
2.0%

% APS Employees[5]
As of 30 June 2020

% Australian Labour market[6]
As of 30 June 2020
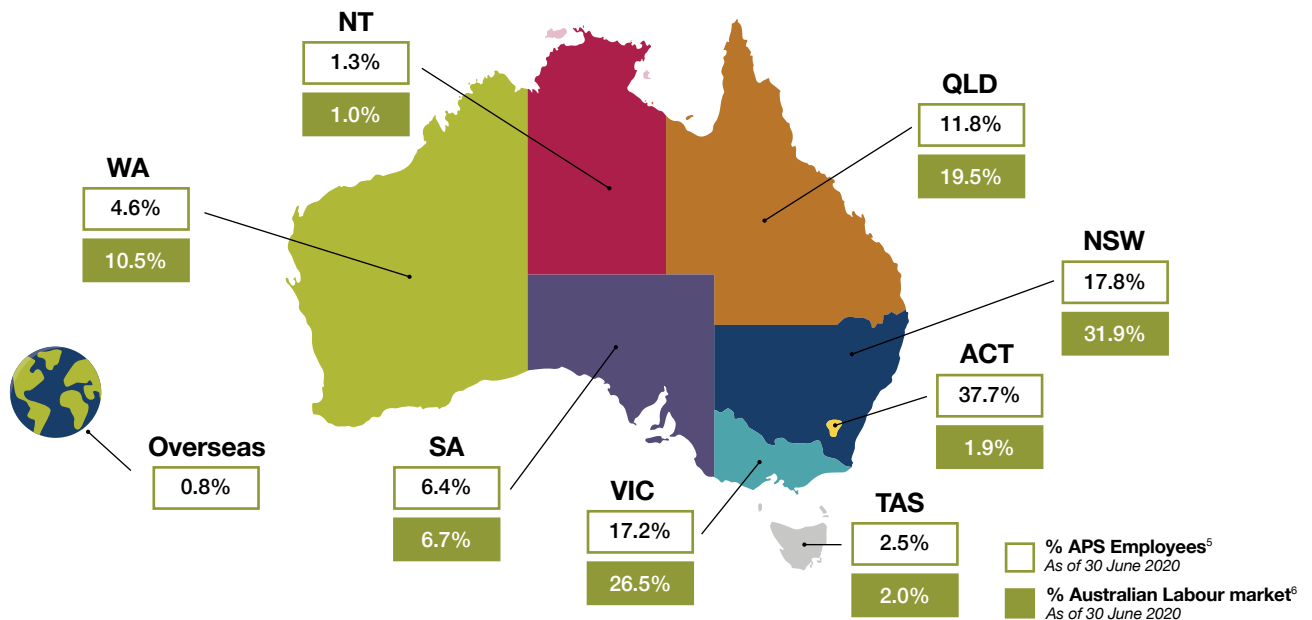
32% of Australian workers in management roles and/or with management skills work in regional areas[7]

26% of APS managers (EL1 and above level) work outside CBR, SYD CBD and MELB CBD[8]

32%

60-70% of ICT workers in specialist ICT occupations are based in **VIC and NSW**[9]

68% of APS ICT roles are based in CBR[10]

The APS workforce comprises high-calibre employees who are highly engaged and committed to service, good government and the wellbeing of all Australians. The 2020 APS Employee Census demonstrates that APS employees are more engaged in their work than ever.
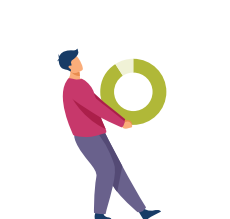
92%
are happy to go the 'extra mile' at work

85%
suggest ideas to improve ways of doing things

82%
believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of their agency

83%
are committed to their agency's goals

The profile and demographics of the APS workforce have shifted markedly in the last 20 years. Although the proportion of APS employees aged 45 and over has increased by 12 percentage points over the past 20 years, the generations these employees represent have changed and will continue to change.

By 2025, 50% of the APS workforce will represent Gen Y and Z, the digital natives. By then, ~85% of recruits into APS roles may represent these generations.

The profile of our workforce and the types of work we engage in will continue to shift.

Workforce demographics

Gen Y + Z
- 37%
- 47.6%[11]

Indigenous*
- 3.5%
- 2.4%[15]

Aged 60+
- 8.3%
- 10.8%[12]

Disability*
- 4%
- 8%[16]

Working full time
- 79%
- 68.6%[13]

Females in SES/Senior Managers
- 48%
- 27%[17]

Women
- 60%
- 47.1%[14]

NESB/CALD*
- 14.3%
- 21%[18]
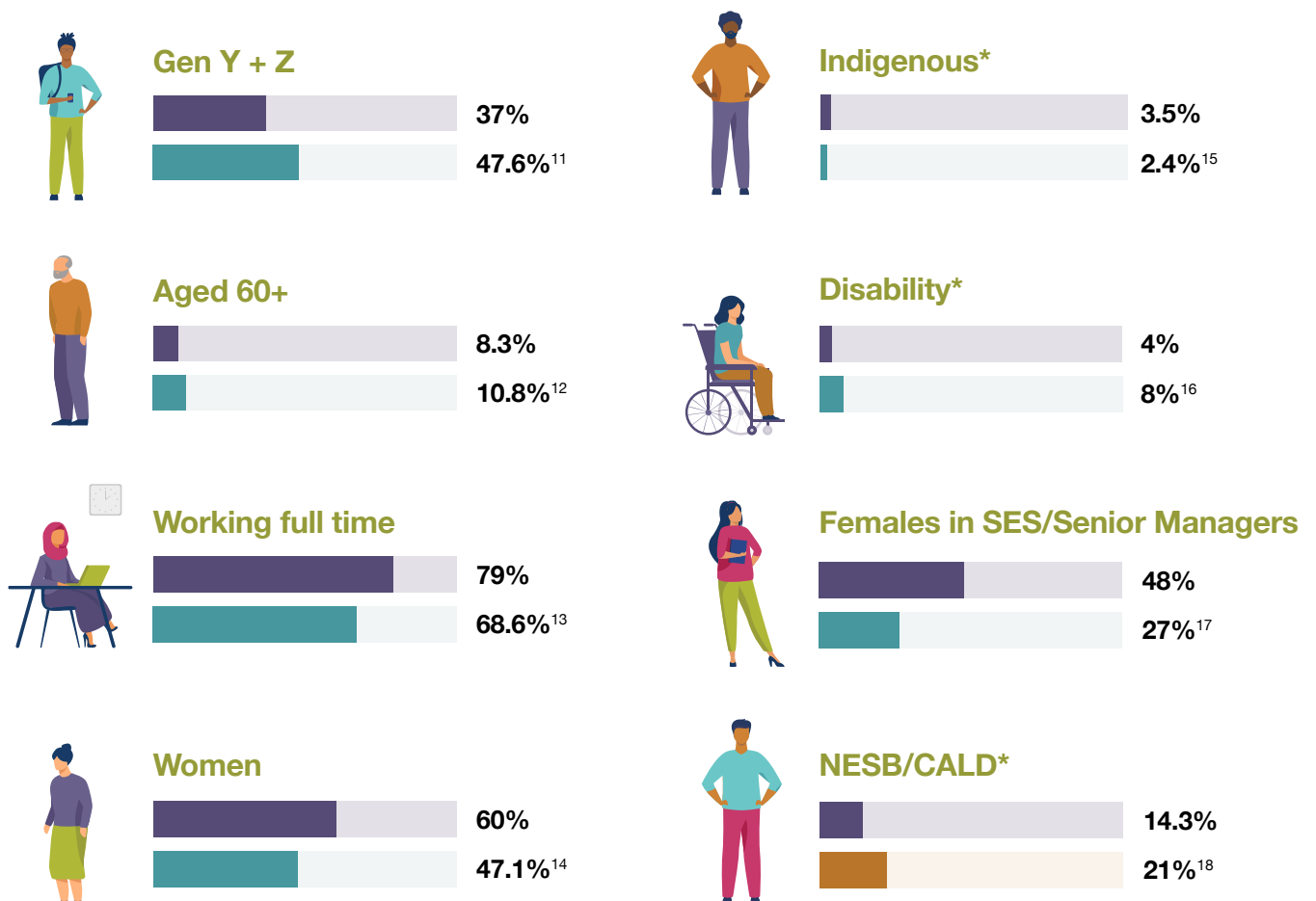
Meeting our workers' needs

Caring responsibilities
- 41%

Accessed flexible working
- 71.3%

Accessed work from home
- 53.1%

- APS workforce as at 30 June 2020[19]
- APS Employee Census 2020[20]
- Australian labour market
- Total Australian population

* Only includes those who choose to identify

The work APS employees perform continues to be diverse. Each day, public servants deliver services and programs, provide policy advice, regulate legislation and manage resources that touch upon every aspect of the lives of the people of Australia.[21]
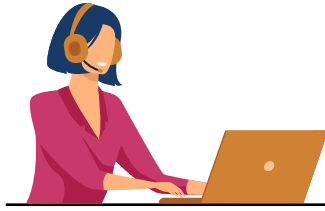
21.5%
Service delivery
Roles include:
Contact Centre Operator, Program Delivery Manager

11%
Compliance and regulation
Roles include:
Border Enforcement Officer, Investigator

10.9%
Administration
Roles include:
Executive Assistant, Data Entry Officer
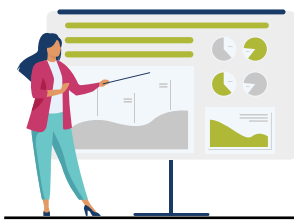
9.1%
Project and program
Roles include:
Project Support Officer, Change Manager

7.5%
Strategic policy
Roles include:
Policy Officer, International Negotiator

8.7%
ICT and digital
Roles include:
Cyber Security Officer, Automated Tester

4.5%
Accounting and finance
Roles include:
Financial Analyst, Procurement Officer

4.3%
Human resources
Roles include:
Workforce Planner, Learning and Development Officer

3.7%
Legal and parliamentary
Roles include:
Lawyer, Ministerial and Parliamentary Officer

3.5%
Research
Roles include:
Statistician, Econometric Modeller

Note: Total may not equal 100 as not all job families are represented.

Remaining flexible in a changing environment

The location of APS roles and the ways we access capability or capacity remain flexible. From time to time, there will be a need for APS agencies to access skills differently through contingent workers, such as contractors and consultants, or through external partnerships with academia or industry. The type of work the APS does and the way the service works will continue to change, particularly as the way public services are delivered continues to be transformed. The APS anticipates a decline in administrative and transactional roles, such as transactional Finance and Human Resources roles, over the next five years, as technological solutions are implemented and rolled out across the enterprise.

This highlights a need to plan for continuous capability development and reskilling activities to transition our workforce to the areas and capabilities which are growing. Workforce planning will be central to the success of agencies in making these changes work. This will be particularly important as different generations working side-by-side will have differing expectations of work, their workplace and the options that employers have to build and maintain a diverse workforce.

Digital technologies and data are transforming how our workforce operates and delivers

The operating environment for the APS is increasingly digital. The 2020 Federal Budget included over $3bn of investment in data and digital technology-enabled initiatives.[22] A number of agencies also have major deliverables under the Digital Transformation Roadmap 2025. Over 74% of the APS workforce is employed in those agencies. Various cohorts of this large workforce will require a level of upskilling and reskilling to build continuous employability and ensure delivery.

As the APS continues its drive towards digital government in a digital economy, automation and digital transformation will alter how APS employees work and the skills they need. According to McKinsey and Company, 'governments around the world are under pressure to operate more efficiently, serve citizens better and provide more satisfying working environments for their employees. Automation can also boost employee satisfaction; repetitive manual work is frequently cited as one of the main sources of public-sector job dissatisfaction'.[23]

18% of **tasks** and up to **40%** of **time in some roles** performed by APS employees could be automated by 2030[24]

McKinsey estimates that 'as many as **4/5** processes in **HR, finance and application processing** are at least partially automatable, with the potential to reduce costs'[25]
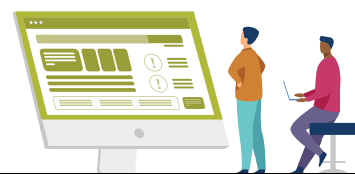
Progress towards digital economies creates an environment of increased cyber challenges. Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020 sets out the action needed across the Australian economy to create a more secure online world for Australians, their businesses and the essential services upon which they all depend. To support Australia's cyber resilience, it is estimated that at least 17,000 more cyber experts will be required across private and public sectors over the next five years to 2026.[26]

Similar to other employers operating in a labour market affected by shortages in specialist skills, the APS will need to invest more resources towards digital, cyber and data roles, while socio-emotional skills such as learning agility and growth mindset, creativity, curiosity, initiative and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving will become key to a high-performing workforce in a digital environment.

Demand for **data science skills** increased by **1810%** over **5 years**[27]

Demand for most **in-demand digital roles** increased by **~700%** over **5 years**[28]

Demand for data analysis specialists and change managers **doubled** over **5 years**[29]

Top job functions with the largest projected growth in the APS are in: **Data, Digital and Intelligence and Policy Analysis**[30]

With **90%** of Australian companies investing in and adopting **big data analytics**, there is strong competition in the labour market for data skills[31]

Increasing demand for skills and talent means reskilling and workforce development are critical to success

The APS operates in an increasingly competitive labour market, in particular for specialist skills and deep expertise. We need to grow and develop our own capability, and attract and retain skills and capabilities. To do this at scale and better access diverse talent across Australia, strategies are becoming increasingly important. A strong employee value proposition, alongside modern and innovative approaches to workforce management, will ensure that we attract and retain this diverse talent.

Due to the demands of the digital economy, organisations face intense competition for just a handful of critical roles. In 2018, 90% or more of S&P organisations recruited for the same 39 roles, which made up 49% of all job postings.[32] Those 39 critical roles included software developers, data scientists and computer systems engineers/ architects. This points to global labour supply challenges for specialist data and digital roles in an environment of increased demand for these roles. Such roles require in-demand but expensive skills, critical to digital business worldwide.

There is increased competition in the Australian labour market for ICT and digital technology skills for a number of reasons, including a current shortage of specialist skills, an estimated growth in demand for technology workers of 100,000 employees by 2024[33] and the fact that developing professional expertise can take an estimated seven years or more.[34]

Similar to other organisations in Australia and globally, the APS is experiencing critical skill shortages and capability gaps. Employers need a strong focus on building and growing capabilities to succeed among this strong competition for specialist talent and expertise.

APS agencies identified emerging roles they need to plan for, in particular in digital and data. 94% of agencies with critical skills shortages used special measures to retain people with critical skills.[35] Facilitating flexible working arrangements was one of the commonly used tools agencies employed to retain those critical skills.

However, despite operating in a competitive labour market and being faced with skill shortages, less than 50% of APS agencies are actively and strategically planning for workforce skills and capabilities.[36]

The APS cannot continue to be overly reliant on recruiting from the labour market and only when a vacancy arises. We must be able to proactively and strategically recruit with a 5–10-year horizon in mind, to build strong capability pipelines for data and digital/ICT roles, and develop these capabilities

internally through focused programs, such as those being developed under the Digital and Data Professional Streams.

In addition to deep expertise/specialist skills, the Australian labour market—and hence the APS—is also experiencing shortages in basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills.[37] These gaps require focused effort throughout different workforce management stages to mitigate workforce capability gap risks.

More than 2 million - projected number of skills shortages in government services **by 2030**. **Digital literacy** ranks in top skill shortages for government[38]

DIGITAL LITERACY

33% of skills that were present in an average job posting in 2017 won't be needed **in 2021**[39]

In a context where 28% of Australian workers will need more than three months of reskilling to meet emerging skills needs[40], workforce reskilling in the APS requires a culture of continuous learning where employees with a growth mindset and curiosity make learning part of everyday work.

Embracing technology and accessing the broader, nationwide talent pool by ensuring jobs are less tied to specific locations will be core enablers for the APS to engage, build and retain the talent and skills needed now and tomorrow. APS agencies also need to support the workforce across a range of cohorts and career stages, and accommodate employees' trends for more flexible working conditions and working longer before retirement.

Community expectations, integrity and high performance are central to the effectiveness of our service

Community expectations of government and the public sector continue to change while we continue to focus on delivering outcomes and services aligned to the needs of Australian people. The APS has a highly engaged workforce. Its people are committed to service, connect closely with agencies' purposes and understand how their work contributes to achieving outcomes for the Australian public. Delivering on changing expectations with flexible, modern approaches for citizens will be facilitated by digital platforms and citizen-centric policy development, service design and delivery.

Employee Engagement Index Score:
73%[41] (+1 percentage point from 2019)
- Australian Labour Market 2019: 70%[42]

Wellbeing Index Score: 70%[43]
(+3 percentage points from 2019)

APS Employee Net Promoter Score: 58[44]
(+8 from 2019) – a score over 50 is considered to be excellent

91% of APS employees understand how their work contributes to achieving outcomes for the Australian public[45]

85% see clear connection between their job and agency's purpose[46]

83% are committed to their agency's goals[47]

77% agree their workgroups use time and resources efficiently[48]

85% agree their supervisor ensures the team delivers outcomes[49]

87% agree their colleagues cooperate to get the job done[50]

As the APS changes and evolves, the attitudes and behaviours of APS employees must continue to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity. A pro-integrity and high-performance culture must be front and centre in the mind of every APS employee. The APS Commissioner's Directions, amended in July 2019, clarify the obligations of agency heads, supervisors and APS employees in achieving, promoting and fostering a high-performance culture.[51]

Around 20% of 2019 APS Employee Census respondents indicated that their agency dealt with underperformance effectively.[52] 2019 amendments to the APS Commissioner's Directions explicitly addressed the role of senior leaders and supervisors in developing and sustaining a high-performance

culture across the APS.[53] This included rewarding and recognising talent and managing underperformance.

The impression and standing of the APS is influenced by the interactions and experiences people have with our workforce. The Citizen Experience Survey highlights that citizens are five times more likely to trust government services if they think employees and the service demonstrate integrity, openness and honesty. Citizens were more than four times more likely to trust public services if they were reliable; that is, they were well-managed, dependable and adaptive to the needs of Australians.[54]

Satisfaction with Australian public services also increases five-fold when APS staff 'did what they said they would do'. Increasing the integrity of the APS workforce is critical to building and maintaining citizens' trust, and to the effectiveness of the APS.[55]

Understanding and addressing skills and capability gaps

At its broadest level, the role of the APS is to:

provide effective, quick, easy and responsive services to the Australian community directly or in partnership with state and territory governments, and the private sector

provide effective advice to inform government decisions to grow the economy, create jobs, support the development of business and industry, and protect the health, environment and quality of life of all Australians

implement government policy directions through effective, citizen-centric approaches

regulate the operation of a range of aspects of the national economy

deliver national security, defence, border protection, health and safety responses to keep Australians safe

internally support delivery of core functions by effectively managing functions such as finance, risk management and business planning, ICT and human resources

COVID-19 has brought increased visibility of the role the APS plays in supporting Australians, with a greater focus on innovation and creativity to solve problems.

To be effective into the future the APS must build mechanisms that enable agencies and staff to continue to:[56]

design policy and delivery solutions that meet the needs and expectations of the community

assist government to **engage and communicate** with the Australian community on social and economic challenges

use sophisticated **data and data analysis** techniques, and understand the **impact of policy and decisions** on outcomes in the communities we serve

work across boundaries to **shape and implement solutions** to complex challenges

reduce unnecessary processes and service congestion through rapid processes and redesigned service delivery arrangements

think about and **manage risk differently**

use and design technology solutions to enhance the achievement of outcomes

The skills and capabilities that we have today are not going to be the skills and capabilities that we need in the future. Our operating environment continues to change and the context in which we deliver services is impacting our future workforce needs. Changing community expectations, digital transformation, increasingly competitive labour market, changing workforce profiles and employee expectations and geopolitical challenges bring varied challenges that

the APS must plan for. This is why we are planning for our future state workforce, to be in the best position to respond to these challenges.

Capability Domains

The collection of capability areas, including skills, knowledge and attributes, required by all APS employees have been outlined to build a highly capable and future-ready workforce.

These capability domains should support individual, team and organisational development through focused development activities as reflected in the APS L&D Action Plan and agency-specific strategies. They also enable key human resources activities such as workforce planning, recruitment, performance and talent management.

Four broad capability domains:

1. Employability

The fundamental skills and knowledge required across nearly all jobs in professional environments, which can be built and retained in the market, are considered employability capabilities. These 'job-ready' capabilities can include essential professional and people skills such as communication, learning agility, team work, research and analysis, and digital dexterity.

2. APS specific

Certain skills and knowledge, which are unique to the APS, are developed internally. These include the skills and knowledge APS employees are required to have to work lawfully and ethically in the APS. These include integrity, risk and information management. Fundamental public service craft capabilities such as policy design and development across government, and implementation of government decisions, enable the APS workforce to deliver effectively for the Government and the Australian people. The review of the APS Centre for Leadership and Learning in 2020 highlighted the importance of developing 'public service craft' capabilities as a priority.

3. Technical and professional

Technical and professional capabilities are the skills and knowledge required to undertake particular specialist roles within the APS. Technical roles are roles which are specific to APS agency functions, such as passport and cargo control, or weather observation and analysis. Professional roles include data and digital specialists, strategic HR professionals, regulator and policy officers. Building professional capabilities through the APS Professions model, as well as building both technical

and professional skills, often requires development specific to an agency or role. This may be through experience on the job, connection with professional associations or formal development.

4. Leadership

Leadership can be exercised by anyone, regardless of position, with the capacity and desire to affect positive change in the APS. Leadership behaviours and attributes which inspire, develop and direct others to achieve APS goals can be built and retained both within the APS and in the market.

Priority capabilities

Clarifying the critical skills and capabilities required across the APS now and in the future will help to ensure APS employees are prepared to deliver services as and when required. These are likely to include capabilities both specific to the APS and more commonly available, such as employability, leadership and technical capabilities. Future clarification of these will facilitate a more strategic approach to buy or build what is required.

In the short term, the Workforce Strategy offers an opportunity for us to identify priority capabilities: those capabilities emerging as critical to the effective performance of the APS.

These capabilities will evolve over time in response to a changing operating environment.

We will establish enterprise-wide mechanisms to continuously challenge and identify these changing capabilities. This will help us remain agile when it comes to adapting and modernising obsolete skills and capabilities, and developing new ones for our workforce.

An APS Learning and Development Action Plan will clarify best practice in capability development and identify roles and responsibilities for the development of the capabilities identified in the capability framework. This includes the role of the APS Academy, to be established in July 2021.

The APS Academy will lead a one-APS approach to learning and leadership to strengthen the professionalism of the APS, minimise duplication and maximise return on investment for the best possible outcomes.

APS Professions: Building deep expertise in key capability areas

"

'…To address the expectations of government and the Australian community… the nature of what we need from a strategic HR needs to broaden to include skills outside of traditional HR. Key needs include change leadership, design capability, commercial and business acumen, data analytics, behavioural economics, organisational psychology and other broad potentials that partner with business to achieve pragmatic business outcomes.'[57]

- Mr Peter Woolcott AO

In 2019, the APS introduced APS Professional Streams to build deep expertise in key professional capabilities aligned to delivering critical functions of government. By the end of 2020, the APS had established three of these streams designed to enhance digital[58] and data capabilities[59] and deep expertise, and improve capabilities to support strategic workforce management[60] in the APS.

The streams comprise practical initiatives which can be grouped under 3 key focuses:

- Getting it right from the start: attracting talent to the APS, improving entry-level skills and creating diversity among the people in these disciplines.
- Developing sophisticated and specialist capabilities: identifying and promoting learning and development opportunities, and designing role profiles.
- Embedding a professional workforce: defining profession-specific capabilities, building career pathways, professional communities and professional standards.

Alongside these three, under the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's new regulator

performance function, we will increase accountability, promote best practice and build professional skills for staff in regulatory roles through targeted upskilling and training, and cultural change.[61]

Strong leadership capabilities will drive performance

High-performing leaders who can engage the skills, talents and commitment of the APS workforce are critical to the APS delivering its services and meeting changing demands.

Public sector institutions across the world are grappling with the impact of technological and societal change on existing approaches to leadership.

Long-established leadership capabilities, such as conceptual and analytical thinking and strategic planning, remain essential. However, it is recognised that soft skills—such as the ability to engage with multiple stakeholders and effectively mobilise diverse teams—are core leadership capabilities for the future.

In the APS, at the broadest level, leadership is about inspiring and energising people to tackle challenges and find solutions that benefit the nation. This includes engaging people to bring about change, to innovate, collaborate and move towards a new vision of the future. It also includes challenging current thinking and ways of working to deliver better outcomes for government and community. In this environment, being adept at working with multiple organisations and systems is just as important as technical expertise in delivering outcomes. Similarly, being able to draw on diverse skills and perspectives, and having the courage to test new approaches are as critical to solving complex problems as analytical skills. Continuing to build leadership capability will be a high priority for the APS as the workforce adapts to rapid change. This must be supported by a range of interventions that encourage individual and organisational commitment to continuous learning.

Of the **46%** of employees who identified skills or capability gaps in their immediate workgroups, **27% identified leadership** as a capability gap.[62]

68% of agencies identified leadership as a top L&D need.[63]

Less than half of all 2020 APS Employee Census respondents (49%) agreed that their Senior Executive Service (SES) manager took time to identify and develop talented people.[64]

63% of APS Census respondents reported their SES manager could **effectively lead and manage change**.[65]

62% of employees reported their SES manager **encouraged innovation and creativity**.[66]

'Complex', 'ambiguous', 'uncertain' and 'disruptive' are not just buzzwords. They accurately describe the reality of the policy, regulatory and service delivery challenges Australia is facing. These challenges require a broader repertoire of leadership responses at all levels, particularly for the SES. The Secretaries Board has endorsed a set of leadership capabilities to reflect what is needed from our senior leaders (see Figure 2).[67] These are key to shaping long-term organisational strategy, developing high-performing workforces and harnessing the benefits of diverse thinking and perspectives to find new ways of delivering outcomes.

SES is the least diverse cohort in the APS[68]. However, SES are more likely to have worked in multiple agencies than the rest of the APS: **63%** vs **29%**.[69]

Female
SES 48.0%
APS: 60%

Indigenous
SES 1.4%
APS 3.5%

Disability
SES: 3.8%
APS: 4.0%

Born in a non-English speaking country
SES 7.3%
APS: 15.9%
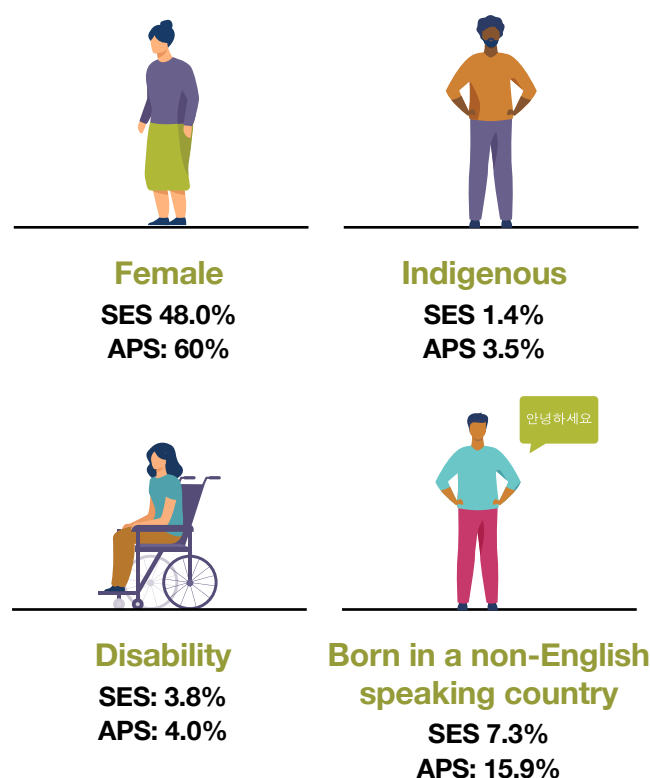
Continuing to ensure diversity of workforce composition at all levels should be a focus to ensure it represents the Australian community.

Figure 2. APS Leadership Capability Framework

Courageous, self-aware, resilient, citizen-centric and life-long learner

These personal qualities sit at the heart of effective leadership in the APS. For APS leaders, mobilising and driving change requires a strong capacity for action and an equally strong capacity for understanding and contending with constraints. Self-awareness, courage, resilience, citizen centricity and life-long learning enable senior leaders to hold steady through the challenges of leadership.

Visionary

To provide the best policy advice to government and shape services for the community into the future, senior leaders need to be able to scan the horizon for emerging trends, identify opportunities and challenges, and inspire a collective purpose.

Entrepreneurial

In finding new and better ways of achieving outcomes on behalf of government and citizens, senior leaders need to be able to challenge current perspectives, generate new ideas and experiment with different approaches. They also need to be adept at managing risk.

Influential

To take the Government's policy agenda forward, senior leaders need to be able to build relationships and influence others, winning and maintaining the confidence of key stakeholders.

Enabling

Creating an environment that empowers diverse individuals and teams to deliver their best for government and citizens is a core requirement for senior leaders. This includes setting expectations, being inclusive, nurturing talent and building organisational capability.

Collaborative

In making progress on issues that cut across agencies, sectors and nations, senior leaders need to be able to develop relationships, build trust, balance competing interests and find common ground. An openness to diverse perspectives is critical.

Delivery

Senior leaders need to be highly skilled at managing the delivery of complex projects, programs and services. This includes harnessing the opportunity provided by digital technology to improve delivery outcomes for citizens.

Around 8% of SES Band 1s and 2s, and 50% of SES Band 3s have been assessed against these leadership behaviours through talent management and capability assessment processes.[70] These assessments show that our SES benchmark well against private sector senior executives. They have usually excelled in demanding roles and are motivated by 'service to others'.[71] They consistently rate well in their capability to deliver - they will get the job done and are highly resilient. These assessments also show that other leadership capabilities important for the APS are less developed. Analysis of SES experiences reported in the APSC's talent assessment processes shows that the two lowest-measured capabilities for SES are 'enabling' and 'entrepreneurial', the two capabilities key to delivering innovative outcomes through teams.[72] However, a review of development plans of those assessed finds 'enabling' is the most common area of development prioritised by SES Band 3s[73], demonstrating their commitment to improving their ability to mobilise others to get things done. As the APS contends with increasingly complex public policy challenges that require adaptive responses, these capabilities are becoming more critical.

Our workforce must continue to evolve to meet changing demands

In response to this changing workforce profile and delivery context, the APS must continue to adapt. For the APS to meet current and future challenges, it needs to develop and deploy its workforce capabilities strategically. A high-performing workforce starts with the right approach to strengthening capabilities in line with business needs.

Changes in public sector workforce profile, community expectations, the way public services are being delivered and employee expectations about work will combine to shape the APS workforce we need to continue to deliver for government and the Australian community.

Delivering for Tomorrow: An Action Plan for the APS workforce

Implementation of this Strategy will remain dynamic, flexible and responsive to the operating environment. This will ensure planned outcomes continue to deliver for the Government and the Australian community. The APS Secretaries Board are the owners of intended outcomes, with implementation and progress reported to the board annually, accompanied by strategic APS labour force insights. Strategy progress and labour force insights will be published for wider consumption through the State of the Service Report.

The APSC, working with lead or partner agencies, will coordinate delivery of key outputs across the service, reflecting the APS working as one enterprise on implementation of key workforce initiatives.

Action Plan	Employee life cycle	What are we doing?	What else will we do?	Our future state workforce characteristics	What benefits for the community?
Attract, build and retain skills, expertise and talent	Early engagement of talent pool / Recruitment / onboarding / Attraction	Australian Government Graduate Program; Establishment of the APS Academy; Development of entry pathway programs; Development of strategic HR capability	**Attract, build and retain skills, expertise and talent** - Establish an APS Academy - Deliver an annual emerging skills needs forecast - Implement an APS induction program - Deliver an APS-wide L&D Action Plan - Define desired environmental changes - Deploy service-wide and project-specific centre of excellence capabilities - Promote the APS as an employer of choice - Establish partnerships with educational institutions	Agile, collaborative, responsive and able to navigate complexity; Skilled, knowledgeable and committed to life-long learning	- Impact the quality of the relationship between citizens and government services through building a highly skilled, high-performing, effective and efficient workforce - Deliver satisfactory, high-quality outcomes and trustworthy experiences for citizens
Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models	Learning & performance management / Career development	Mobility Framework; Development of core digital and data literacy skills for all staff; Data Professions Strategy; Digital Professions Strategy; Tools and resources to support workforce transition planning for digital transformation; Guidance on flexible workforce models	**Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models** - Support planning for digital transformation program - Develop APS-wide guidance on strategic commissioning of work - Understand requirements for whole-of-government workforce data infrastructure - Partner with external experts to mitigate capability risks - Build a culture in which individual mobility is a key enabler of organisational performance - Review APS classification structure - Support workforce flexibility and talent accessibility by increasing the regional presence of the APS	Maximising data and technology, and digital engagement	- Better understand public and citizen needs and deliver reliable and responsive services - Maximise data and technology for decision making, policy and service design and delivery - Deploy flexible and responsive workforce models adapted to the changing environment
Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership	Engagement & retention / Reward & recognition / Separation	APS L&D Action Plan; Talent management programs for leadership roles; Leadership development programs; Pro-integrity training for all staff	**Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership** - Embed mobility in capability development and talent management - Establish transition and mentoring programs - Upskill managers and senior leaders to manage the APS as an enterprise - Build one APS by expanding leadership development opportunities - Enhance talent management to create leadership pipelines - Strengthen training and guidance materials to reinforce APS integrity	Professional, engaged and committed to integrity; Citizen-centred in approach, inclusive and representative of our diverse communities	- Trust in delivery of services and programs aligned to community needs - Trust in coordination between services for consistent information and advice

We will recruit and develop the capabilities and skills needed to be a diverse, high-performing workforce that facilitates career pathways across an outcomes-focused enterprise.
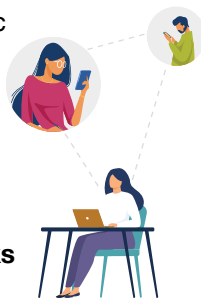
Changing skill requirements

By 2030, APS employees may spend:[74]

15% less time on basic **cognitive tasks**

20% more time on **technological activities**

12% more time on **social** and **emotional tasks**

59% of L&D executives have experienced growing **skills shortages** in their organisations over the past three years[75]

72% of agencies reported **critical skill shortages**[76]

Of those agencies who had critical skills shortages, the most common skill shortages were in:[77]

Data 70%

Digital 54%

ICT 40%

46% of employees said their workgroup was experiencing **skill and capability gaps**[78]

Top identified gaps were:[79] **ICT (33%)** and **digital (18%), written (29%)** and **oral (22%) communication, leadership (27%), data (24%), change management (22%)** and **creativity and innovation (21%)**

While still a world-leading public service, the APS is less competitive than other civil services in relation to:[80]

- ICT skills at work (digital dexterity)
- Communications skills
- Problem-solving skills

Developing Staff

68% of HR leaders will prioritise building **critical skills and capabilities** in 2021[81]

27% of Australians **did not take up** learning activities because they were too busy at work[82]

Of the **21%** of 2020 APS Employee Census respondents who **had not completed any formal learning** and development during the previous year, **around half** (51%) said this was because they had **other priorities**[83]

90% of APS agencies **do not have an evaluation strategy** for measuring the effectiveness and impact of learning[84]

Diversity

Organisations who employ a diverse workforce **benefit from the value** of diversity of thought

20% increased innovation and **30% lowered risk**[85]

Organisations who foster an inclusive workplace culture are **8x** more likely to achieve **better business outcomes**[86]

> "
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> 'The APS will need to invest in the professionalism and expertise of its people and leaders, who are at the heart of its organisational capability. This includes adopting a strategic approach to workforce management to improve how the APS attracts, recruits, develops and deploys its people.'[87]
>
> 'High-quality learning and development opportunities are needed to realise the potential of APS people.'[88]
>
> *- Commonwealth of Australia*

Recruiting the best talent

In a competitive labour market, the APS needs best-practice approaches to recruitment, leveraging technology and innovation to attract and recruit high-performing, skilled employees at all stages of their careers.

We are rethinking the way we attract candidates, through enterprise-wide entry programs and strategic approaches to attract skilled individuals from entry-level roles to mid-career and senior-level professional and leadership roles. We are designing recruitment strategies that focus on building identified capabilities for the APS. The development of innovative entry programs for individuals at any stage of their career will contribute to building our brand and position the APS as an employer of choice to attract and retain candidates from digital apprentices and cadets to mid-career professionals and leaders from various sectors.

A strong, positive narrative about the APS employee value proposition will also be critical to attracting new talent at all levels. This needs to build on existing recognised APS agency brands and promote the breadth and diversity of opportunities available and the ability to contribute to work that makes a difference for the Australian community.

Developing our people

Capability development is a key priority for the APS. We will focus programs across the enterprise to build capabilities through Professional Streams and the APS Academy. We are changing the way we approach learning and development to consider more effective systems using technology and enterprise-wide development programs for key public service skills.

In an environment of accelerating change, learning agility—the ability to maintain and develop new skills continually, learn from experience in the workplace and quickly adapt to change—is critical.

A more efficient and effective system of building capability in our people includes:

- adopting modern learning practices – a continuous cycle of learning for, through and in work
- responsibility for learning is shared between individuals, managers and leadership
- enabling all APS employees with the opportunity to access the development guidance and help they need digitally – anywhere, anytime
- providing development guidance and delivering strong return-on-investment learning and the ability to measure this return
- clarifying roles in the APS learning ecosystem to prevent duplication and maximise outcomes
- a focus on deliberate mobility to build depth and breadth of experience in talented individuals.

Building a learning environment for employees to thrive is also critical, and agency management to maintain employee health and wellbeing are central to our ability to respond to workforce challenges and the adoption of different workforce models.

Building critical capabilities

The increasing complexity and ambiguity of public policy challenges, combined with citizens' demands for more effective, responsive and transparent government services, require the APS workforce to be skilled in innovative problem solving, complex relationship management, integrity and ethics. A strong focus on delivering for Australians and supporting the wellbeing of the communities we serve also requires our staff, in particular those staff in service delivery roles, to have the skills to navigate difficult conversations with customers through, for example, suicide prevention and mental health training.

The 2019 Independent Review of the APS advocated for the establishment of an APS Professions Model and the development of an APS-wide Learning and Development Action Plan.

APS Professions

We will continue to implement APS-wide Professional Streams to build deep expertise in key professional capabilities aligned to delivering critical functions of government. Professional streams in Human Resources, Digital and Data have been established to address identified, critical workforce capability gaps.

We will implement ongoing evaluation and review mechanisms to understand the impact of current APS professions and inform decisions on the development of future professions. Through professional stream leads, we will work with agencies to align recruitment and development strategies with identified capabilities in professional streams.

APS Learning and Development Action Plan

We will deliver and implement an APS Learning and Development Action Plan to underpin a highly capable and future-ready service. This will seek to ensure the APS has the critical skills needed to meet the future needs of government, giving all APS employees access to quality learning and development when required.

One-APS capability: establishing an APS Academy

The APSC will support one-APS capability development by establishing an APS Academy from 1 July 2021 to lead the transformation of APS learning and development practice.

The Academy will operate as a national, networked model in partnership with all APS agencies. It will connect with existing APS centres of excellence, as well as extend networks with the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, academic institutions and other specialist providers.

The Academy's development focus will be on building capabilities central to the 'APS craft': in short, leadership, integrity, governance, policy, delivery and engagement. It will emphasise the importance of a broad suite of learning approaches, including experiential learning, on-the-job training, mobility and secondments, as well as some intensive face-to-face course offerings.

Diversity

A diverse workforce brings diversity of perspective, skills, experience and background. Diversity drives innovation and leads to better business outcomes.[89]

We have a diverse workforce and are continuing to build inclusive workplace cultures deep-rooted in respect for all people including their rights and their gender, age, heritage and cultural background, skills, experience, work styles and ideas. Our diversity and inclusion strategies, including the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24,* the *Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–2025* and the *Gender Equality Strategy* will continue to shape our workforce management approach.

To support the APS to deliver on our business strategies we must continue to build and support a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace cultures. We will strengthen the diversity of our workforce by implementing diversity strategies across the APS. We will also work closely with agencies and heads of APS professional streams to consider specific initiatives as part of their workforce strategies.

When we successfully implement this Strategy, APS staff, managers and leaders will see the APS is able to:

Short Term

- Progress towards mitigating current capability gaps and establish plans to develop capabilities for emerging roles.
- Attract, develop and retain individuals with identified skills, capabilities, growth mindsets, learning agility, curiosity, creativity, innovation and strong judgement skills.
- Attract and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves, through a strong employer brand.

Longer Term

- Position itself as a career choice for top Australian talent, communicating a compelling employee value proposition.
- Deploy strong core skills in the day-to-day work performance of all public servants.
- Build a learning culture and mindset where staff take accountability for their own development and career management and progression, and recognise development opportunities that can enhance their capabilities.
- Increase citizen trust through demonstrated capabilities and strong technical and professional expertise.

When we successfully implement this Strategy, the Government and the Australian community will see the APS is able to:

- Impact the quality of the relationship between citizens and government services, through building a highly skilled, high-performing, effective and efficient workforce.
- Deliver satisfactory, high-quality outcomes and trustworthy experiences for citizens.

How will we get there?

- 🟢 **What we're already doing**
- ⚪ **What else we will do**
- ⚪ **What agencies should consider**

Attract, build and retain skills, expertise and talent

Develop guidance for agencies to apply modern recruitment practices, leveraging technology and innovation to attract high-performing, skilled employees through clear and easy recruitment processes.

Develop an **employee value proposition for APS graduates** to attract high-quality candidates.

Develop entry programs to attract diverse talent to core functional areas such as data, digital and APS Professional Streams.

Build inclusive cultures to support diverse workforces. **Strengthen workforce diversity** through business-linked workforce planning, from hire through to retire.

Implement the **APS HR Professional Stream**, along with a strategy to build and uplift strategic HR skills in the APS.

- Established HR Professional network, HR graduate recruitment for the APS, HR leaders as advisors on SES HR recruitment panels, and continue to uplift HR capability through professional recognition.

Establish the **APS Academy** to lead the transformation of APS learning and development practice.

Promote upskilling and the importance of life-long learning to employees. Build workforce engagement with modern learning practices.

Deliver, in partnership with the National Skills Commission, an **annual emerging skills needs forecast** for the APS, through the annual State of the Service Report, supporting agency workforce planning activities.

Implement an **APS induction program** that reinforces key **APS qualities of integrity, service delivery and advice,** and supports government.

Deliver an **APS-wide L&D Action Plan** to drive a system-wide approach to development of core APS skills and workforce reskilling through modern learning practices, and establish standards to ensure quality L&D and ROI.

Define desired environmental changes, outcomes and benefits. **Monitor progress and evaluate** the impact of workforce interventions.

Establish a free-agent model to deploy centre of excellence capabilities for project work in agencies.

Design recruitment and L&D strategies around building priority capabilities for the APS.

Promote the APS as an employer of choice through a strong integrated brand across the APS, including the potential to develop and incorporate whole-of-APS employee value proposition.

Establish **partnerships with educational institutions** to connect their course curricula to future skills the APS will need, and build strong talent pipelines into the service.

Increase utilisation of **service-wide centres of excellence for various capabilities** (e.g. behavioural insights, user-centred design, change management).

Incorporate the graduate employee value proposition into their marketing and attraction activities.

Implement wellbeing programs that promote a safe working environment for employees to thrive.

Action 2: Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models

We will lead digital transformation and deploy skills, expertise and talent to where it is needed, to deliver the outcomes that the Government and Australians expect.

Agile workforce models

97% of employers believe that employees' **expectations** of work are **changing**[90]

Top 3 enablers of performance for APS employees in 2020:[91]

- increased flexibility in work practices (69%)
- improved technology and a more digital environment (52%)
- improved internal communication (32%)

49% of APS employees thought their **productivity had improved** since the start of 2020[92]

89% of APS employees agreed their workgroup **successfully adapted to new ways of working** when required[93]

65% agreed their workgroup had used the COVID-19 crisis to **improve the way they worked**[94]

COVID-19

During the pandemic, user adoption of digital technologies advanced **5 years** in approximately **8 weeks**[95]

Investment in technology

Over 111,000 APS employees are working in agencies currently affected by deliverables in the **Digital Transformation Roadmap** 2025[96]

9 in 10 Australian companies are investing in and adopting big data analytics[97]

Skills & capabilities

Digital & data literacy skills continue to be identified as capability gaps within immediate workgroups across the APS[98]

High risk of a "skills mismatch of a significant scale" arising from accelerated digital disruption in the economy. Future of work requires a combination of developed foundational **language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills**[99]

Data analysts & scientists were identified as among the top 10 emerging job roles for Australia[100]

73% of APS agencies identified employee skills and capability as a barrier to the use of data[101]

Innovation in service delivery

The Digital Service Standard[102] sets out best practice for how teams are formed, how they work and how they design and deliver digital services

Agility

The need to deliver faster and in a more agile manner was demonstrated when the APS mobilised **more than 2,300 employees** across government temporarily, to deliver critical functions during COVID-19

"

'The APS must prepare for major changes in the years ahead as technology redefines the jobs its people perform, the services they provide and the outcomes they deliver.'[103]

'The APS will need to change fundamentally its ways of working, to become a much more dynamic and responsive organisation. It must remove roadblocks to achieve outcomes effectively. This is essential to make it easy for the public and business to deal with the Government and access its services. It is also essential for the APS to better support successive governments and help tackle complex, cross-portfolio issues.'[104]

- Commonwealth of Australia

Tech and digital capabilities

Technology continues to change how Australians live, work and prosper. The adoption of new technologies and digital collaboration tools, and the increased use of data to inform decisions will all continue to change the world of work. Working in a digital age disrupts traditional work models and requires new skills, processes and structures to embrace disruption quickly, facilitate change and drive innovation. We will need to continually assess how technological advances will impact our workforce and develop guidance to support agencies to skill employees to prepare them for emerging and new roles. We will continue to prioritise the development of core digital and data skills for our workforce to support digital transformation and the use of data at scale. We will also prioritise digital upskilling of APS leaders to lead digital teams, drive change and manage digital enterprises.

New work models

The recommendations of the APS Review remain highly relevant: the APS needs to transform its workforce and structure, and perform as one enterprise to compete globally and drive innovative and citizen-centric solutions.[105]

We will embrace new workforce and capability models and streamline workforce management practices to bring the right capabilities together through tiger teams or taskforces to solve problems. We will also better utilise the collective intelligence of our workforce and engage the Australian public to crowd-source solutions to complex societal problems.

Disruption to the APS operating model experienced during the COVID-19 crisis reinforced the need for the APS to employ new ways of working, engage with risk and streamline decision-making structures to best support the Australian community and safeguard Australia's security and prosperity.

We are looking at ways to transfer capability more seamlessly between the APS and other sectors, injecting external capability and innovation into the enterprise. We can generate innovative solutions to complex problems by leveraging concepts such as innovation labs and developing training agreements in partnership with academia and industry.

We are reviewing SES and non-SES classification levels and structures within the APS against best practice and these emerging workforce needs. This classification review will explore opportunities to streamline management, improve decision making and enhance workforce flexibility across the APS to best deliver government priorities.

We will continue to change the way the APS operates by placing the needs of Australians at the core of everything we do. A cultural change, driven from the very top of the APS is required to support both delivery of immediate government priorities and the longer-term transformation of the APS through the implementation of the APS Reform Agenda.

Mobility and surge

The mobilisation of the APS was critical to addressing major events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, wide-spread bushfires and significant weather events in 2020.

The APS mobilised en masse to support the response to COVID-19. More than 2,000 employees came from across the APS to help Services Australia respond to requests for help from the public.

Additionally, more than 11,000 employees reported in the 2020 APS Employee Census that they had worked in a different team in their agency dedicated

to the COVID-19 response. More than 2,500 reported working in a team at a different agency.[106] We have built upon these experiences and will strive to remove barriers to mobility to ensure employees move even more quickly and efficiently to support government services that need their skills the most.

We are creating an APS Surge Reserve to assist with large-scale responses to unforeseen workloads in the future.

We will also continue to share and deploy resources rapidly, reduce duplication and deliver effectively against government priorities.

The benefits of mobility go beyond meeting increased demand. Mobility across APS agencies and into other jurisdictions and sectors can build capability, diversify perspectives and strengthen the work of the APS. Data shows most APS employees (71.1% at 30 June 2020) have only ever been employed in one agency.[107] While there is no 'right' APS-wide level of movement between agencies, there are some areas of critical capability that would benefit from greater cross-agency and cross-sector mobility. Through mobility, employees develop new skills, expand their networks and get an enhanced understanding of how APS work impacts the Australian community and business in different ways.

Flexible workforce composition

Flexibility in workforce composition across the APS will remain an important feature of effective workforce planning for agencies. This is critical to ensure agency heads can access the skills, capability and capacity to drive delivery.

The APS workforce structure needs to be less restricted and siloed, and more open and integrated, both across the service and in its liaison with other sectors.

This will allow the workforce to be more mobile, meaning people and skills can be transferred and deployed faster and more easily to ensure productivity while meeting changing demands. This is essential as the capabilities the APS needs are constantly evolving in line with technological and societal changes.

Opportunities for APS employees to gain practical experience and exposure to work in other sectors only improves the APS's ability to understand the

communities it serves. It also provides valuable insight into different operating approaches, which can benefit APS agencies and build stronger public-private partnerships.

Ultimately, a more open, mobile and communicative workforce will foster more diverse thinking, allow people to collaborate, innovate and debate ideas, and improve individual and overall capability.

The APS continues to deploy a flexible approach to resourcing that strikes the balance between a core workforce of permanent public servants and the selective use of external expertise. This will mean a continuing mixed workforce approach, where APS employees and non-APS workers collaborate to deliver outcomes within agencies.

A mixed workforce approach will continue to be a feature of APS workforce planning. Non-APS workers, when used effectively in appropriate circumstances, can provide significant benefits to agencies and help them achieve their outcomes. Non-APS workers can also provide access to specialist and in-demand skills to supplement the APS workforce in peak times in business cycles. There will be a need for APS agencies to access skills, capability or capacity differently, including through contractors and consultants, or through external partnerships with academia or industry. There may also be a need to engage with industry to develop skills and capabilities to drive delivery of programs across the service. The use of non-APS employees, including labour hire, contractors and consultants, brings different opportunities and risks for APS agencies to manage. Agencies relying on mixed workforce arrangements need to take an integrated approach to workforce planning that includes and best utilises their non-APS workers. This is particularly important where key deliverables are specifically reliant on this non-APS workforce.

Ensuring agencies take a structured approach to the use of non-APS employees—including considering where work would be best delivered by an APS employee—and knowledge transfer and capability uplift arrangements is a key element of successful mixed workforce models, which are already being used by agencies across the APS.

A professional public service harnesses skills, expertise and capacity from a variety of sources to deliver services as priorities arise. We must focus on understanding and removing barriers to external mobility and encouraging the mobilisation of skills from both across and outside the APS.

Workforce flexibility

We are working in a modern multigenerational workforce. People are working longer and employee expectations are changing. The use of technology in day-to-day life sets expectations in the workplace to take advantage of technology to increase productivity. We are improving the ways we organise our workforce to ensure that our workforce management infrastructure is fit-for-purpose for today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Flexible working is quickly becoming a key element of the development of an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and will strengthen our ability to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce. More flexible working arrangements offer new opportunities to engage diverse talent and respond to changing expectations.[108] Diversity of thought is central to driving new and innovative approaches, and through enhanced workforce flexibility, the APS will be able to build strong attraction and retention strategies through a compelling EVP. Remote working and flexible working arrangements also offer opportunity to achieve higher productivity growth, impacting economic recovery for Australia. Through COVID-19, we have seen technology enable jobs to be done from any location. There are now over 75 million daily active users of MS Teams, adding 31 million in just over a month.[109] APS agencies embraced technology and quickly adapted to the COVID-19 crisis. Based on lessons learnt from the crisis, agencies intend to make a number of changes to their workforce strategy and/or plan. The top three changes include reviewing workforce strategies to ensure they facilitate flexible and remote working, increasing the mobility and agility of the workforce, and exploring different approaches to recruitment.[110]

In the next five years the Australian Government will be required to solve new challenges in new ways and will rely on technology, agile work models and the digital capability of our people to deliver successful outcomes. The strategic use of data and digital technologies will increase workforce and organisational efficiency, productivity and overall performance. Increasing our sophistication in using people and business data will enable more reliable forecasting and alignment of our workforce to business strategy and government priorities. Embracing new ways of working, flexibility and fostering diversity of thought is critical to leveraging innovation and finding solutions to complex problems.

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> 'Australia's ongoing success depends on our ability to harness these technological advances to drive economic growth and raise productivity and living standards for all Australians. A key focus of the Government's Digital Economy Strategy is the digital transformation of government itself, ensuring we keep pace with community needs and expectations.'[111]
>
> *- The Digital Transformation Agency.*

When we successfully implement this Strategy, APS staff, managers and leaders will see the APS is able to:

Short Term

- Rapidly deploy a large cohort of existing APS staff in the early stages of a crisis to support the Government's crisis response.
- More easily use staff mobility as a strategic workforce management tool in service of government, agency and enterprise-wide priorities to help with peaks in demand, bringing diverse skills and perspective together to solve problems, and developing its people.
- Increase its use of digital technology enabling agile and flexible ways of working.
- Effectively use digital platforms, data and evidence for policy and service delivery.
- Effectively manage its workforce for the impact of digital transformation and the use of data at scale.
- Demonstrate high performance and embrace technology developments that drive more efficient work practices, and work more innovatively and efficiently in a digital world.

Longer Term

- Demonstrate that workforce management is aligned with government priorities and business objectives, and drives business outcomes through implementation of workforce strategies and plans.
- Efficiently and effectively use staff mobility as a strategic workforce management tool in service of government, agency and enterprise-wide priorities.
- Effortlessly use technology solutions for cohesive workforce management, delivering efficiencies and enabling strategic foresight from technology adoption and use of integrated workforce datasets.

When we successfully implement this Strategy, the Government and the Australian community will see the APS is able to:

- Better understand public and citizen needs and deliver reliable and responsive services.
- Maximise data and technology for decision making, policy and service design and delivery, supporting digital citizen engagement in a digital economy.
- Deploy flexible and responsive workforce models adapted to the changing operating environment and citizen expectations.

How will we get there?

● **What we're already doing**   ○ **What else we will do**   ● **What agencies should consider**

Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models

Develop guidance to agencies on the **design of APS structures and management span, and review APS classifications** to develop more agile operating models and effective resource management.

Develop an **APS Reskilling Guide** and tools to support agencies reskill and upskill their workforce for the impact of digital technology and emerging roles.

Develop an **APS Mobility Framework** for the purpose of building capability and deploying capacity.

Prioritise upskilling and reskilling of employees and align development to emerging roles in data and digital, and roles augmented by technology.

Establish a **surge reserve** that supports greater use of mobility as a workforce management tool in a crisis.

Develop a **whole-of-enterprise digital learning and development solution** to support upskilling, reskilling and career development needs across the service.

Partner with the DTA and ABS to **develop core digital and data literacy skills** for all APS staff.

Delivering the **DTA Digital Career Pathways program** to attract, build and keep the skills of APS employees to help with digital transformation.

Design **agile work practices and operating models** to support mobilisation of staff to key and critical functions.

Established the **APS Data Professional Stream** to source, grow and mobilise data capabilities and expertise across the APS.

- Established Data Professional network and cross-agency project teams to create a data capability framework, data role descriptions, data capabilities for SES officers and data literacy development offerings.

Established the **APS Digital Professional Stream** to build and strengthen digital expertise of the APS workforce.

- Established Digital Professional network, mapped digital careers and skills via Career Pathfinder tool, strengthened digital leadership and digital stream recruitment for the APS.

Develop and embed a **package of tools and resources** to support workforce transition planning for digital transformation program.

Develop **APS-wide guidance on strategic commissioning** of work based on skills and capability insights and foresight.

Review workforce management practices and promote flexibility to strengthen attraction and retention initiatives.

Understand the requirements of a whole-of-government **workforce data infrastructure.**

Partner with external experts, such as those in academia, industry and professional bodies, to develop and bring in expertise when and as needed, to mitigate capability risks.

Undertake a review of the **APS classification structure** to streamline management, improve decision making and enhance workforce flexibility.

Build a culture **where individual mobility is recognised and rewarded** as an important enabler of organisational performance.

Support workforce flexibility and talent accessibility by **increasing the regional presence of the APS**.

We will ensure that our leadership continues to shape our behaviour, our purpose and our delivery of outcomes, and that the APS is highly regarded for our integrity and citizen-centric focus.

Whole-of-enterprise operating model

The APS **lacks a clear unified purpose**[112]

70% of APS staff report that the APS is **too hierarchical**, operating **in silos and traditional ways** of working[113]

The APS **lacks a unified leadership team** and runs more like a group of agencies, **not an integrated organisation**[114]

Citizen-centric delivery and institutional integrity

52% of respondents to the Citizen Experience Survey said they were **satisfied with the Australian Public Service**[115]

The APS must uphold, and be seen to uphold, the highest standards of ethical behaviour

- **90% or more** of employees perceived their colleagues and supervisors always or often **acted in accordance with the APS Values**[116]

The **APS Values, APS Employment Principles and APS Code of Conduct** underpin our approach to integrity culture. All APS employees agree to uphold these elements when they begin work with the APS, supporting integrity in APS employment

Leadership

The top people management and leadership development needs were:[117]

- **Leadership** – leading and managing through change, uncertainty and transformation
- **People management** – centred around managing remote teams, developing high-performing teams, staff mental health, coaching and mentoring, psychologically safe environments and career management
- **Performance management** – including high performance and underperformance. Managing complex and challenging staffing issues

Of those APS employees who said their immediate workgroup had capability gaps, **27%** reported **leadership** as a **missing capability**[118]

72% of APS staff stated that their manager **encourages and supports** high performance[119]

High-performance cultures

Organisations with highly effective performance management systems are **three times** more likely to report that they **outperform their peers**[120]

48% of APS staff believed their overall experience of performance management in their agency had been **useful for their development**[121]

78% of APS staff agreed their workgroup **completes work to a high standard**[122]

> **"**
>
> 'Australians should be at the centre of government – in the decisions it makes, in the programs and projects it delivers, and in meeting community expectations.'[123]
>
> *- The Hon Scott Morrison MP*
>
> *'Trust in the APS is related to its capacity to deliver – but the quality of both what is delivered and how delivery is achieved is crucial to that trust.'[124]*
>
> *- Stephen Sedgwick AO*

Reinforcing integrity

The APS is committed to good governance and integrity across the service. This means an APS that is impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.

Australians expect us to deliver a strong economy, keep them safe and provide reliable services that meet their needs. The integrity, openness and honesty of our workforce are critical to public confidence in the APS.

While integrity in the APS is consistently high (according to the 2019 APS Employee Census, at least 90% of employees said their colleagues and supervisors always or often acted in accordance with the APS Values)[125], it is nonetheless critical that the APS remains vigilant and continues to prioritise integrity as a core component of professionalism.

To maintain and foster ongoing high levels of integrity in the APS, and drive a pro-integrity culture, the APS must take a whole-of-enterprise approach. The Australian Public Service Commissioner is leading

efforts to do this in line with Recommendation 7 of the APS Review and the Government's commitment to reinforce integrity culture in the APS.[126] Pro-integrity culture at the institutional level goes beyond focusing purely on compliance with a set of rules; it also involves values and acknowledges and champions proactively doing the right thing.

To support this work, the APSC commissioned Mr Stephen Sedgwick AO to consult across the APS and provide a report on institutional integrity in the APS. Mr Sedgwick made 10 recommendations, focusing on three core elements: awareness, capability and accountability.

The APSC will work with agencies to implement Mr Sedgwick's recommendations to reinforce APS integrity.

Citizen-centric engagement

The APS response to COVID-19 demonstrated agility and flexibility in implementing policy quickly and effectively to meet the needs of the Australian community.

We will build on lessons learnt during the crisis and establish strong partnerships and collaboration with the community to design programs, policies and strategies aligned to citizens' needs. Building trust is a priority for the APS; satisfaction with service delivery is key to building a trusting relationship with the public. Public trust improves how people engage with services.

Through greater collaboration across our networks, working groups and communities of practice we will increasingly co-design and crowdsource solutions to common problems. We will have access to more data and intelligence among the Australian community to inform the delivery of outcomes aligned to citizens' expectations, measured through the Citizen Experience Survey.

Changing leadership requirements

In the APS we need leaders who achieve results by leading everyone in their teams to work and deliver according to the purpose of their agency and the APS. Purposeful leaders hold themselves and their teams accountable for delivery to the expectations of the Government, the Parliament and the Australian community. They also enable diverse teams to deliver, creating authorising environments underpinned by accountability, integrity and care for staff health, safety and wellbeing. These authorising environments, alongside a culture of challenging hierarchies and encouraging and embracing new ideas generated across organisational structures, will foster innovation and contribute to our progress as an enterprise.

As the APS operating environment changes so do the capabilities we require of our leaders.

The role of our leaders has become even more critical and complex; this change emphasises the need for foundational people management capability across the APS. The changing impact on leadership was reinforced in conversations with leaders reflecting on the lessons of COVID-19.[127] The pandemic has also created an environment where effective remote management has quickly become critical to success.

To attract and build tomorrow's high-performing leaders the APS needs:

- a clear understanding of the capability required to deliver our business and speed up its execution – it is increasingly about the ability to move from policy design to delivery and from having all the answers to engaging others to make progress on complex challenges
- a strategic approach to ensure we attract, develop, retain and deploy our SES aligned to agreed leadership capabilities
- collaboration and work across the Australian Government, working as one APS; there can be no more silos
- effective talent management to build strong diverse leadership at senior levels
- succession planning for the most senior critical roles
- to support broad experiences across policy, program, and service delivery, earlier in an employee's career
- a culture that authorises and encourages investment in learning, curiosity about self and others, and offers regular and quality feedback.

To lead this work, the Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council will continue to work in partnership with the Secretaries Board to shape a strong and diverse leadership pipeline for the future. This includes recognising and nurturing the capabilities most critical for future success: delivering outcomes through effective collaboration with diverse stakeholders and by enabling teams and individuals to perform at their best.

Supporting high performance

As the work of the APS is critical to Australia's economic and societal recovery, the APS workforce needs to deliver on government priorities effectively and in a timely manner. In an increasingly dynamic and complex global environment, our ability to respond to changing demands and leverage opportunities is underpinned by performance management practices. The Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016 detail the basis for which performance management is undertaken within the APS, to develop practices that will sustain a high-performance culture.[128]

Achieving, promoting and fostering a high-performance culture is a priority for the APS[129], to increase productivity and achieve better outcomes for the Government and Australians.

> **We will reflect expectations in performance management frameworks and processes.**

In line with amendments to the APS Commissioner's Directions 2019, 53% of agencies that responded to the APSC's 2020 Performance Management Survey had updated their performance frameworks to include changes that focus on employee development and capability uplift, and ensure a high-performance culture is the responsibility of all APS employees.[130]

To support this, we will work with managers and employees to have effective performance and career conversations. We will also implement talent identification processes as part of the broader performance management approach. This will strengthen succession and talent pipelines for critical, management and senior roles across the APS.

Work has also commenced to increase the interoperability of APS HR systems to support effective performance management processes with an enterprise-wide understanding of performance levels.

When we successfully implement this Strategy, APS staff, managers and leaders will see the APS is able to:

Short Term

- Better understand employee productivity and be more productive and efficient, delivering increased return for tax payers.
- Demonstrate a strong accountability culture in relation to outcomes, and resource and enterprise management.
- Identify common APS-wide workforce risks against whole-of-APS strategies and deliverables, and manage them as one enterprise.
- Build strong talent leadership pipelines for APS leadership roles and a commitment to succession planning and development.
- Model and promote a pro-integrity culture.

Longer Term

- Demonstrate it possesses people management and public sector management skills to deliver on expectations of accountability and efficiency.
- Deliver better, more responsive policies, services and regulatory responses, and demonstrate accountability for project and program management.
- Streamline decision making through appropriate structures, supported by proper exercise of accountabilities and delegations.
- Contribute to citizen satisfaction through a pro-integrity culture.

When we successfully implement this Strategy, the Government and the Australian community will see the APS is able to:

- Continue to deliver services and programs aligned to changing citizen needs and expectations.
- Greater coordination between government services with consistent, simplified and streamlined information and advice, building integrity and trust.

How will we get there?

● **What we're already doing** ○ **What else we will do** ● **What agencies should consider**

Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership

Reinforce pro-integrity culture through the development of tools and guidance, and through **APS-wide induction, mandatory integrity training and other core systems.**

Develop leadership capability through contemporary leadership development and robust assessment and development planning. Implement talent management and **succession planning** for senior APS leadership roles.

Prioritise **digital upskilling** of APS leaders through mandatory participation in the **Leading in a Digital Age program.**

Continue to **upskill managers and employees** to have effective performance and career conversations. Upskill people managers on **managing underperformance and managing probation** effectively.

Facilitate **continuous communication** between staff and senior leaders, and horizontally through **networks, working groups and communities of practice** to encourage partnerships and collaboration.

Embed **mobility in capability development and talent management programs** for SES roles. Expand to EL2 roles in time.

Establish **transition and mentoring programs** to support senior professionals entering the APS.

Upskill managers and senior leaders to ensure they **effectively manage the business of the APS enterprise.**

Increase **alignment between agency-level and central-level workforce management initiatives** with a focus on efficiency to remove duplication and break down silos.

Build **strong partnerships with community** to inform the development of programs and strategy aligned to citizen needs.

Continue to **expand the range of leadership development opportunities** to build 'One APS' leadership at all levels led by the APS Academy.

Identify, develop and retain **high-potential employees and succession management** to build talent pipelines for critical and leadership pipelines.

Enhance talent management at APS middle-management levels (EL) to nurture strong and diverse leadership pipelines for the future.

Review and strengthen training and guidance materials to **reinforce APS integrity**, including supporting agencies to establish improved metrics for monitoring integrity culture across the APS.

Workforce Strategy
within the APS Operating Model

This Strategy is one element in the overall APS operating model.

It operates in conjunction with the requirements of the enterprise agreements negotiated under the Government's Enterprise Bargaining Framework alongside business strategy directions. Agencies should consider how this Strategy can integrate with their Corporate Plans, in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).[131]

APS Values and Code of Conduct

The *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act) requires APS employees and agency heads to behave at all times in a way that upholds the APS Values of being ethical, respectful, accountable, impartial and committed to service.[132] Agency heads and SES employees must also promote these Values. Employees of the APS occupy a position of trust. They undertake work on behalf of the Government and the community. With this trust comes a high level of responsibility which should be matched by the highest standards of ethical behaviour from each employee.

Together the APS Values, the APS Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct set out the standard of behaviour expected of agency heads and APS employees. They provide the public with confidence in the way public servants behave, including when exercising authority to meet government objectives. By upholding the APS Values and behaving in a manner consistent with the APS Code of Conduct, APS employees—and the service as a whole—can demonstrate they are accountable, professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and work collaboratively within the APS and with external organisations and communities to achieve the best results for the Australian public and the Government.

Our actions align with and complement existing strategies

Initial initiatives within this Strategy are based on our current understanding of our business strategies and the APS enterprise. We will continue to be agile, developing initiatives to align with and consider workforce needs—chiefly skills and capabilities—to support the delivery of APS-wide strategies and programs such as the *APS Reform program*, *Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020* or the *Digital Transformation Strategy 2025* and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategies (see page 21).

As the business environment and strategies change, or new strategies are released, initiatives will be built and implemented iteratively. This will ensure strategic enterprise-wide workforce initiatives support the business direction across the APS and connect the workforce to changing enterprise requirements.

Figure 3. APS Workforce Strategy within the APS operating model
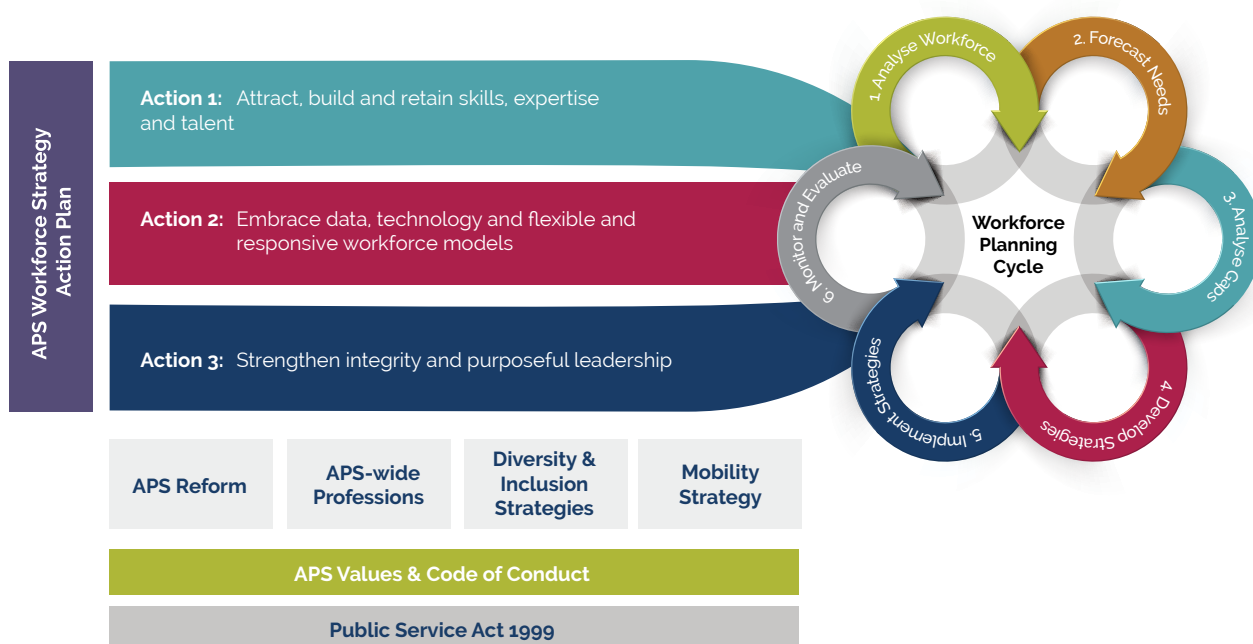
Implementation
and Realising Success

Agency-specific workforce planning is a key enabler of success

To implement the activities outlined in this Strategy, the APS needs to understand its workforce, both at an agency and system level. This Strategy does not replace agency and profession-level workforce plans or agencies' operational planning processes. Responsibility for agency workforce planning, engagement, wellbeing and performance stay with agencies and agency heads.

The strength of APS workforce planning capability has been raised as an issue over the past decade through a number of reviews, including the recent Independent Review of the APS.[133] The need for strong workforce planning capability was further highlighted during the response to the COVID-19 crisis. Many APS agencies have, or are developing, their own workforce plans or strategies relevant to their specific operating context, business objectives and priorities. Agency-level workforce planning is a key enabler of this Strategy and a priority within a broader APS planning system.

APSC Centre of Excellence — building workforce planning capability across the APS

To support strategic workforce planning in agencies, the APSC—through its Centre of Excellence for APS workforce planning capability—built a long-term, evidence-based program of work to create the APS workforce planning ecosystem. This program, co-designed with senior APS workforce planning practitioners and with oversight from the APS HR Working Group* was developed to provide an agile approach to mature the workforce planning capability across the APS, in a strategic, structured and engaging manner. This program will include tools and resources, capability development and training for workforce planning and analytics practitioners, career pathways and skills assessments, and partnerships with AHRI and educational institutions to further build workforce planning capability.

The APSC launched the program of work in June 2020. It applies the following fundamental principles:

Strategic business partnering

Ongoing engagement with senior workforce planners and Chief People Officers to understand needs across the system, inform central initiatives and support their workforce planning work

User-centred design

Using digital tools and methods to engage APS workforce planners in co-designing solutions to workforce planning capability gaps

Behavioural insights

Using behavioural insights to advance workforce planning capability development and design simple and effective workforce planning approaches and interventions

The program of work comprises initiatives across the following four work streams:

Workforce planning capability for practitioners and leaders/managers, including building capability pipelines for workforce planning roles

Leadership and agency accountability for workforce planning outcomes

Workforce planning tools and technology solutions (e.g. GovERP) to support workforce planning in agencies and the APS at the highest level

Developing people analytics capability in agencies, producing labour market insights to support workforce planning, and developing strategic workforce foresight to inform the future of work in the APS

The program is being rolled out in three stages to 2025, with evaluation built in for every stage to ensure it delivers outcomes, and eventually benefits, to the APS enterprise.

Made up of Chief People Officers in APS agencies; operates with mandate from the COO Committee and oversight by the HR Head of Profession.

Monitoring and review

The Strategy will be assessed and evaluated regularly. Progress will be reported to the Secretaries Board and the Chief Operating Officers Committee (COO Committee) and publicly reported in the APS Commissioner's annual State of the Service Report.

Some actions may become obsolete and new actions may be required if the work environment changes significantly. Others will need to respond to specific business demands as they arise. For these reasons and to keep the Strategy relevant at all times, it is iterative.

- A number of actions identified in the Strategy are already being implemented, including APS reform priorities identified in Delivering for Australians.
- In 2023, a checkpoint review will consider changes in the operating context, progress on key actions and make recommendations to Secretaries about the remaining two years of the Strategy.
- A full review of the Strategy will be undertaken in 2025 and reported to Secretaries.

Benefits realisation

To ensure that throughout delivery of this Strategy we remain accountable for efficient and effective management and utilisation of APS resources, including the management of our workforce, we will focus on benefit management for planned workforce initiatives. This will allow us to adjust planned initiatives accordingly, so we can continue to be relevant and improve through a strong evidence base.

The APSC has outlined an approach to measuring and monitoring success/outcomes to assess the delivery of planned benefits of this Strategy. The identified approach articulates the planned benefits for the APS and the Australian community, and the key strategy outputs driving outcomes which will, in time, deliver these planned benefits – **refer to Attachment 1.**

Measurement and evaluation of planned benefits relies heavily on existing data collection and management mechanisms such as the APS Employment Database, the APS Employee Census and the Agency Survey, to provide a structured and coordinated approach while removing duplication of data collection and enabling economies of scale across the APS.

Case Studies

Australian Government Graduate Program

The Australian Public Service (APS) recruits on average ~1200 graduates per year, across 40 graduate programs. Up until 2020 graduate programs were managed in a decentralised model. The user experience for prospective graduates was repetitive, time consuming and inconsistent, and agencies were competing against one another for talent.

To continue to attract the best and brightest graduates with a diverse mix of skills and experiences, the APS needed to be better positioned in the graduate market, leveraging established agency graduate recruiter brands and recruitment expertise.

In 2020, informed by user and stakeholder research and evidence from other jurisdictions, the APSC and partner agencies co-designed a new way to recruit graduates. A new graduate portal on the APSJobs platform was delivered, as a one-stop-shop for graduates. A new generalist recruitment stream and new professional and specialist streams were established, complementing the existing HR, Digital and Indigenous pathways.

As a result, during the 2020 recruitment campaign graduates had more opportunities to apply and be considered for a number of graduate roles across multiple agencies. These positive results informed the blueprint for further streamlining of APS grad recruitment under the Australian Government Graduate Program (AGGP).

The 2021 AGGP will also benefit from an APS graduate Employee Value Proposition to increase the impact of the recruitment campaign, further scale the streams, enhance marketing and promotion activities and enhance development and mobility for graduates under a one-APS concept.

Building diversity in digital roles

'There's no question that diverse workforces are more successful, more innovative, more adaptable and more in tune with their customers' needs.'[134]

Randall Brugeaud, CEO Digital Transformation Agency

In 2020 the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) launched a new Coaching for Women in Digital program, redesigned based on user research, to provide women in digital roles with the opportunity to reflect and learn, connect with their peers and grow their digital careers. In delivering the program, DTA ensured they focused on participants' strengths, increasing confidence and ability to manage difficult situations, and taking ownership of careers through goal setting and accountability.

To be able to foster innovation, be more adaptable and be more representative of the community it serves, the APS requires a diverse digital workforce developing and delivering digital service solutions. As such, the APS has an opportunity to increase its female participation in digital leadership roles. The Coaching for Women in Digital program will support women to develop skills and progress their digital careers, and support agencies to build a strong digital workforce.

Through the development of targeted programs, the APS can build capability and skills in emerging industries for a diverse, high-performing workforce.

TechLauncher – developing the next generation of tech professionals

TechLauncher is an innovation lab, an initiative which enables university students to develop the research and professional skills required to use data and technology to bring great ideas to life and have a positive impact on our society.

Alongside technical competence, these skills include communication and stakeholder management, critical thinking, product design, teamwork (including multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural and distributed teamwork), time management and many other professional and teamwork skills required by employers in government and industry. Students develop these skills by working closely with government and industry professionals, technology experts and entrepreneurs across the ACT to complete year-long projects addressing complex problems in a variety of disciplines, or to create their own start-up enterprises.

TechLauncher is a program run by the Australian National University—a Commonwealth entity—with partner organisations. A number of APS agencies were clients for student project teams in the past. Agencies such as the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and Defence Science and Technology also contributed to TechLauncher through involvement as tutors and mentors for student project teams, and guest speakers for professional development forums delivered under the program.

Leveraging innovation labs such as TechLauncher can support APS agencies to showcase their work among the next generation of tech and digital talent, and develop innovative solutions to public service challenges by tapping into the talent and skills of digital natives.

GovHack – accessing talent in a different work model

GovHack is an international competition for skilled data and digital talent who seek to make life better through open government data. Across a weekend Hackathon, thousands come together in locations all across Australia and the world to form teams, agree projects and participate in what has become one of the world's largest open-data competitions. As a festival of ideas using open government data to make communities better, GovHack showcases open data as a mechanism for identifying and solving deep-rooted societal and economic challenges.

GovHack was established to raise the profile of government open data. Through this, GovHack also provides an opportunity for government, citizens and industry to collaborate, gain knowledge and develop new skills—for example skills in gaining insights from big data and developing AI-powered, data-driven solutions to complex policy or service delivery problems.

In 2020, the Australian Taxation Office and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment sponsored the event and benefited from accessing the collective talent of the most brilliant data and tech talent in Australia who generated ideas during the Hackathon. The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, Department of Defence, Department of Social Services, IP Australia, Australian Financial Security Authority, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Bureau of Meteorology were some of the APS agencies crowdsourcing complex data skills through GovHack and accessing innovative ideas through engaging with talent external to the service.

Crowdsourcing mechanisms such as Hackathons can help APS agencies access talent and expertise in data and digital skills, and inject innovation by increasing access to external skills and allowing broader and diverse talent to contribute to government in a different work model.

APS Centres of Expertise – Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government

The Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) is Australia's central unit for applying behavioural insights (BI) to public policy. BETA's mission is to improve the lives of Australians by putting human behaviour at the heart of government policy. Since 2016, BETA has completed over 30 projects with partner agencies to advance the wellbeing of Australians through a strong commitment to the application and rigorous evaluation of BI to public policy and administration.

BETA offers innovative solutions to a wide range of policy settings to pilot and test how even small changes to existing services can be made to improve delivery and achieve better outcomes.

In the past five years BETA has also trained thousands of public servants in BI and delivered over $25 million per year in direct benefits to government.

One example of applying BI to policy settings is the recent collaboration between BETA and the Department of Health on the global issue of tackling antimicrobial resistance. BETA and the Department of Health ran a trial to test the impact of personalised letters from Australia's Chief Medical Officer to high-prescribing General Practitioners (GPs), prompting them to consider reducing antibiotic prescription where appropriate and safe. The most effective letter, with a graph comparing GPs' prescribing behaviour to their peers, reduced antibiotic prescription by 12 per cent over six months. The impact of this single peer-comparison letter was still evident 15 months later. This demonstrates the impact that a simple, cost-effective single BI-informed intervention can have on tackling global health issues.

Alongside BETA, a number of other APS centres of expertise are available to APS agencies to tap into knowledge, skills and resources to develop skills in house, and partner with to deliver better policy and services, and ultimately better outcomes for the service.

These centres include (but are not limited to) user-centred design hubs in Services Australia, the Digital Transformation Agency and the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources; the change management centre of expertise in the Department of Home Affairs; the Delivering Great Policy hub and the Office for Best Practice Regulation in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Developing strong leadership pipelines

Development of current leaders to build strong future pipelines for senior leadership roles is a key talent management focus in any organisation that emphasises its leadership capability. To ensure ongoing institutional strength of the APS and to contribute to an APS whose senior leaders represent the diversity of the broader Australian community, the APS Secretaries Talent Council oversees capability assessment, talent identification and career development for senior executive service (SES) Band 3 employees. This work involves a comprehensive and objective assessment of past experience, current leadership capability and potential for the future, as well as development planning supported by the SES B3's Secretary and a professional coach. As part of the approach, each SES B3 develops a targeted development plan that outlines how they will develop to perform at their full potential.

In 2020, as part of this systematic approach to understanding current capability and potential for the future, APS Secretaries undertook succession risk assessment and planning for twenty of the most senior APS roles including their own. This work reflects a strong commitment by APS Secretaries to develop strong and diverse leadership pipelines at the most senior levels of the APS, and identify and mitigate succession risks.

Succession planning and talent identification for senior leadership roles are overseen by the Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council, and coordinated centrally by the APSC. To complement this central, whole-of-enterprise work, APS agencies should consider applying succession risk assessment and planning principles for all leadership or other critical roles, and supporting targeted performance and career development for staff to reduce future risks in leadership capability.

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The APS Workforce Strategy Measuring and monitoring success/outcomes sets out benefits from strategic workforce interventions and outlines accountability measures following strategy implementation. Continuous monitoring of interventions against planned benefits will ensure the Strategy remains dynamic and relevant to the ever-changing operating environment.

The Framework will:

- Measure and assess the delivery of planned benefits of the APS Workforce Strategy
- Reflect leading practice benefit realisation principles, processes and techniques
- Ensure the Strategy continues to respond to changes in the operating environment and delivers benefits aligned to workforce requirements
- Outline the monitoring and assessment needed to inform future interventions
- Use program evaluation methodology to establish a clear set of expected outcomes, benefits and metrics for assessing strategy delivery

This approach demonstrates:

- Why an investment is needed
- What the strategic outcomes of the Strategy are
- What the planned measurable benefits are
- Who owns the benefits
- When the outcomes are expected to be delivered and when benefits are expected to be realised

Principles in determining benefits:

- Benefits must be measurable and evidence-based to demonstrate improvement resulting from an outcome
- Benefits must be aligned to the objectives of the Strategy to enable the workforce now and into the future
- Benefits need to be first understood as outcomes and the reason investments may be made
- Benefits can only be realised through change and change can only be sustained by realising benefits
- Benefits are dynamic and will be regularly reviewed and updated
- Benefits need to be owned by appropriate sponsors/managers

Keys to success:

- Continuous engagement and monitoring of actions to determine how and when outcomes are being delivered and planned benefits are being achieved
- Flexibility in benefit management and measurement to ensure initiatives remain relevant to a rapidly changing direction and operating and labour market environments
- Clear responsibilities and accountabilities agreed across the service to drive the implementation of the Strategy
- Clear guidance to agencies on importance of the planned benefits and how realising the relevant benefits at agency level can be incorporated into own business planning processes

Accountability and reporting :

- Secretaries Board are accountable owners of planned benefits
- APSC in collaboration with lead or partner agency are accountable owners for delivery of key outputs
- Implementation progress reported annually to Secretaries Board, accompanied by strategic APS labour force insights
- Strategy progress and labour force insights published for wider consumption through the State of the Service Report

This Strategy will drive workforce transformation in the APS, delivering outcomes within the enterprise and ultimately benefits for the Australian community.

	Key outcomes for the APS and our workforce	Key outputs driving these key outcomes	Sample measures of success may include*	Key benefits for the service	Key benefits for the Australian community
Attract, build and retain skills, expertise and talent	- Strong capabilities aligned to current and emerging enterprise-wide requirements - Strong learning culture and growth mindset, and commitment to continuous development - Compelling employee value proposition that is well positioned to attract top Australian talent, making the APS a career choice	- Establishment of the APS Academy to lead the transformation of APS learning and development practice - Development of entry pathway programs and guidance for agencies to apply modern recruitment practices	- Fewer agencies report capability gaps or skill shortages in data, digital and strategic HR - Majority of APS agencies have workforce plans/strategies in place which align with the APS Workforce Strategy - Fewer APS employees identify capability gaps in their workgroup - Majority of APS employees take accountability for own learning and career development and progression - Majority of APS Employees engage with a variety of learning channels within and outside of work settings - Market research shows the APS (as opposed to individual agencies) as a top employer for graduates - Market research shows the APS is a career choice for data, digital and strategic HR professionals, including mid-career and senior professionals	Agile, collaborative, responsive and able to navigate complexity Skilled, knowledgeable and committed to life-long learning	- Impact the quality of the relationship between citizens and government services, through building a highly skilled, high-performing, effective and efficient workforce - Deliver satisfactory, high-quality outcomes and trustworthy experiences for citizens
Embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models	- One APS workforce that is seamlessly mobilised to respond to shifts in government - Solid core digital and data skills - A high-performing workforce, actively seeking out and embracing technology developments to work more innovatively and efficiently in a digital world - A service that flexibly and creatively accesses talent across the Australian labour market and harnesses expertise from within and outside of the service	- APS Mobility Framework - Development of core digital and data literacy skills for all staff - Implementation of workforce attraction and development programs under the Digital and Data Professional Stream strategies - A package of tools and resources to support workforce transition planning for digital transformation in agencies - Guidance on flexible workforce models	- Fewer APS employees report barriers to mobility - More APS employees take-up mobility opportunities - Majority of APS agencies have embedded the APS Mobility Framework - Majority of APS employees report that high-quality performance and development discussions improved their performance - Majority of APS employees report having the tools and digital skills to efficiently and effectively do their job - Employees report that managers and senior leaders foster innovation	Maximising data and technology, and digital engagement	- Better understand public and citizen needs and deliver reliable and responsive services - Maximise data and technology for decision making, policy and service design and delivery - Deploy flexible and responsive workforce models adapted to the changing environment
Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership	- Strong and capable leadership pipelines for APS leadership roles and a commitment to succession planning and development to ensure leadership continuity and deliver effective resource and enterprise management - An APS workforce which models and promotes a pro-integrity culture	- Focused investment in Talent Management programs for APS leadership roles - Design and roll out of leadership development programs, including Leading in the Digital Age - Pro-integrity training for all staff and guidance for agencies on building a pro-integrity culture	- Fewer agencies report leadership capability gaps - All agencies have strong succession risk mitigation and successor development plans in place for all SES roles - All SES staff have undertaken a capability assessment and have a targeted development plan in place - Majority of APS senior leaders have undertaken the Leading in the Digital Age program - Majority of APS employees report that managers and leaders spend time to identify and nurture talent - All staff have undergone integrity training - Majority of APS employees report a strong pro-integrity culture in their agencies - Fewer agencies report investigations into integrity-related matters	Professional, engaged and committed to integrity Citizen-centred in approach, inclusive and representative of our diverse communities	- Trust in delivery of services and programs aligned to citizen needs - Trust in coordination between services for consistent information and advice

* This list is not a comprehensive list. Measures of success will be defined and agreed with initiative leads as the Strategy is being implemented   *Data sources for metrics include (but are not limited to) APS Employee Census, yearly Agency Survey, APS Employment Database, APS Academy, external research etc*