



Australian Government

Australian Public Service
Commission

State of the Service Report

2020–21

Reform in the
shadow of
COVID

COMMISSION
REPORT
SERIES



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2020–21

Reform in the
shadow of
COVID



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This document must be attributed as the State of the Service Report 2020–21.



Australian Government
Australian Public Service Commission

The Hon Ben Morton MP
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Minister for the Public Service
Special Minister of State
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

In accordance with Section 44(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, I present you with my report on the state of the Australian Public Service for 2020–21.

Section 44(3) of the *Public Service Act 1999* requires that this report is laid before each House of Parliament by 30 November 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

Peter Woolcott AO
Australian Public Service Commissioner
29 November 2021

PREFACE

Section 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth) stipulates that the Australian Public Service Commissioner issue a report each year to the agency's Minister for presentation to the Australian Parliament. It is required to report on the state of the Australian Public Service (APS) during the past year.

The State of the Service Report 2020-21 identifies year-to-year trends in workforce participation and capability across the APS.

This is the 24th annual report on the state of the APS presented to Parliament.

The report is informed by the results of the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census. It is also draws on the APS Employee Database, the APS Agency Survey, and other data collections and research undertaken to evaluate the APS during the past year.

The appendixes to the *State of the Service Report 2020-21* comprise:

- APS workforce information sources
- APS agencies
- APS workforce trends
- supporting statistics to the report
- unscheduled absence data.

AT A GLANCE

Employee headcount

153,945

+2.3% from 30 June 2020



10,157 engagements
8,430 separations

2021 Ongoing and non-ongoing employees

Ongoing
133,952



Non-ongoing
19,993

Patterns of work

Full time
80.6%

Part time
13.9%

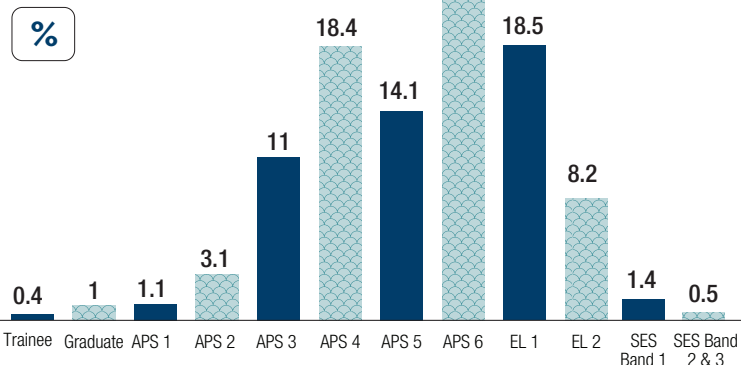


Casual
5.5%

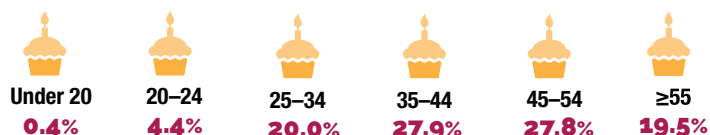
Gender by Classification

Classification	Women %	Men %
Trainee	54.5	44.6
Graduate	49.8	49.8
APS 1	66.6	33.1
APS 2	61.6	38.3
APS 3	65.3	34.4
APS 4	68.5	31.4
APS 5	62.3	37.6
APS 6	58.6	41.4
EL 1	54.6	45.3
EL 2	50.1	49.9
SES Band 1	51.9	48
SES Band 2 & 3	44.6	55.4

Proportion of employees by classification



Proportion of employees by age



Diversity



60.2%

Women



3.5%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander employees



4.1%

Employees with a
disability



22.3%

Employees born
overseas



14.7%

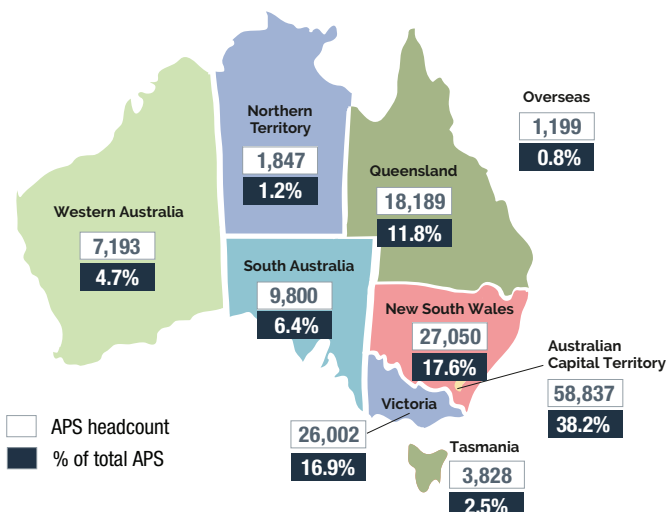
Employees born in a
non-English speaking
country



7.0%

LGBTQIA+
(2021 APS Employee Census)

Number and proportion of employees by location



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COMMISSIONER'S

OVERVIEW

The APS has responded to the challenges we have faced as Australians—working as one enterprise and recalibrating our culture and the way we work.

Peter Woolcott AO, Australian Public Service Commissioner



There is no start or end date to the reform of the public service, but there are times when the need for ambitious reform is pronounced. Over the past year the Australian Public Service (APS) faced a critical juncture where we chose to scale solutions arising from the pandemic and to better prepare for the complex future ahead.

Changes that in many respects were already underway in the APS have accelerated as the need for an agile APS, oriented to the needs of the community and the Australian recovery, became more important. The APS also sought to strengthen the foundations and culture that build a world-class public service.

The Secretaries Board and the Chief Operating Officers sub-Committee of the Board have worked hand in glove to drive the concept of the APS as one enterprise. There has been an immediate focus on delivery. COVID-19 has underscored the strength of the APS in delivering fast and effective responses when we quickly mobilise resources, share knowledge and align efforts across the service.

That said, just as telling has been the longer term attention paid to mobility and capability. Strengthening the capability of the APS workforce continues to be the cornerstone of the APS reform effort. It is the common thread across all of the priority reform areas. It can be seen in the manner in which the Secretaries Board has brought together a series of initiatives which underpin our future ability to serve the Australian people and Government. They include, the APS Workforce Strategy, the Learning and Development Strategy and Action Plan, the APS Academy, the Mobility Framework and Surge Reserve, as well as the Professions Model.

This *State of the Service Report* outlines many of the ways in which the APS, as an institution,

has responded to the challenges we have faced as Australians—working as one enterprise and recalibrating our culture and the way we work.

Digital technologies and approaches alongside the effective use and reuse of public data are fundamental to responsive public policy solutions and this year has seen concentrated attention on building strong foundations in these areas. The establishment of the Secretaries Digital Committee and a strengthened mandate for the Digital Transformation Agency promote an enterprise approach to digital governance, investment and delivery. Australia's first Data Strategy set to be released by the end of this year, will further strengthen our capacity to inform government decision-making and drive national priorities.

One of the successes of this period has been the ability of the APS to work together, with new opportunities for different parts of government to come together and more staff reporting that they are working as a team. The APS Employee Census results have highlighted that the collaborative response to COVID-19 and other government priorities, have helped build common ownership in responding to different challenges, and strengthened a sense of purpose in many APS employees.

However, like any organisation with a long history and the size and breadth of the APS, achieving enduring change to work practices and culture will not be simple or straightforward.

To enable this shift, *Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025* was released in March 2021—the first whole-of-enterprise workforce strategy. The Strategy provides for an integrated approach to workforce management that tackles immediate and emerging priorities for our workforce and signals a major pivot in how the APS develops skills and capabilities. A new



networked model of capability across the APS is reflected in the ongoing development of the APS Professions, the new Learning and Development Strategy and Action Plan, and the establishment of the APS Academy.

The APS Workforce Strategy also signalled an ambition for a more responsive APS, and this year we have adopted more agile ways of working, and have seen that there can be more empowerment, autonomy and responsibility in teams, with quality results. Against this backdrop the Hierarchy and Classification Review is considering whether we have the right structures in place to accommodate the diverse functions of the APS to deliver outcomes, enhance performance and ensure accountability. I look forward to receiving the final report from the Review Panel by the end of the year.

This year has shown that system-wide approaches have served Australia well through the pandemic. We need to lean into contemporary organisational design, and remain flexible to agency needs, to emerge stronger as we navigate increasingly difficult public policy issues and prepare for the future of work.

The rapid changes which COVID-19 has spurred across the APS has generated both new opportunities and higher expectations from the Government, the community and our workforce of what the APS can deliver in the future. As we move beyond dealing with the immediate aspects of the crisis we are closely examining our ways of working, our structures, our cultural norms, and our capabilities, to ensure they continue to serve us as they should and realise this promise.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the COVID-19 pandemic has created opportunities to inject new flexibility and resilience into public service operating models across the world.

The use of flexible working arrangements in the APS, including working from home, pre-dates the pandemic and looking to the future will remain a feature of how the APS operates. The large scale shifts to home-based work, necessitated by health orders, has proven a more distributed model of work is viable without undermining productivity. Substantive questions remain about how greater flexibility can support both employee wellbeing and operational needs, including ensuring the strength and quality of networks, teamwork and collaboration. However, greater flexibility offers clear benefits for the APS in its capacity to recruit and retain expertise from wider labour markets.

As the world becomes more complex and international considerations more intertwined with domestic issues, the skills and knowledge needed by the public service are evolving. The APS will be required to grapple with issues in new ways and will rely on technology, agile work models and the digital and data capability of our people to deliver successful outcomes. The continued development of the APS professional streams—Data, Digital and Human Resources—reflect the need to uplift key capabilities and foster rewarding careers in these critical areas across the APS.

The APS is not alone in wanting more digital and data skills in its workforce. Skills shortages in the labour market and strong competition for specialist talent and expertise require, now more than ever, flexible consideration to the location of APS roles and innovative ways of accessing capacity and capability.

In addition to technical expertise, the importance of strong foundational public service capabilities, such as policy analysis and implementation of services, is reflected in priorities for the new APS Academy. The 'APS craft' capabilities reflect

the skills every public servant needs to work effectively in the APS and develop and refine over their career. Complementary efforts to build purposeful career pathways in the APS and increase skills and capabilities, are being driven by the professional streams and through enterprise-wide entry-level programs such as the APS Career Starter, to mid-career transitions for veterans, to the development of stronger leadership capabilities for our senior leaders. These initiatives will provide diversity of thought and experience to bring balanced insights to the complex and interconnected challenges facing the service.

As Australia responds and recovers from the pandemic, APS staffing numbers have modestly increased with the size of the APS rising to 153,945 employees. This was a rise in both ongoing and non-ongoing roles to assist the Government's recovery plan, providing essential services and supporting the roll out of the 2021 Census.

Tasked with serving Australians, it is important that the APS reflects the range of differences that exist within the Australian community.

Long term trends show increasing diversity in the APS, with greater proportions of women, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and those from a non-English speaking background.

There is more work to be done and we are still lagging in some areas, particularly in our representation of people with disability which has not seen material improvement. People from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and public servants with a disability also still remain under-represented at the most senior levels.

The *APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25*, launched in December 2020, focuses on ways to attract, recruit and retain more people with disability into the APS, and to create accessible and inclusive workplace environments.

Implementation of the practical actions in the Strategy, along with existing agency-led initiatives, will support improved employment outcomes for people with disability in the APS.

For the first time women in the APS have reached, and in most cases exceeded, parity with men at every level up to and including the collective SES cohort. The independent evaluation of the previous APS Gender Equality Strategy noted however that the APS cannot become complacent about gender equality. A renewed Strategy, to be released by the end of 2021, will help normalise flexible and respectful workplaces, and further embed gender equality.

Recognising the trend toward an ageing workforce, the APS is also focused on ways to embrace and support an age-inclusive, multigenerational public service. Harnessing this diversity will enable innovation, strong contestability, and ultimately better outcomes for Australians.

Let me conclude by emphasising that in 2020-21, the APS has demonstrated its agility and responsiveness to help the Government respond to the many economic, social and health challenges arising from COVID-19.

In being responsive to significant surges in demand and priorities, the APS has not forgone long-term thinking about the future. We are working to embed lessons learned and drive the big reforms to improve public service capabilities and performance.

Our capacity to continuously learn and adapt will depend on effective structures, an inclusive culture, strong capabilities and leadership. I am confident that the APS is well placed to meet the demands of our rapidly changing environment and continue to meet the needs of Government and the Australian people into the future.

CHAPTER ONE

WORKING AS ONE APS

You [the APS] should all be enormously proud of what we've accomplished this year. We faced twin national crises in real time, a health crisis and an economic one, to save lives and to save livelihoods. There was no rulebook ... ¹

The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia

¹ The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia. (2020). *Speech to the APS200 Virtual Forum*. 25 November.



More than 20 months since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the crisis continues to significantly impact the Australian community and the APS.

Responding to profound health, economic and societal challenges, the normal rhythm of public service delivery accelerated. Traditional organisational boundaries and ways of working changed. The results are better, more flexible and more adaptive methods of delivering for the community.

The APS has been critical to the design and delivery of the Australian Government response to COVID-19, in the face of disrupted working environments, large-scale mobilisation across the service, and high community expectations. The APS intensified engagement with state and territory governments, businesses and community groups, academia and research organisations, with the purpose of supporting Australians.

Whether to secure ventilators and Personal Protective Equipment supplies, rapidly roll out economic support packages for millions of Australian employees and businesses, transition Government services from face-to-face to online, or support new governing architectures such as the National Cabinet—the APS has been integral.

With the arrival of COVID-19, weaknesses in APS structures that affected whole-of-government action in the past were addressed, with more agile mechanisms established to better harness expertise and data across Government and drive organisation-wide solutions in real time.

For example, the Chief Operating Officers (COO) Committee, which was formed last year, continues to facilitate the mobilisation of staff to areas of critical need and holds responsibility for ensuring that the decisions made by the Secretaries Board on the management of the enterprise are implemented across the APS.

Improved, responsive governance in 2020–21 included establishing a new Secretaries Digital Committee and a strengthened mandate for the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA), to promote joined-up investment so the APS can efficiently deliver on the Government's priorities in service delivery and digital government.

To date, Australia's national security architecture has successfully navigated the multi-dimensional challenges facing the nation in pursuit of Australia's national interest. But Australia now faces the most challenging and complex strategic environment since the 1930s and early 1940s.

The Secretaries' Strategic Security Committee (3SC) aims to elevate and broaden strategic security discussions by recognising the cross-portfolio, whole-of-government nature of contemporary national security challenges.



With a membership that includes all Commonwealth Secretaries and relevant Directors-General, its deliberations seek to raise national security awareness across the Commonwealth, while also increasing economic and social awareness within traditional security agencies.

The effectiveness of the whole-of-government arrangements, under the stewardship of the Secretaries Board to position the APS workforce to respond to COVID-19 were acknowledged by the Auditor-General in December 2020.

Read the full Auditor-General's report, *Management of the Australian Public Service's Workforce Response to COVID-19*.



The operation of the APS as an integrated organisation continues to evolve. The Secretaries Board is driving a series of practical reforms set out in the Australian Government response to the 2019 *Independent Review of the Australian Public Service* (the Thodey Review) to maximise the potential of the service to deliver for Australians and the Government.² These actions support Australia's response to and recovery from the pandemic, accelerate digital transformation through an enterprise-wide approach, and strengthen capability through the APS workforce strategy.

This *State of the Service Report* sets out how the APS is delivering on these priorities, working as one enterprise to reinforce institutional foundations and build a highly capable, future-ready workforce. It shows collaborative action to deepen expertise in a range of areas such as regulation, digital and data.

COMMITTED TO SERVICE

... I saw the way in which collaboration at a really extraordinary level became critical to our success. Everybody was focused on the main game. Nobody was pursuing their own agenda unless it was an agenda which was going to either keep Australians safe or safeguard our future prosperity.³

Stephanie Foster PSM, Deputy Secretary Governance, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

The events of the last two years have proven the benefits of collaboration across traditional boundaries—both within and outside the APS—to deliver the best outcomes for Government and Australians.

² Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Our Public Service, Our Future. Independent Review of the Australian Public Service*. 13 December.

³ Stephanie Foster PSM, Deputy Secretary Governance and Head of APS Reform, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2020). *Exploring the future of work with PwC Australia Podcast*. 17 December.

The APS has been working in new ways with leaders across private, community, and research sectors to deliver programs, policies and services to Australian citizens. For example, to ensure business continuity for the tourism industry and help conserve and protect high-value reef tourism sites, marine tourism operators worked with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to undertake reef site monitoring and maintenance at over 200 different sites. The Department of Defence is working with industry in new ways to support the Australian Defence Force (ADF), bridge information gaps and build long-term relationships, by establishing the Defence Industry Secondment Program. The program enables public servants and military personnel to spend 6 weeks in industry workplaces. Further, close direct collaboration with hundreds of older Australians and their families resulted in an online platform to connect older Australians to Government-funded aged care services, improving the way people access services and information.

Crises and other complex policy problems demand cross-boundary collaboration, support for innovation and adaptive responses as options are explored.⁴ The drive towards better collaboration between agencies, which was already underway in the APS, has accelerated since COVID-19 with new opportunities for different parts of Government to work together and with more staff reporting they are working as a Government team.⁵ Some of the disincentives to collaboration have disappeared through the pandemic, with two-thirds of respondents to the 2021 APS Employee Census reporting few barriers to working as one APS.

Efforts to flexibly mobilise resources, share knowledge and align efforts across the APS have helped build common ownership of the COVID-response and strengthened a sense of purpose in many employees.⁶ In 2021, the majority of the APS workforce (82%) reported a strong belief in the purpose and objectives of the APS and 9 out of 10 staff (90%) could see how their role contributed to achieving results for the Australian public.⁷ For many employees, their commitment to serving the Australian public leads to their choice to remain working in the APS.

Across the APS, employees report that the work they perform provides them with a sense of accomplishment, and they are keen to go the 'extra mile'.⁸ More than 8 in 10 respondents to the 2021 APS Employee Census reported being willing to work beyond what is required in their job to help their agency achieve its objectives.

⁴ Ansell, C., Sørensen, E., and Torfing, J. (2020). *The COVID-19 pandemic as a game changer for public administration and leadership? The need for robust governance responses to turbulent problems*. Public Management Review (Issue 7, Volume 23). 21 September.

⁵ 2019 and 2020 APS Employee Census.

⁶ 2020 APS Employee Census.

⁷ 2021 APS Employee Census.

⁸ Ibid.

Collaboration and commitment to source critical ventilators

Lying in a hospital bed in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Canberra's Calvary Hospital a decade ago, all of Belinda Fraser's concentration was on taking the next breath. Belinda was the first pregnant woman to be admitted to the ICU in Canberra with the H1N1 virus, also known as swine flu. The doctors did not hold out hope of saving her unborn child. Belinda recalls being told by medical staff that if her oxygen levels didn't improve she would be put on a ventilator. Belinda's mother and husband sat with her throughout the night, encouraging her to breathe—to get oxygen into her lungs and to her baby.



Belinda Fraser PSM

"This was the only thing that got me through," Belinda recalls of that night. "In the morning they decided I would not need to be ventilated after all."

Just over 10 years later, this unique personal experience came back to the forefront of Belinda's mind with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. An Australian public servant with 18 years' experience, Belinda was seconded to a taskforce to source ventilators.

The taskforce, set up in the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, was responsible for sourcing ventilators for the Australian National Medical Stockpile managed by the Department of Health. Taskforce members had to learn quickly what type of ventilators Australia needed, and how many, undertake due diligence on the procurement, and give options to the Department of Health.

To this end, and to ensure Australia had an immediate onshore supply, Belinda worked closely with Australia's ventilator manufacturers who had moved to a 24-hour cycle. Everything seemed to be falling into place, until a unique problem arose—Belinda was advised production would have to stop because of sanitiser shortages. When Belinda found out that production of ventilators was at risk, she immediately started thinking outside the box. Having an in-depth knowledge of finance and procurement guidelines and knowing that public-facing institutions in Canberra had shut their doors due to COVID, she wondered if they might have unused medical grade sanitiser available to help fill the need. Using her networks, she discovered they did, and were more than happy to share with those who had an urgent need for the supplies. This quick thinking and collaborative effort helped production of ventilators continue until normal suppliers could reinstate orders.

Belinda is passionate about the APS. "I love having a lot of contact with external stakeholders in this business-focused portfolio. You get to learn a lot about the things you can actually do as a public servant that will make a practical difference to people, businesses and industries."

Belinda received a 2021 Public Service Medal (PSM) 'for outstanding public service to fostering collaborative arrangements for securing ventilators for the Australian Government National Medical Stockpile in response to the COVID-19 pandemic'. Belinda firmly believes it is a worthy recognition of the efforts of her whole team, and their performance in very exceptional circumstances.



Nurse adjusting ventilator equipment.

DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Digital technology has made it possible for all parts of the service to respond more effectively to the pandemic. Many digital services were delivered in record time to record numbers of Australians without interruption as the health orders transitioned the workforce from office to home.

Digital technologies and techniques together with open data are fundamental to agile and responsive public policy solutions and vital to supporting Australia's economic recovery. As the ambition for rapid digital transformation amplified across the APS throughout 2021, the Secretaries Board took action to avoid siloed approaches to digital governance and investment.

The Secretaries Digital Committee has been established to promote an enterprise approach to ICT and digital investment, and support the shared use of digital capabilities, ensuring decisions across Australian Government entities are made for the long term. The committee held its first meeting in September 2020.

The Machinery of Government move of the DTA to the central Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio in April 2021 strengthened the DTA's mandate and placed concentrated attention on ICT and digital strategy, investment and assurance across the APS. The Machinery of Government change also moved the Digital Professions function to the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to help lift digital capability across the APS.

Work continues to baseline APS digital and ICT capabilities, prioritise and plan investments, and promote whole-of-government reuse opportunities. The DTA recently completed a review of digital capability across 20 agencies responsible for the majority of Government's most significant digital services. While this review identified positive levels of digital maturity across a range of capabilities, there are areas of improvement to strengthen the digital performance of the APS and digital posture of the Australian Government. Many of these reforms are underway, with a particular focus on upskilling public servants, including senior leaders, in digital skills and leading transformational change.

In 2020, Australia's e-government development was ranked as 5th in the world by the United Nations E-Government Survey.⁹ The Australian Government's twin Digital Economy Strategy and Digital Transformation Strategy reflect the need for the APS to accelerate the scaling of digital infrastructure and skill the workforce to be a leading digital economy and society by 2030.

⁹ United Nations. (2020). *E-Government Survey 2020: Digital Government in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development*. n.d.



DATA ACROSS GOVERNMENT

Australian Government data holdings are an important national asset that drives innovation and evidence-based decision-making. The effective use of public data enables program evaluation, informed policy, risk-based regulatory processes and drives better services for all Australians. Good use of data helped in Australia's efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that vulnerable Australians remained safe and leading to one of the world's most effective responses to the initial outbreak of the virus. It is also fundamental to building a modern digital economy.

The Government has announced the delivery of Australia's first Data Strategy by the end of 2021, setting a vision to create a national ecosystem of data that is accessible, reliable and relevant, and able to be easily used to drive national priorities.

The 2020–21 Federal Budget also announced a \$16.5 million pilot program to make Government data assets discoverable and support whole-of-economy reuse. The Office of the National Data Commissioner is leading the program, which will develop data inventories for 20% of Australian Government agencies. Common standards and shared infrastructure will be used to aggregate agency inventories into a Government-wide catalogue of data assets. This will complement existing catalogues on open data platforms, particularly data.gov.au, and support greater transparency of Government data holdings as well as promoting reuse, including with other jurisdictions, researchers and the private sector. This will allow the APS to respond more quickly in emergencies and help transition Australia to a data-driven economy, including making Australia more attractive to investors seeking to create new data-driven products and services.

The Australian Government supported by the APS, has also worked closely with states and territories to improve cross-jurisdictional data sharing, with National Cabinet signing a new Intergovernmental Agreement on data sharing in July 2021.¹⁰ The agreement recognises data as a shared national asset and commits all jurisdictions to share public sector data as a default position, where it can be done securely, safely, lawfully and ethically. It is supported by a National Data Sharing Work Program to focus national efforts on priority data areas.

Furthermore, uplift of data capability in the APS continues to be a priority, with the APS Data Profession established in September 2020. The Data Profession, with the Australian Statistician serving as the Head of Profession, acts as a unifier of the APS data workforce to build data capability. Since its establishment, there has been rapid growth and diversification of the data ecosystem, which provides strong support for the use of data to inform policy and effective service delivery, which are critical elements of the work of the APS.

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Australia. (2021). *Intergovernmental Agreement on data sharing between Commonwealth and State and Territory governments*. 9 July.

SURGING TO MEET DEMAND

My starting proposition is one-APS. And I think if you start thinking about your role and your contribution as being part of that much broader entity, psychologically, the idea of moving to different parts of it is a more straightforward proposition. And I think the leadership across the breadth of the APS are increasingly thinking in those terms.¹¹

Katherine Jones PSM, then Deputy Secretary, Department of Finance

The arrival of COVID-19 in early 2020 saw public service leaders around the world find new ways to reprioritise and mobilise staff to deliver Government priorities and meet increased demand for Government services. This response appears to be rewiring organisational processes and practices in the public sector, allowing for the emergence of more cohesive and adaptive workforces.¹²

Locking in the benefits of a united organisation, the Secretaries Board established a permanent APS Surge Reserve in April 2021. The Surge Reserve is a national effort. It draws on volunteers from across the APS, in every state and territory, who may be deployed for short periods to help colleagues address a surge in demand for Government services or support, particularly during a crisis.

In the first month, more than 2,000 employees volunteered to join the APS Surge Reserve. The APS Surge Reserve complements, rather than replaces, well-established disaster

response and management arrangements in individual agencies. By October 2021, more than 70 surge workforce requests had been met, with over 3,000 staff deployed.



**Read more about
mobility in and across
the Commonwealth,
state and territory
public services.**

¹¹ Katherine Jones PSM, then Deputy Secretary, Department of Finance. (2021). *IPAA Work with Purpose Podcast Special Anniversary Edition*. 29 April.

¹² OECD. (2020). *Public servants and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic: Emerging responses and initial recommendations*. 27 April.

Surge in demand for public services

APS agencies have continued to face rapid and significant increases in demand for their services this year, particularly arising from COVID-19-related outbreaks. APS employees have been deployed to other Commonwealth agencies, and across jurisdictions to support this response and priorities.

Services Australia—floods and cyclone

Over 350 staff from across the APS assisted Services Australia's rapid response to the New South Wales floods in March 2021 and Tropical Cyclone Seroja's impact on Western Australia the following month. At 30 June 2021, Services Australia had processed more than 360,000 claims for support, answered over 580,000 related calls and provided more than \$438 million in assistance to people impacted by these natural disasters.



Services Australia staff assisting the community affected by floods

State and Territory Government health departments—contact tracing

APS employees were deployed to health departments in Western Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, to assist in contact tracing efforts. The New South Wales Government lodged a request for Australian Government Assistance through Emergency Management Australia in July 2021 for up to 64 APS employees to support New South Wales Health with contact tracing. Over 90 nominations were received, with several staff deployed within 48 hours.

Department of Defence, Department of Veterans' Affairs—Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

The Secretaries of Defence and Veterans' Affairs requested assistance in May 2021 to support the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. More than 70 employees nominated to assist in areas such as legal, policy, data and communications.

Services Australia—processing COVID-19 support payments

In July 2021, Services Australia requested support to deliver COVID-19 Disaster Payments to Australians unable to earn an income due to a COVID-19 lockdown. More than 700 APS employees nominated to assist, from large departments to smaller agencies such as the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency and IP Australia. Surged staff have worked alongside their Services Australia colleagues to process over 4.1 million claims. More than \$11 billion has been paid to assist Australians unable to work and earn an income while affected by lockdowns.¹³

¹³ Services Australia. (2021). *COVID-19 vaccine rollout update*. 11 October.

A NIMBLE AND MOBILE APS WORKFORCE

The ambition for a more responsive APS, which uses workforce mobility to deploy skills, expertise and talent to where it is most needed, is set out in *Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025*. The ability for employees to move within and between roles, across APS agencies and sectors allows for the sharing of expertise, builds capability and brings a diversity of perspectives to public policy problems.

Permanent mobility across APS agencies over the last 3 years has remained relatively stable, with 3.1% of the workforce undertaking a permanent move during 2020–21. Temporary mobility, however, is far higher. One-fifth (20%) of respondents to the 2021 APS Employee Census undertook a temporary move during the past 12 months, mostly within their ‘home’ agency (85%). The variety of work on offer within agencies can enable employees to enjoy a high degree of mobility according to their interests and capabilities as new opportunities become available, without leaving their ‘home’ agency.

There are still some common perceived obstacles to seeking a temporary move that need to be overcome. Lack of communication and awareness of temporary mobility opportunities is one of the main barriers.¹⁴ A recent pilot program around mobility opportunities for digital professionals, called oneAPS Opportunities, included a temporary platform to advertise short-term flexible digital work opportunities, similar to platforms such as Freelancer or Airtasker. Building on lessons learned from this pilot, the APSC is developing an APS-wide mobility platform (leveraging the APSJobs website) to broaden the pool of candidates available to managers and help make opportunities across the service more accessible to employees.

Optimal mobility reflects the needs, capabilities and problems faced by each APS agency. If an organisation has too much mobility, particularly mobility that is not strategic or well-targeted, it is likely to negatively impact how that organisation operates and performs.¹⁵ Conversely, organisations with too little mobility are likely to miss out on the important benefits that stem from employee movement.¹⁶

Each agency must identify the most effective way to use mobility for their context. To facilitate increased internal and external mobility, the APSC released the APS Mobility Framework in April 2021.¹⁷ This sets out the principles for using mobility effectively, and provides guidance for employees, managers, executive and human resources (HR) practitioners to help maximise the benefits of a mobile workforce.

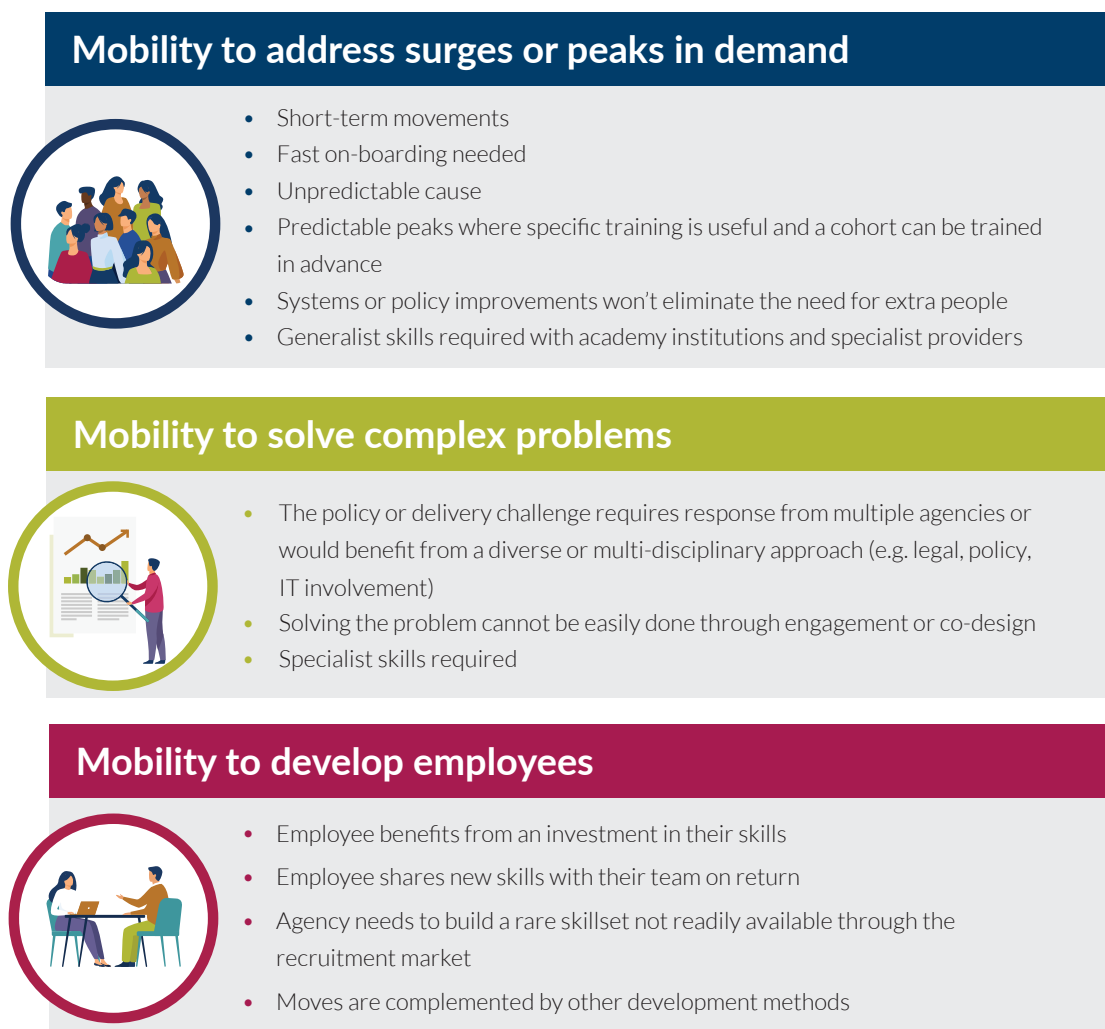
¹⁴ 2021 APS Employee Census.

¹⁵ Nalbantian, H. R. and Guzzo, R. A. (2009). *Making Mobility Matter*. n.d.

¹⁶ Deloitte Insights. (2019). *Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with a human focus*. n.d.

¹⁷ APSC. (2021). *The APS Mobility Framework*. 29 April.

Figure 1.1: When mobility is most effective



Source: The APS Mobility Framework¹⁸

SHAPING THE FUTURE APS WORKFORCE

Governments across the world are needing to attract and recruit staff with an increasingly diverse range of skills to keep pace with today's policy and service delivery challenges.¹⁹ The first APS workforce strategy, *Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025*,²⁰ released in March 2021, represents a shift in managing the workforce to meet the needs of the APS as one organisation. The whole-of-service workforce strategy sets out how the APS will align its efforts and investment to build and shape the way the APS attracts, develops and utilises its people, flexibly mobilising them when and where needed.

¹⁸ APSC. (2021). *The APS Mobility Framework: Guidance for managers*. 29 April.

¹⁹ OECD. (2021). *Government at a Glance 2021*. 9 July.

²⁰ APSC. (2021). *Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025*. 18 March.

The Secretaries Board is using the strategy to guide efforts across the APS to ensure the workforce can deliver for Australia and Australians, now and into the future.

The COO Committee is working across the service to prioritise and drive the actions identified in the strategy.

The APSC's Centre of Excellence for APS Workforce Planning Capability supports agencies to develop robust workforce planning approaches. Over 70% of APS agencies have established or are developing agency-level workforce plans/strategies. Most agency-level workforce plans have now aligned with the APS Workforce Strategy to drive workforce transformation and business outcomes.²¹ For example, Services Australia has reviewed its workforce initiatives against the APS Workforce Strategy and identified opportunities to continue to strengthen its strategic workforce management.

Undertaking this mapping exercise was very useful for Services Australia to not only demonstrate to our executive the clear alignment of our current initiatives with the overall strategic APS workforce direction, but to also support our upcoming workforce planning exercises in the agency. I encourage all agencies to undertake this mapping exercise to provide their senior leaders with the confidence that agency-level workforce planning is aligned with the overall APS direction, in a true one-APS approach.

Sandi Murray, Director Workforce Planning, Services Australia

The APSC Centre of Excellence delivers initiatives across 4 work streams: capability; leadership; tools and technology; and analytics and insights. Since the program was launched

in June 2020, there has been interest from state, territory and international jurisdictions on developing similar programs to uplift workforce planning capability. The OECD has recognised the APS Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning as a best practice case study and featured the program of work in its Public Employment and Management online portal.²²

**Discover the suite of
APS Workforce Strategy
2025 resources.**



²¹ 2021 APS Agency Survey.

²² OECD. (2019). *OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability*. 17 January.

APS workforce planning starting up a new era

In 2019, the Government's APS reform agenda, *Delivering for Australians*, highlighted the need for an integrated approach to APS workforce management.²³ To support this shift and implement the first APS workforce strategy, the APSC established the Centre of Excellence for APS Workforce Planning Capability in mid-2020.



The centre builds workforce planning capability through policy advice and frameworks, tools and resources, capability development offerings for workforce planners and strategists, and development of leadership capability to drive workforce planning and accountability.

APS workforce planners and strategists also benefit from peer support, coaching and mentoring from expert workforce planners in the Centre of Excellence and across the Workforce Planning Community of Practice. This Community of Practice comprises more than 700 members from over 65 agencies, representing approximately 70% of APS agencies.

The centre has recently partnered with the APS Academy to design and pilot a foundational Workforce Planning Start Up program with 15 participants across 15 agencies. This program builds the foundational skills that workforce planners need to support their leadership team to strategically manage their workforce.

For more information on the Workforce Planning Start Up program visit www.apsacademy.gov.au or the Workforce Planning Community of Practice for the latest news on this offering.



Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning—areas of focus

- 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

²³ Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Delivering for Australians. A world-class Australian Public Service: The Government's APS reform agenda*. 13 December.

NETWORKED MODEL TO BUILD APS CAPABILITY

Developing the capability of the APS is a complex endeavour. Uplifting capability across the entire APS requires both central coordination and agency intervention. This is not without challenges. The Thodey Review found that a ‘fragmented approach to learning and development’ was hampering the performance of the APS. The review specifically identified the need for ‘a system-wide understanding of what development is needed, what is available and what works’.²⁴

A September 2020 survey identified that a group of 60 APS agencies offered employees learning and development addressing a common set of topics including management, leadership and communication.²⁵ Despite these common topic areas, only 25% of responding agencies made their internally-developed learning resources available to the broader APS.

Learning and development is a shared responsibility between portfolio and agency heads, learning and development teams and providers, managers, and every APS employee.²⁶

The release of the *APS Learning and Development Strategy*²⁷ and *Action Plan*,²⁸ the launch of the APS Academy in July 2021, and the continuing development of the APS professions, represent a fundamental shift in how the service works together to build capability.



**Read the full
APS Learning and
Development Strategy
and Action Plan.**

These initiatives aim to reduce duplication across the APS and encourage a culture of continuous individual and organisational investment in learning. The action plan focuses on leveraging good practice across the APS, sharing learning resources and partnering to ensure staff have access to the right development at the right time, whatever their role and wherever they are located.

²⁴ Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Our Public Service, Our Future. Independent Review of the Australian Public Service*. 13 December.

²⁵ 2020 APS Learning and Development Survey.

²⁶ APSC. (2021). *Highly Capable, Future-Ready: APS Learning and Development Strategy*. 20 July.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ APSC. (2021). *Highly Capable, Future Ready: APS Learning and Development Action Plan*. 20 July.

Figure 1.2: Targeting capability development in the APS**APS Academy**

- Focus on building APS Craft capability; the core public sector skills, tools and knowledge needed to deliver great policy and services
- Develop and deliver practitioner led learning; bringing the experience and expertise of the APS into every stage of learning
- Connect the best in learning across the APS, leveraging APS and external partners to increase reach and ensure greater collaboration and coordination

Professional streams

- Target critical capability gaps within the APS, including Data, Digital and Human Resources
- Professional streams deliver practical initiatives to attract, retain and develop deep expertise within the APS and provide rewarding careers in critical areas
- The strategic direction and leadership of each stream is set by a Head of Profession

Centres of Excellence

- Targeted capability development to enable best practice and innovation in APS functions or job families e.g. behavioural insights, procurement
- Develop and promote the skills, tools and resources needed to support robust policy and service delivery outcomes
- Create a community where practitioners can provide peer support, coaching and mentoring to share expertise and collaborate

APS-wide partnerships with professional associations

- Targeted development for cohorts or job families (e.g. accounting and finance) through strong partnerships with established professional bodies in Australia
- Cohorts of APS employees who hold (or could qualify for) professional membership
- Employer-sponsored certification pathways with professional bodies
- Targeted recruitment and mobility programs

Agency-specific technical capability development

- Targeted specialist capability development for a particular function (e.g. geoscientists)
- Practical approaches to capability uplift that meet agency-specific needs
- Longer-term learning programs including training modules
- Agency-driven programs, linking to APS-wide initiatives as needed

The APS Academy was established to help employees develop the APS ‘craft’ capabilities that are unique and fundamental to the role of a public servant. The APS Academy emphasises the importance of a broad suite of learning methods, which extend learning beyond formal training and development to learning that occurs more frequently in and through work, and by connecting with other people and resources. These methods build capability continually and enable the workforce to learn and adapt at the speed of change.

Through a networked model, partnering with APS agencies and external partners, the APS Academy is designed to connect employees with the contemporary public sector knowledge, resources and experience.²⁹ An APS Academy Faculty, comprising current and ex-serving senior members of the APS, has been established to guide, influence and contribute to the design and delivery of initiatives that build APS craft capabilities.

The APS Learning Board, formed in August 2021 as a sub-committee of the COO Committee, will provide direction to the APS Academy to deliver a united approach to building capability. The Learning Board and Academy work closely with the existing professional streams and the Heads of Profession in Data, Digital, and Human Resources, to continue to develop APS capability in these critical areas.

Find out more about the APS Academy courses and APS craft capabilities.



²⁹ In 2021, the APS Academy is partnering with the IPAA and ANZSOG.

CHAPTER TWO

HARNESSING MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

What we need is a modern, flexible, apolitical public service that is fit for purpose for myriad tasks. And we have one, as demonstrated during COVID. We are up to the task. But we need to keep modernising and adapting the service to remain up to the evolving task of Government. In a rapidly changing world we need to evolve and develop as APS leaders, and to evolve and develop the APS as a whole.³⁰

Simon Atkinson, Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

³⁰ Simon Atkinson, Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. (2021). *Address to the IPAA. On Service, Professional Development, Systems Leadership and Global Reopening*. 24 June.



The past year has continued to be instructive as the APS progresses its reform agenda to ensure the service is fit for purpose into the future. The APS is building on the early lessons from the pandemic that tested organisational boundaries, technology, teams and the resilience of its people, while also prompting new conversations about ways of working.

Critical questions for the APS workforce remain:

- To be effective in an increasingly complex environment, how best do we achieve a **'one-APS'** mindset across all levels and how well do current **structures and hierarchies** serve the APS to fulfil its remit to Government, Parliament and the Australian community?
- To ensure we remain an employer of choice, how might greater levels of **flexibility** across key labour markets impact the APS employee value proposition and lay the foundations for maximising an **inclusive work culture** which reflects the Australian community?
- To **uplift capability** for the future of work, how does the APS best compete for **talent**, offer flexible and targeted **learning**, **develop leaders** for the 'new normal' and embed a **pro-integrity culture** in all that we do?

The APS is exploring workforce-level initiatives and system-wide thinking to help answer these critical questions.

FUTURE-FIT HIERARCHIES AND STRUCTURES

What the COVID-19 experience has shown is that public-sector work practices don't need to be fixed in stone. A lot of flexibility in the workplace is possible. Hierarchy can be streamlined. And giving staff responsibility for doing their job can frankly achieve better results.³¹

Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM, National President, Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA)

Optimising organisational layers and spans of control can empower staff, reduce bureaucracy and increase accountability.³² International civil services, such as the United Kingdom, are reviewing their structures to ensure their hierarchies are designed for rapid problem-solving and decision-making.³³ The Thodey Review concluded that current organisational arrangements in the APS lack the flexibility and responsiveness needed to meet the needs of a rapidly changing and connected operating environment.³⁴

³¹ Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM, National President, IPAA. (2020). *The importance of public services in the world of COVID-19*. 14 July.

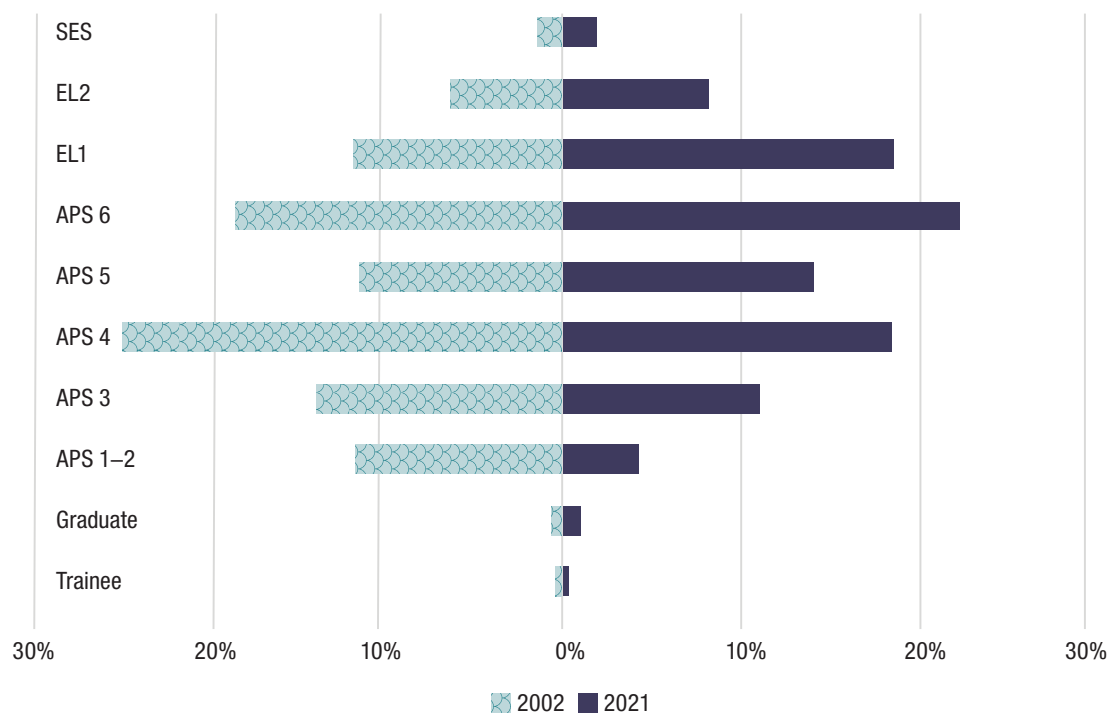
³² Deloitte Development LLC. (2019). *Spans and Layers for the Modern Organization*. n.d.

³³ Government of the United Kingdom. (2021). *Declaration on Government Reform*. 15 June.

³⁴ Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Our Public Service, Our Future. Independent Review of the Australian Public Service*. 13 December.



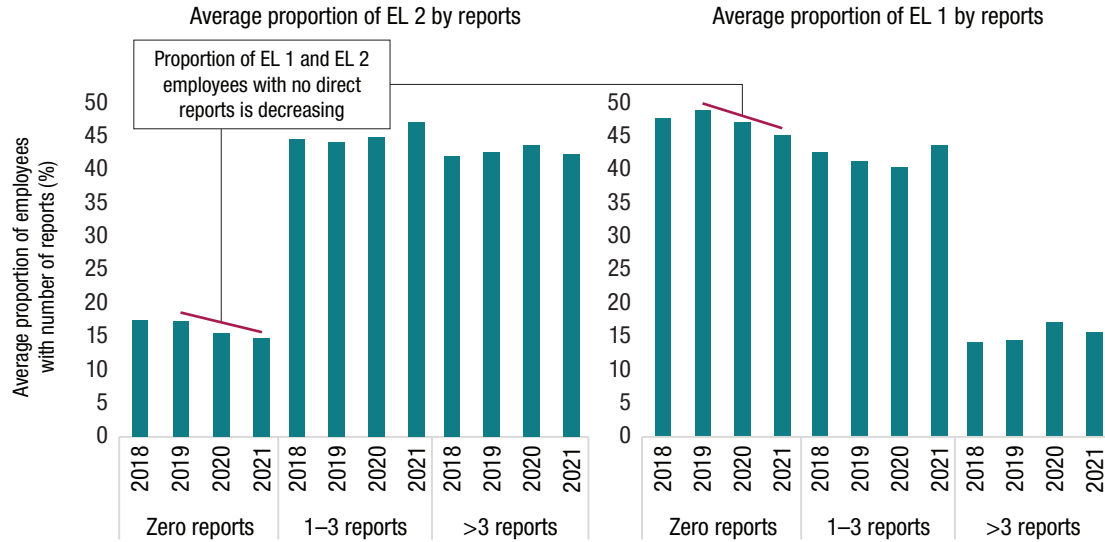
Figure 2.1: Changing proportion of employees by classification (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED

As the APS adopts more agile ways of working, strengthened organisational design practices will be important to tailor teams and management structures to suit business needs, strategic priorities and type of work. This includes, where appropriate, embracing agile approaches of operating to ensure an efficient flow of information and a faster decision-making process.

The spans of control for senior managers in the APS have broadened over recent years. Since 2019, the proportion of Executive Level (EL) 1 and EL 2 managers with no direct reports has decreased. In 2021, an average of 42% of EL 1 and 45% of EL 2 employees had between 1 and 3 direct reports.

Figure 2.2: Average proportion of EL 1 and EL 2 employees with number of direct reports

Source: 2018-2021 APS Agency Surveys

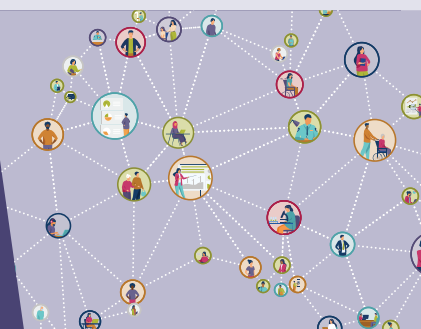
The Hierarchy and Classification Review, established in March 2021, is reviewing both Senior Executive Service (SES) and non-SES classifications against best practice and emerging workforce needs.³⁵

³⁵ APSC. (2021). *APS Hierarchy and Classification Review*. 18 March.



Review of APS hierarchy and classifications: building a future-fit APS workforce

Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025 set out how the APS will reshape its workforce and structures, embrace new capability models and streamline workforce management practices to compete globally and drive innovative, citizen-centric solutions.



As part of the Australian Government's APS reform agenda, *Delivering for Australians*, the Hierarchy and Classification Review is underway to review SES and non-SES classification levels and structures. The review is about simplifying decision-making structures, uplifting capability and reimagining the culture of the APS to encourage faster decision-making, empower the workforce, foster innovation, and enable greater flexibility and mobility across the APS. The review will explore opportunities and make recommendations that accommodate the diversity of APS functions and best position the workforce for the next 25 years.

The review is being led by independent panel members, Dr Heather Smith PSM, Ms Kathryn Fagg AO FTSE and Mr Finn Pratt AO PSM.

The panel is working through its findings and will provide the final report to the Australian Public Service Commissioner by the end of 2021 for consideration.



Read more about
the Hierarchy and
Classification Review.



NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Like organisations across the globe, the experience of working remotely at scale across the APS is demanding new tools and capabilities to ensure arrangements support both organisational productivity and employee wellbeing.

Flexibility has long been a feature of the APS, incorporating arrangements to enable people to balance personal responsibilities with work life, while continuing to deliver organisational outcomes.

This approach to flexibility continues—necessitated in part by continuing localised stay-at-home orders in response to the COVID pandemic. APS data aligns with broader labour market research: expectations have shifted and employees are now likely to seek greater levels of flexibility as an ongoing feature of work.³⁶ The office, however, is likely to remain a central workplace, for its role in building culture, fostering collaboration and maintaining connections with colleagues.

The nature and application of flexible work depends on each agency's business and operational circumstances. Arrangements may include:

- flexible work locations such as home-based work, remote work, telework and hybrid work
- flex time or time off in lieu
- flexible conditions including part-time work and job-share arrangements.

Access to some form of flexible work is common across the APS. Around two-thirds of respondents to the 2021 APS Employee Census said they were accessing a type of flexible arrangement.³⁷ However, the past year has seen a rise in 'hybrid working'—that is, a mix of working at, and away from, an employee's usual place of work across the working week. In 2019, 22% of APS Employee Census respondents worked away from the office or from home at least part of the time. This increased to 53% in 2020. The APS workforce continues to embrace these arrangements throughout 2021, with 46% of respondents working this way.³⁸

Looking to the future, flexible working will remain a key feature of the APS employee value proposition, improving employee satisfaction, retention and attraction of new talent. With some roles that can be performed remotely from anywhere and flexible working arrangements on offer, there are opportunities to access new labour markets. For example, in highly competitive labour markets such as Canberra, APS agencies are reporting challenges

³⁶ Boston Consulting Group. (2020). *The Expectation Gap in the Future of Work*. 14 December.

³⁷ 2021 APS Employee Census.

³⁸ Ibid.



recruiting for specialist digital and ICT roles, while remote working may facilitate access to the larger talent pools in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

APS employees recognise the value their agency places on flexible working. In 2021, three-quarters of APS Employee Census respondents indicated they were confident that if they asked for a flexible work arrangement, it would be given reasonable consideration. Very few respondents (10%) said lack of support for flexible work practices was a barrier to workplace performance.³⁹

Like other public service jurisdictions, APS agencies are considering how to better structure their workforce to meet the changing ways of working. Around two-thirds (68%) of agencies indicated their flexible work policy had been reviewed and updated since COVID-19.⁴⁰

Remote working productivity

On balance, working from home can unlock significant gains in terms of flexibility and time for employees and could even increase the nation's productivity. Risks can be managed but we should keep an eye on them and be ready to intervene if necessary.⁴¹

Michael Brennan, Chair, Productivity Commission

Understanding the impacts of the changing location of work continues to develop across all organisations.⁴² Employers are actively monitoring the effectiveness of their operations and the productivity of the workforce, and the APS is no different. Traditional assumptions are being challenged and the relationship between employees' presence in the office, mobile technology and worker productivity are being re-examined.⁴³

Drivers of productivity measured through the APS Employee Census, such as innovation and employee engagement, remained high in 2021.⁴⁴ Almost half of all respondents to the 2020 APS Employee Census self-reported higher productivity since the emergence of COVID-19.⁴⁵ Further, the majority of respondents in 2021 indicated that their workgroup cooperates with others to get the job done (87%), and that they contribute to their team by suggesting ideas to improve the way they work (85%).

³⁹ To a great or very great extent.

⁴⁰ 2021 APS Agency Survey.

⁴¹ Productivity Commission. (2021). *Media release: Forced experiment working from home*. 16 September.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ OECD. (2020). *Public servants and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic: Emerging responses and initial recommendations*. 27 April.

⁴⁴ 2021 APS Employee Census. Innovation Index is 66%; Engagement Index is 73%.

⁴⁵ The emergence of COVID-19 for the purposes of this report refers to February 2020.

Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic required an unprecedented large-scale change to working from home, the Productivity Commission has explored the benefits and challenges of these new ways of working across the economy.⁴⁶ The study found that working from home or hybrid working arrangements can unlock significant gains in terms of flexibility for employees. Employees benefit from reduced commuting, allowing more time for other activities, such as exercise and family time. There are productivity gains arising from greater autonomy to manage workflow and less interruptions from colleagues. However, the Productivity Commission cautions that employers will need to balance the potential benefits with increased organisational complexity and additional risks from having a hybrid workforce. These risks include negative changes to organisational culture, information security challenges, and increased technology costs.



**Read the full
research paper,
*Working from
Home*.**

The Productivity Commission predicts that working from home will continue to be a key feature of future workforces, with organisations and employees becoming more effective at working from home and negotiating mutually beneficial outcomes.

RESILIENT WORKFORCE

Probably the one thing that I'm most proud of is how, through all of this really incredibly stressful time ... I can't think of a harsh word that was exchanged amongst the teams, that people were kind with one another and helpful. We had a roster at one stage to try and give people three hours off a week, and people were just jumping up and down to say, "No, so-and-so needs a break, and so-and-so needs a break".⁴⁷

Caroline Edwards PSM, then Associate Secretary, Department of Health

The pandemic has forced the APS to redefine its working space. Employees across Australia have experienced stay-at-home orders, with many juggling home schooling, separation from friends and family, and other hardships. The line between when work ends and home begins can become blurred, and the importance of a work/life balance becomes even more critical.

⁴⁶ Productivity Commission. (2021). *Working from home: Research paper*. 16 September.

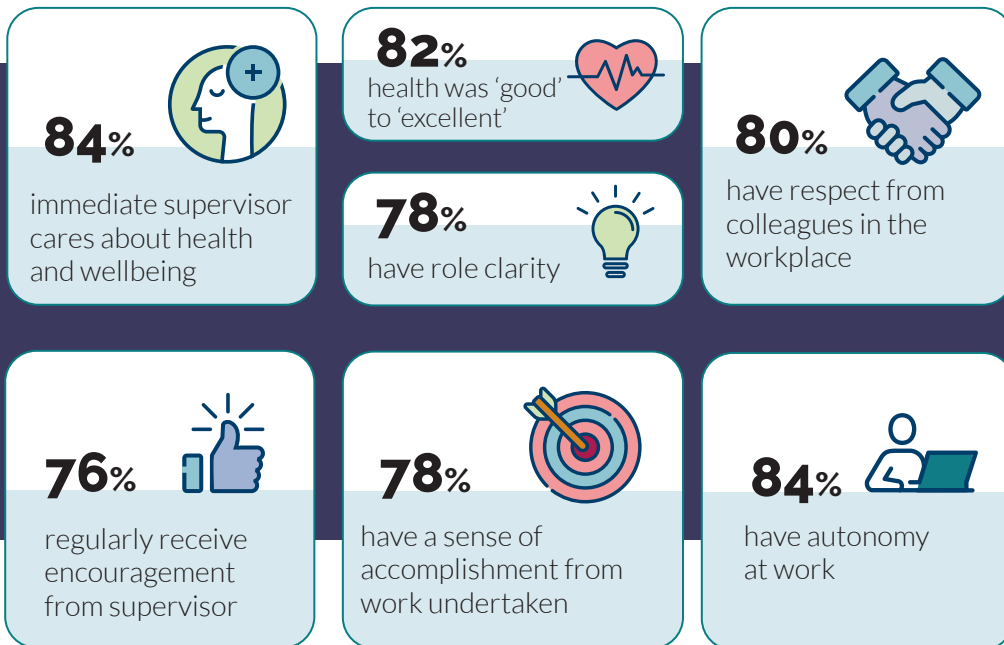
⁴⁷ Caroline Edwards PSM, then Associate Secretary, Department of Health (2021). *IPAA Work with Purpose Podcast Special Anniversary Edition*. 29 April.



Given the additional pressures present while responding to crises, new measurements were introduced into the 2020 APS Employee Census to identify and track wellbeing among APS employees. While some employees have reported a positive (21%) change to their general health and wellbeing since COVID-19, others have seen a negative impact (32%).⁴⁸

In the past year, at least 1 in 3 respondents indicated that they often find their work stressful, and report feeling burned out (34%). However, a large majority indicate they have supportive supervisors who care about their health and wellbeing (84%) and that they are surrounded by a team that works well together to 'get the job done' (87%).

Wellbeing



⁴⁸ 2020 APS Employee Census. No change (47%).

Since 2018, the APS Employee Census has asked questions that comprise the APS Wellbeing Index, a measure of the practical and cultural elements known to assist a healthy and sustainable workplace. In 2021, the APS Wellbeing Index score was 68%, showing a small drop from 2020 (70%), though still higher than in 2019 (67%). The decline can be attributed to lower levels of satisfaction with the communication and promotion of wellbeing support measures.⁴⁹ Employee satisfaction with communication in 2020 was very high after the onset of the pandemic (48% satisfied in 2019 up to 58% in 2020). This reflects the deliberate actions agencies and senior leaders took to communicate with employees as the response to COVID-19 unfolded. Agencies specifically focused on the wellbeing of their employees as they managed the changing situation. As a result, APS Employee Census results show a large improvement from pre-COVID results on the proportion of employees who agree that change is managed well in their agency (39% in 2019 up to 48% in 2020).⁵⁰

As Australia and the world transitions to 'normal', the APS should not become complacent in valuing and prioritising the wellbeing of its employees. Employee wellbeing has long been linked to employee engagement, individual performance and organisational productivity.⁵¹ International research also suggests that employees in a post-COVID world will seek out employers who emphasise wellbeing.⁵²

In driving mental health and wellbeing initiatives, APS agencies have recognised that while staff may be physically distanced, social connection is crucial to overall wellbeing. Agencies have incorporated new and innovative ways to connect such as structured social catch-ups alongside business meetings, virtual training programs, regular team stand-ups, and wellbeing information sessions with experts.

To further support the workforce, an APS Mental Health Capability Framework has been co-designed with input from across the APS to assist agencies to develop and implement evidence-informed mental health and suicide prevention initiatives.

⁴⁹ 2021 APS Employee Census.

⁵⁰ 2019 and 2020 APS Employee Census.

⁵¹ Nielsen, K., et al. (2017). *Workplace resources to improve both employee well-being and performance: A systematic review and meta-analysis*. 24 March.

⁵² Morgan, I. (2021). *Employees Want Wellbeing From Their Job, and They'll Leave to Find It*. 3 August.

Improving APS mental health and suicide prevention capability

The APS Mental Health Capability Project, commissioned by the Secretaries Board in late 2018, was the first service-wide review into the mental health capability of the APS workforce. The project was led by a taskforce within the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.



L-R: Selvina Bustelo, Human Resources Adviser, NIAA; Rachael Jackson CPHR, Chief Operating Officer, NIAA; Ray Griggs AO CSC, former Chief Executive Officer, NIAA

Over 16,000 APS staff from more than 100 agencies participated in the project. The taskforce consulted extensively with subject matter experts, employees with lived experience of mental illness, and those who were carers of people with lived experience.

The review resulted in the design of an APS Mental Health Capability Framework to drive an increase in mental health capability at both an organisational and individual level. To test how the framework translated in a range of operating contexts, pilot programs were undertaken during 2020 with the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Home Affairs and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). Further, Geoscience Australia and IP Australia tested the adaptability of the framework by implementing it without a high level of support from the taskforce.

In August 2021 the Secretaries Board endorsed project recommendations to align agency practices with the framework and establish the APS Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit.

The unit now operates out of the APSC, promoting whole-of-service development of workforce literacy, capability and expertise in mental health and suicide prevention. Ongoing collaboration and input from APS leaders, employees with lived experience, carers and people from diverse backgrounds, are critical enablers for the unit's work. This work builds on the Productivity Commission's Inquiry Report into mental health⁵³ and the National Suicide Prevention Adviser's recommendations highlighting the importance of building public sector mental health and suicide prevention capability.⁵⁴

⁵³ Productivity Commission. (2020). *Mental Health: Productivity Commission Inquiry Report*. 16 November.

⁵⁴ National Suicide Prevention Taskforce. (2021). *National Suicide Prevention Adviser – final advice*. 19 April.

PRO-INTEGRITY CULTURE

Integrity, I think is so important to all of the work that we do as public servants. It actually is the core of who we are. If we go back to our APS value of ethical, it talks about the fact that APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity in all that it does. So it's vital to who we are as public servants. We act with integrity in everything that we do.⁵⁵

Jaala Hinchcliffe, Integrity Commissioner, head of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, and APS Academy Faculty member for Integrity

The APS has surged to meet the demands required to fast-track policy and deliver services that affect all aspects of Australian life. For the APS to be effective in this work, the community needs to trust that it will deliver in the public interest—both the ‘quality of *what* is delivered and *how* delivery is achieved is crucial to that trust.’⁵⁶

Citizen perceptions of Government integrity is the strongest determinant of trust.⁵⁷ As such, a pro-integrity culture that reflects the highest standards of professionalism is key to building this trust in the APS. Pro-integrity involves embedding a culture of ‘doing the right thing at the right time’ into an organisation so it is a core consideration of all it does—from the conduct of its individual employees, to its systems and practices.

Personal integrity may guide individual professionalism, but a pro-integrity culture provides assurance that all APS employees and their agencies are accountable and consistent in their decisions and actions. Strengthening the pro-integrity culture delivers several benefits to APS agencies by producing better decision-making, exemplifying high professional standards, enhancing public trust in the APS, and protecting against misconduct.

In line with the Government’s commitment to reinforce an APS-wide integrity culture, the APSC commissioned Mr Stephen Sedgwick AO to analyse how to strengthen integrity across the APS. Mr Sedgwick’s *Report into consultations regarding APS approaches to institutional integrity*⁵⁸ was released in December 2020. The report concluded that the APS operates within robust integrity frameworks and that there was no need for major changes to the compliance framework. The report’s recommendations focused on enhancing awareness, capability, and accountability in recognition of the importance of constant reinforcement of the APS’s integrity culture. The Secretaries Board endorsed all recommendations.

To implement the recommendations, and to support the APSC’s broader focus on fostering trust in public service integrity, the APSC is developing practical initiatives that focus on

⁵⁵ Jaala Hinchcliffe, Integrity Commissioner and head of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity. (2021). *IPAA Integrity Series Podcast Episode #1*. 2 September.

⁵⁶ Sedgwick, S. (2020). *Report into consultations regarding APS approaches to institutional integrity*. 16 December.

⁵⁷ Murtin, F., et al. (2018). *Trust and its determinants: Evidence from the Trustlab experiment*. OECD Statistics Working Papers (No. 2018/02). 30 June.

⁵⁸ Sedgwick, S. (2020). *Report into consultations regarding APS approaches to institutional integrity*. 16 December.



awareness raising, capability development and accountability. This includes the ongoing development of guidance and educational materials to support staff to uphold integrity and navigate ethical scenarios. Resources, including fact sheets, guides and a podcast series are in development. In March 2021, the APSC launched mandatory integrity training for new APS employees, and is now developing a masterclass series to support SES in fostering an integrity culture. The APSC is also working to highlight the importance of integrity as a capability in leadership and capability development frameworks.

Managing unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviours, such as harassment or bullying, are not tolerated in the APS and are contrary to the APS Values and Code of Conduct. The APS monitors and actively works to eliminate incidents of these negative acts.

The proportion of respondents to the APS Employee Census experiencing harassment or bullying has decreased year-on-year, from 17.2% in 2015 to 11.7% in 2021.⁵⁹ However, the most common types of harassment or bullying have remained the same—verbal abuse, interference with work tasks such as undermining or sabotage, and inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules.

The number of recorded complaints of harassment and bullying made by APS employees has increased over previous years (422 recorded complaints in 2018–19; 531 in 2019–20; 588 in 2020–21). In line with this increase, the number of recorded complaints of sexual harassment more than doubled from 32 in 2019–20 to 78 in 2020–21.

There is no doubt that more work is also required to improve the reporting culture around harassment and bullying. More than half (59%) of 2021 APS Employee Census respondents who had perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace over the previous 12 months did not report their experiences. The most common reason cited by these employees was that they did not think any action would be taken (53%). Other common reasons included concerns around upsetting relationships in the workplace (45%) and that it might affect their career (43%).

Further work is needed to create a culture where those targeted feel comfortable to report and confident that swift action will be taken; a culture where bystanders also call out inappropriate behaviours so they can be addressed. A refreshed APS Gender Equality Strategy, to be released in late-2021, will strengthen the APS's approach to preventing and responding to gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault and bullying.

⁵⁹ 2021 APS Employee Census.

Alongside this refreshed strategy, there will be new annual reporting from APS agencies on gender equality measures to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) from 2022–23. This action is in response to a recommendation in the Australian Human Rights Commission’s *Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report*.⁶⁰ A cross-agency pilot has commenced with the Department of Finance, Department of the Treasury, the Fair Work Ombudsman, WGEA and the APSC to work through the data to be reported, and will include information on policies and training relating to gender-based harassment and discrimination. This reporting will enable the APS to better understand and track progress against key metrics of workplace gender equality and benchmark performance against other entities. It will aid in identifying gender equality challenges so that action can be taken to address these.

Public trust in government

Alongside many other public services across the world, the APS workforce is affected by the changing public expectations and demands of Government services, as well as trust in public institutions.⁶¹ Trust in the public service is founded on visibility of integrity in action. Trust in public institutions and government can also be earned by improving citizens’ experience when interacting with public services.⁶² A diverse workforce can also enhance people’s trust by bringing different perspectives and skill sets to contribute to public interactions and designing solutions to policy challenges.⁶³



**Find out more
about drivers
of citizen trust
and satisfaction
from the Citizen
Experience Survey.**

The Citizen Experience Survey,⁶⁴ administered by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), is a regular, national survey measuring citizens’ experience with services delivered by the APS. Survey results indicate that perceptions of trust improved through 2020 and early 2021 (trust in public services was 66% in February 2021). This was followed by a slight decline in mid-2021 (61% in June 2021), a trend seen in other nations.⁶⁵ Despite the slight decline, trust continues to remain higher than pre-COVID-19 levels (57% in February 2020). Positively, respondents with more complex service experiences retained higher levels of trust and more than half of those surveyed in June 2021 agreed that services were easy to access and efficient in reaching an outcome. Recent independent research confirms that over the past two years, the public sector has improved the citizen experience at twice the rate of the market average.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission. (2020). *Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report*. 5 March.

⁶¹ Boston Consulting Group. (2018). *Scenarios for 2030: A report for the Independent Review of the Australian Public Service (APS)*. 1 October.

⁶² Kumagai, S. and Iorio, F. (2020). *Building Trust in Government through Citizen Engagement*. n.d.

⁶³ Nolan-Flecha, N. (2019). *Next generation diversity and inclusion policies in the public service: Ensuring public services reflect the societies they serve*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance (No. 34). 7 November.

⁶⁴ PM&C. (2021). *2020–2021 Citizen Experience Results Summary*. n.d.

⁶⁵ OECD. (2021). *Government at a Glance 2021*. 9 July.

⁶⁶ KPMG. (2021). *Customer experience excellence report*. 9 November.

Public trust in Australia's economic response to COVID

In January 2020, while flying back from the United States to start her new job at the Department of the Treasury, Jenny Wilkinson pondered the increasing chatter she was hearing in the media about a virus in China.



The next month, the world shifted dramatically. Jenny was not sure what the global COVID-19 pandemic would mean—for the world, for Australia, for policy or for health, or for her staff. “The organisation was genuinely and deeply grappling with it,” recalls Jenny. “It was certainly a baptism of fire for me.”

Jenny Wilkinson PSM

By March, the Government was announcing Australia's health and economic response.

In June 2021, Jenny received a Public Service Medal, ‘for outstanding public service in the development of fiscal policy, particularly in the formulation of the Australian Government's economic response to COVID-19’.

The way policy and services are delivered has an impact on the public's trust in government. Looking back on 2020, Jenny sees a few standout moments that may have contributed to a rise in this trust. “All jurisdictions stepped up to the challenge. Federal, state and territory governments all recognised they had to address a completely new situation. We saw leaders trying to be open and transparent with the public on what they were trying to do and how they were doing it, but also pretty transparent about the inherent uncertainties. There is a need for both those elements to build trust.”

“What I hope the APS takes from this, and learns from this episode, is how effectively we can all work together—when we trust each other, and when we think genuinely and carefully about designing holistic responses when challenges emerge.”

CAPABILITIES FOR THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK

The pandemic response has shone a spotlight on the work and worth of public servants. The crisis thus presents a new opportunity to reinforce the attractiveness of the public service as a career of choice for a new generation of skilled workers who are motivated by public values.⁶⁷

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

The nature of work in the public service is evolving, with digital transformation and community expectations about responsiveness, agility and integration of the public services impacting future workforce needs. Strong expertise in traditional public service capabilities, such as policy analysis and implementation of services, must be complemented by emerging technical skills. The pandemic has highlighted capability gaps in public sectors globally, chief among them a lack of expertise in data and digital, reinforcing the need for change.⁶⁸

PUBLIC SERVICE CRAFT

Successive reviews of the APS have concluded that capability development is the most fundamental requirement for improving the public service performance and delivering better outcomes.⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ The new APS Academy, launched in July 2021, focuses on development of APS 'craft' capabilities unique to the APS. While there is great diversity of roles and functions across the service, these foundational capabilities are the skills that every employee requires for the APS to work effectively as one institution and deliver for the Australian people. Invoking the language of 'craft' reflects a professional public service identity, and a journey from apprenticeship to mastery as a repertoire of core public service skills are developed and refined during an APS career.

The APS Academy Faculty, with representation and experience from across the service, will provide the Academy with APS craft subject matter expertise, ensuring APS craft offerings are aligned to best practice and environmental context.

⁶⁷ OECD. (2020). *Public servants and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic: Emerging responses and initial recommendations*. 27 April.

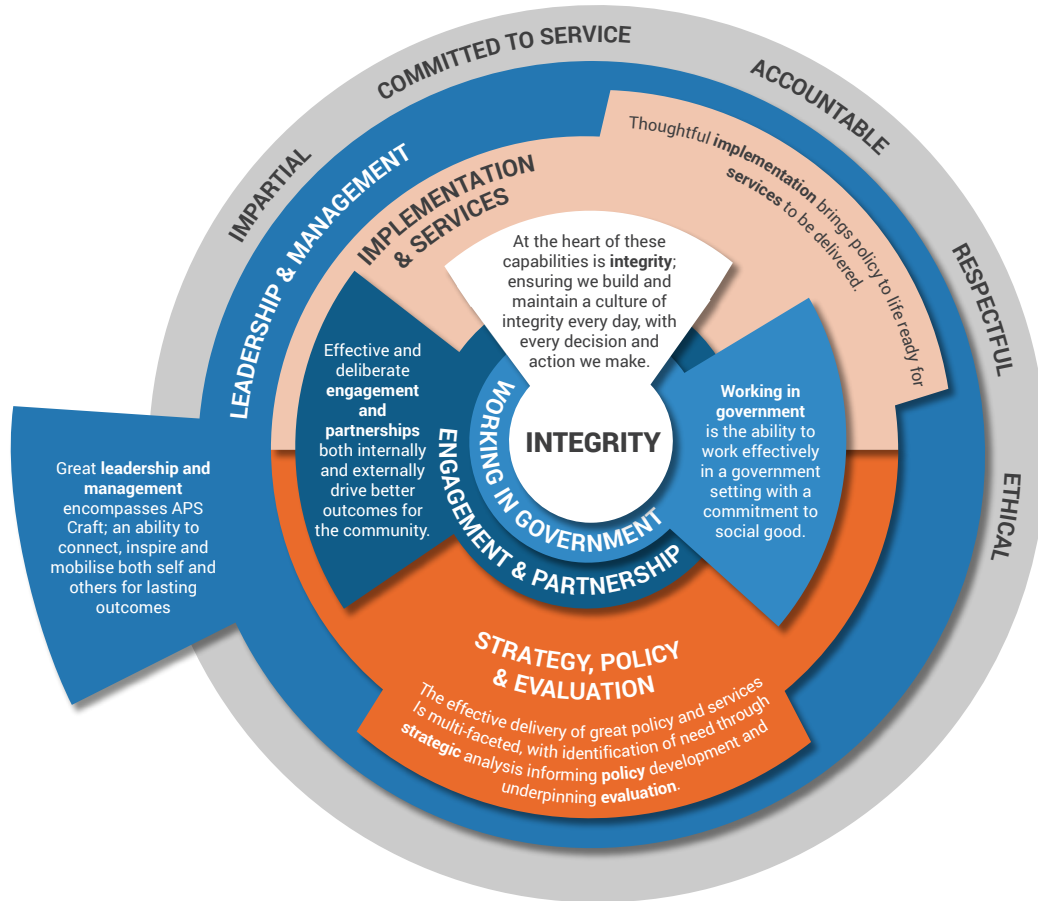
⁶⁸ OECD. (2020). *The Covid-19 crisis: A catalyst for government transformation?*. 10 November.

⁶⁹ Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Our Public Service, Our Future. Independent Review of the Australian Public Service*. 13 December.

⁷⁰ Commonwealth of Australia. (2010). *Ahead of the game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*. 2 March.



Figure 2.3: APS craft



Source: APS Academy

The **integrity craft** aims to embed a pro-integrity culture in the APS. Central to building a high-performing and trusted public service, the practice of integrity goes above and beyond an understanding of the ‘rules’ of working in the APS. It drives a culture that addresses ethical challenges and concerns in the pursuit of excellence. This craft will help equip the APS with the capability to make sound decisions and offer ‘frank and fearless’ advice at every level.

The work of the APS relies on building effective engagement and partnerships with stakeholders to harness their collective knowledge, professionalism and expertise. The **engagement and partnership craft** will equip APS employees with skills to foster networks and collaborate with individuals, communities, businesses and all levels of government.

APS employees will develop expertise in implementing government policy and services, including identifying and managing risk, exploring and prototyping solutions and measuring impact through the **implementation and services craft**. The craft aims to instil the knowledge and skills to identify, implement and deliver services that meet the needs of Australians.

The **strategy, policy and evaluation craft** combines learning across three critical capabilities—strategic thinking which sets the direction of the policy, policy design which informs the delivery of services and implementation, and evaluation which tests outcomes throughout the policy design process. This craft will provide the tools and understanding to enable APS employees to deliver great policy advice.

The **leadership and management craft** will support leaders to continuously develop their capabilities to effectively respond to emerging challenges and to inspire a sense of purpose and a culture of high performance across the APS. Ethical leadership, supporting wellbeing, valuing diversity and inclusion, skilfully influencing stakeholders and providing rigorous advice will all be themes explored under this craft.

The **working in government** craft provides APS employees with an understanding of Australia's system of government and how to work effectively within it. This includes the technical and procedural aspects of government as well as the capabilities of responsiveness, adaptability, and agility which ensure excellence in providing advice to the government of the day. An important element of this craft is working with Ministers and their offices.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Successive reviews of the APS have highlighted the importance of an effective partnership between the APS and the Government in delivering strong outcomes. The Strengthening Partnerships initiative led by the APSC is a new approach to understanding and emphasising the important collaboration between the APS and Ministers and their offices. The initiative has two components:

- Development of guidance material for the APS on engaging effectively with Ministers and their advisers. The material has been developed with the assistance of an experienced Ministerial Liaison Reference Panel of current and former Chiefs of Staff and senior public service executives. Themes include the operating environment of a Ministerial office, working with Ministers, and principles for Departmental Liaison Officers. The material helps APS employees understand their role and the role of their Minister and Ministerial advisers.
- Through the APS Academy, development of a learning program, targeted at SES officers. The *Strengthening Partnerships SES Learning Program* is delivered by experienced practitioners and reflects the lived experience of senior officials and Ministerial offices. It covers supporting ministers to deliver outcomes, delivering quality, timely advice to inform decisions, and working in partnership with Minister's offices to effectively implement decisions and priorities.



The APSC will monitor the guidance material and the SES Learning Program and look for opportunities to broaden the work and reach of Strengthening Partnerships.

CRITICAL CAPABILITIES

Data is a growth industry, partly because of all the advances in digital and the fact that you can now learn, in much more granular detail, the effects of policies, what parts of the community ... where there are gaps. And I think there's no question the Government has recognised the power of data and the importance of investment in data as an uplift.⁷¹

Dr David Gruen, Australian Statistician, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Head of Data Profession

As the demand for digital, ICT and data skills across the labour market increases, the APS needs to focus on growing these capabilities internally and building its talent pipelines to continue to deliver its services to the Australian community. These skills need to be contemporary and continuously refreshed. Moreover, technological and digital literacy needs to be seen as a core skill. As such, improving the base level of technological and digital literacy, at all levels, will improve capability and decision-making.

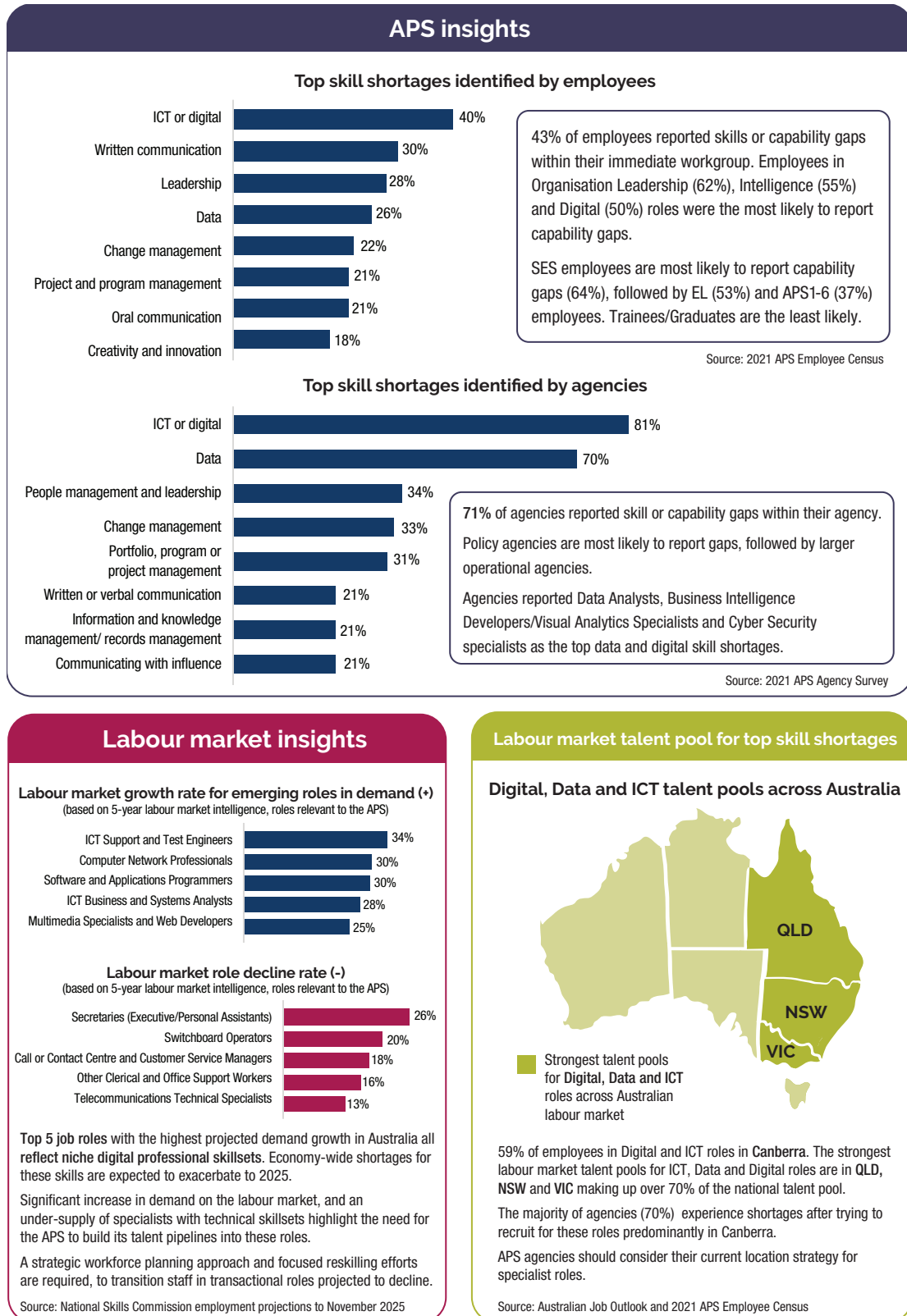
In the 2021 APS Agency Survey, 71% of agencies identified critical skills shortages, with gaps in data and digital skills the most common. At the same time, increased capability in strategic HR across the APS will benefit the uplift of data and digital skills, particularly through improved workforce strategy implementation and planning. The APS is addressing capability uplift through the Digital, Data and HR Professional streams. Each stream is led by a Head of Profession responsible for developing capability to address focused, long-term capability needs.

The **APS Digital Profession** has been in place since April 2020, and now has more than 2,650 members. It is helping to bridge the gap between the current digital and ICT capability and what the APS is expected to need in the future. The digital profession has mapped 150 digital roles to career pathways, to help people explore their digital career options in Government and has piloted an 'oneAPS Opportunities' platform to test new approaches to find and deploy digital professionals. In addition, more than 850 digital professionals have participated in targeted coaching and mentoring programs for women.⁷²

⁷¹ Dr David Gruen, Australian Statistician and Head of Data Profession. (2021). *IPAA Work with Purpose Podcast Special Anniversary Edition*. 29 April.

⁷² The Women in IT Executive Mentoring (WITEM) program and the Coaching for Women in Digital program.

Figure 2.4: Strategic Labour Force Insights Dashboard





Digital Profession—Emerging Talent Programs

To meet the Australian Government’s ambition of being in the top 3 digital Governments by 2025, the APS needs people with the right digital skills, capability and mindset. The global shortage of digital talent means it is important for the APS not only to upskill and re-skill its current workforce, but also to generate a talent pipeline for the future.



Emerging Talent Program Induction Session.

The Digital Profession’s Emerging Talent Programs provide the APS with potential employees with new digital skills and fresh ideas, especially ‘digital natives’. The programs target different skill and education levels:

- Graduates—giving people with a university degree in a digital or technical field the opportunity to use their digital skills to build a better Australia
- Cadets—supporting people currently studying an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in a digital or technology-related field and giving them practical skills while they study
- Apprentices—providing an opportunity for people who are passionate about digital technology and looking to start their digital or technical career in Government (no degree is required for this program)
- Australian Defence Force Cyber Gap Program – partnering with the Australian Defence Force to provide people with a 12-month online program, completed in conjunction with tertiary studies and designed to enhance skills and employability in the cyber security field.

These programs identify and recruit emerging digital talent by providing visible entry-level pathways into digital careers in Government, promoting digital and technical careers as an option to young people to grow the talent pool, matching the right digital talent to the needs of agencies, and delivering ongoing support and targeted learning and development to program participants.

The programs have been successful in boosting the number of digital graduates, cadets and apprentices working in the APS. In 2019, 96 apprentices, cadets and graduates were placed. This increased to 153 in 2021. The 2022 program intake interviewed 750 potential future digital practitioners and is expecting to place 300 people into digital roles across 20 agencies.

Workforce data indicates there are 4,359 people⁷³ working in data roles across the APS and numbers continue to grow as the demand for dynamic data-driven public policy increases. While the labour market appears to have improved the availability of specialist data skills over the past 2 years, strategic workforce planning effort is still needed to attract and retain data specialists.

The **APS Data Profession** was established in September 2020, to lift the data capability of the APS workforce to generate deeper insights to inform decision-making in policy development, program management and service delivery.

Several initiatives have been undertaken in the first year of the profession to establish a data literate APS workforce, with highly capable sophisticated and specialist data professionals including:

- delivering the first APS data graduate program, which saw 216 graduates join the service across 15 agencies, with more agencies to be involved in the coming year
- releasing the APS Data Literacy Capability Framework to improve understanding of the data-specific knowledge, skills and behaviours related to a range of activities from communicating with or about data, to performing exploratory data analysis—the framework is a guide for APS agencies, employees and managers as they build data capabilities, manage workforce requirements and develop careers
- establishing a strategic recruitment policy to fill senior data roles across the service.

More than 1,500 people had joined the data profession network by September 2021 with active engagement across agencies in governance bodies and project groups.

The **APS HR Profession** was established in October 2019, with the aim of attracting, building and retaining strategic HR capability across the APS. The HR profession now has 3,500 members and more than 40 senior HR panellists supporting recruitment for key senior HR roles in the APS.

The HR Profession delivered several key initiatives in 2020–21 to build and uplift strategic HR skills across the APS including:

- launching the APS HR Workforce Strategy and Action Plan in August 2021 which focuses on growing individual capability, delivering consistent and high-quality services, and maturing the HR profession

⁷³ APSED, 30 June 2021. Number of APS employees within the Data and Research job family within the 2021 edition of the APS Job Family Framework.



- releasing the Pathways to Professionalisation—APS HR Capability Framework, a key implementation activity outlined in the APS HR Workforce Strategy, which supports HR professionals at any level to identify their current proficiency and next steps
- piloting the APS HR School Leaver program through which 2020 and 2021 Year 12 graduates can enter a HR career in the APS workforce and access on-the-job and corporate training with one of 12 participating agencies.



Read more about the APS HR Workforce Strategy and Action Plan and its signature initiatives.

Read more about the APS professional streams and their signature initiatives.



Regulatory practice

Through its Deregulation Agenda, the Australian Government is working to minimise the regulatory burden faced by business, while maintaining the regulation needed to secure competitive markets, safe communities and a healthy environment. Strengthening and uplifting the APS's regulator performance, capability, culture and professionalism is a core component of the Government's renewed regulatory framework.

For the APS to continue to deliver effective and efficient regulation into the future, practitioners need the skills, tools and culture to ensure high performance standards and good outcomes. The APSC, PM&C and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment have partnered to establish the Excellence in Professional Regulation pilot training program.

This pilot program will be progressively developed and delivered over 3 years. It will include 3 streams: Regulatory Practice Essentials, Mastering Regulatory Practice and Leading a Regulatory System. Drawing on the principles of the recently released *Regulator Performance Guide*,⁷⁴ the program will take advantage of technology and various contemporary and continuous learning approaches to deliver a holistic learning experience.

⁷⁴ PM&C. (2021). *Regulator Performance Guide*. 1 July.

The Secretaries Board has also established a Regulator Leadership Cohort, comprising heads of Commonwealth regulators and senior leaders with significant regulatory functions, to provide perspective and expertise on improving regulator capability, culture and performance. The Regulator Leadership Cohort recommends actions to adopt best practice and improve performance across Commonwealth regulators. It is also partnering with the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) to deliver leadership masterclasses that support senior regulators to share collective insights and build a trusted community for shared problem-solving.

BUILDING CAREER PATHWAYS

As the APS grapples with increasingly complex and interrelated issues, it needs professionals who bring a diversity of skill, thought and experience. A more diverse APS that values different experiences and encourages varied career paths will help the APS bring balanced insights to complex issues.

The implementation of APS professional streams is only one of several initiatives focused on building career pathways in the APS to help with this. As an individual in the APS, it can be challenging to navigate a career path in one of the largest employers in Australia. The APS is implementing a number of actions to help people establish career pathways and to increase their skills and capability, from entry level to leadership positions. Central to this is how capability and job performance are developed, nurtured and managed.

GROWING THE ENTRY-LEVEL PIPELINE

For years, APS graduate recruitment has been cumbersome for both graduates and employers, with agencies running their own recruitment processes in a decentralised approach. In 2020–21, a coordinated approach to graduate recruitment was launched under the Australian Government Graduate Program (AGGP).⁷⁵ The AGGP brings together individual APS agency graduate recruitment processes under a single umbrella and offers graduates the option to apply for one or several streams including general, data, digital and HR.

A successful pilot in 2020 involved a partnership between 5 APS agencies. More than 6,000 applications were received, including 1,700 across the digital and data streams. The second phase in 2021 involved 34 agencies coming together for an inaugural APS virtual careers fair, giving graduates the opportunity to speak to multiple agencies in the one place.

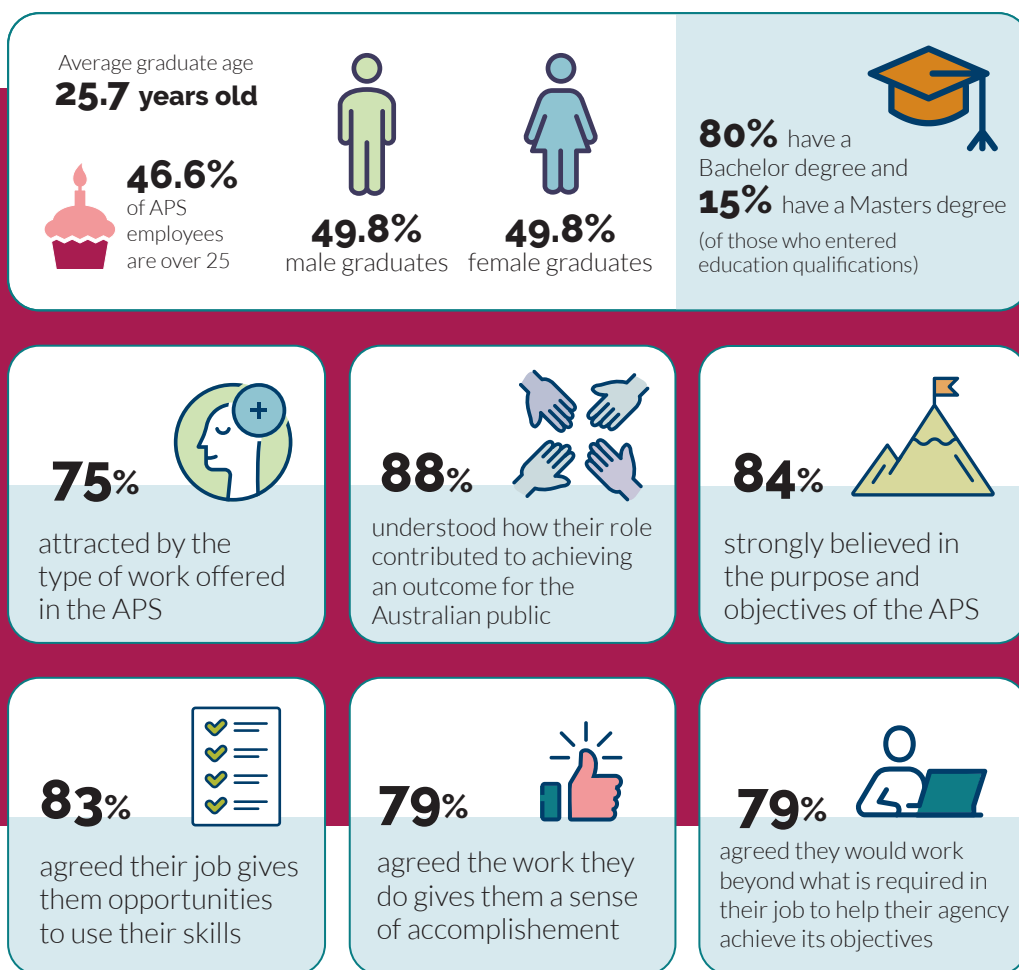
⁷⁵ APSC. (2020). *Australian Government Graduate Program*. n.d.



A redesigned Graduate Portal was launched in March 2021 and has attracted more than a quarter of a million views and 173,193 unique visitors. In 2021 there were 8,463 applications received across the AGGP streams, a 37% increase in application numbers from the previous year.

The 2021 graduates were also offered the opportunity to do service delivery rotations, with more than 150 additional service delivery rotation opportunities available. These rotations support an operating model and aim to instil a culture of mobility from the outset.

Graduates



Source: APSED, 30 June 2021; 2019 and 2021 APS Employee Census

Building on the success of a centralised AGGP, a cross-agency discovery project focused on other APS Entry Level Programs (ELPs) to examine current barriers and explore best practice across the public and private sectors. Work has now started to build consistency and centralise and/or consolidate these entry-level programs where it makes sense to do so.

Career Starter Program: Kick-starting APS careers

The Career Starter Program, originally established by the Department of Finance in 2002, has expanded to become a whole-of-government program, with 9 agencies participating in 2021. The program was awarded the 2018 Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) Susan Ryan Age Diversity Award.

The program supports participants who have recently finished their Year 12 certificate or equivalent to build skills on the job, learn through structured training and work as part of a team.

Participants complete a Certificate IV in Government, which supports them to transition into the APS, problem-solve and think critically. Career Starter participants can contribute to project, administrative and research work.

Participants are placed in various Government agencies, starting as a permanent APS Level 1 and advancing to APS Level 2 when they complete the program.

The program offers recent school leavers a great opportunity to kick-start their APS careers. It also offers the APS a pipeline for new talent. Close to three-quarters (74%) of participants remained with the APS four years after completing the program. This represents a rate of retention comparable to APS graduate programs.

VETERAN SKILLS IN THE MODERN APS

The APS benefits from recruiting individuals who have built a career external to the service, such as in the Australian Defence Force. Leadership, logistical and organisational skills honed in the military translate to many roles in the APS. Veterans also bring strong ethics, behavioural expectations and a background working in secure environments, as well as a desire to continue to serve our country.

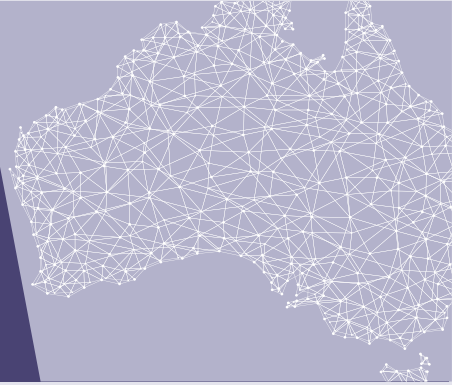
Several publicly and privately run veteran employment and transition programs support ex-service personnel to bring their skills to the APS job market, including the recently established Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) *APS Veteran Employment Pathway* program.⁷⁶ In 2021, DVA is trialling the program with the Department of Defence, with the aim of supporting veterans to gain ongoing APS employment. The program assists veterans' transition to the APS through a comprehensive induction and development program, with targeted support to move from a military background into the culture and skills required for the APS. For a smooth transition into APS culture, participants take part in formal learning and development, a mentor and buddy program, peer network building and family inclusion activities. The trial program consists of 10 months of targeted learning and development through 2021–22. On completion, participants will be able to continue as ongoing staff members under standard APS employment conditions.

⁷⁶ Department of Veterans' Affairs. (2021). *APS Veteran Employment Pathway: Continuing to Serve*. 14 July.



Translating capability from a military career to the public service

Mr Leigh Gordon AO CSM joined the Royal Australian Mint (the Mint) in February 2021 after a career in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), most recently as the Air Vice-Marshal of the Joint Strike Fighter project. Leigh was particularly motivated to join the APS to continue to make a contribution to Australia and Australians.



Since joining the APS, Leigh reflects that the range of skills and experiences acquired during his 38-year military career readily translates to his role as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mint. “These include strategic leadership, personnel management, program and project management, and stakeholder engagement,” says Leigh.

One of the core skills developed in the military and valued in the APS is strategic leadership. As the CEO, Leigh leads the Mint to adapt and thrive in an increasingly complex environment where the use of cash is changing, where technology is advancing, and where supply chains are becoming more fragile.

“A significant proportion of my ADF career has also centred on project and program management and I have found that my skills are readily applicable to the APS,” says Leigh. “Each year the Mint undertakes a significant program designing, manufacturing and delivering a range of coins for banks, commercial partners, and collectors. Key program management skills, such as risk management, business acumen and financial management, have translated across from the ADF.”

The APS is positioning itself to be more flexible and agile for the future, and Leigh considers that “the APS benefits from the transfer of skills from outside the organisation to ensure it develops and remains relevant.”

THE FUTURE OF APS LEADERSHIP

Public service leaders have to make space for innovation while managing risk and being accountable for results, support fast-moving political agendas, manage and transform vast public organisations, motivate and inspire their workforces, and be trusted partners to citizens and an ever-growing list of partners and stakeholders. All of this while promoting the highest level of personal and professional ethics and integrity.⁷⁷

Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development

Public service leaders—senior level public servants who lead and improve major Government functions—are at the heart of Government effectiveness.⁷⁸ SES leaders require a broad range of capabilities to guide the APS through an increasingly complex environment. The *APS Leadership Capability Framework*, which identifies the leadership capabilities considered critical for success in the most senior APS roles,⁷⁹ was updated as part of *Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025*. It now includes driving institutional integrity, a citizen-centric focus and a commitment to life-long learning.

Figure 2.5: The APS Leadership Capability Framework



Source: Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025

⁷⁷ OECD. (2021). *Government at a Glance 2021*. 9 July.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ APSC. (2021). *Leadership Capabilities*. 21 March.



Secretaries and Agency Heads are continuing to build an APS workforce with stronger leadership capabilities. With an eye to the future, the Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council focus on the senior leadership pipeline. The objective is to ensure the APS has people with the skills, experience and expertise to lead at the most senior levels, now and in the years ahead. This includes being able to work with diverse stakeholders and a range of ministerial arrangements, provide sound policy, service delivery and regulatory advice that takes a whole-of-government view, and manage large and complex organisations to deliver value for Government and Australian citizens. The APSC has continued to support these Councils in their work.

A key element in building a strong and diverse pipeline is understanding the current capability of the senior leaders. As part of the APS reform agenda, in 2020 the SES Band 3 benchmarked capability assessments were integrated into the Secretaries Talent Council Band 3 talent assessment program of work. As at September 2021, 87 SES Band 3 capability assessments have been completed with several assessment rounds delivered in 2020 and 2021. Future assessment rounds will focus on new SES Band 3s and Band 3-equivalent Agency Heads. All SES Band 3s will complete a reassessment every 2 to 3 years to support ongoing development and career planning.

As a leader in the public service, I think it's about empowering your staff ... really pushing down responsibility, enabling them to grow, helping them with their challenges and guiding them, but not stepping in and doing it ... unless we, as leaders, take responsibility and make sure that we're there to nurture and to nourish that capability, I think that for the public service, the stewardship won't look as good as it could.⁸⁰

Mary Wiley-Smith, Deputy Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Just as organisations have adapted to new ways of operating, embracing digital technology and reorganising their supply chain, leaders have also adapted over the course of the pandemic. Leaders globally will need to adapt to a 'new normal' to operate in workplaces that are more flexible, less hierarchical and more diverse.⁸¹

The public sector is no exception. Even before COVID-19, there were calls for leadership within the public sector to adopt a different mindset to best respond to broader remits and increased complexity.⁸² The mindset needs to build and support teams of diverse expertise and embrace innovation more strongly in the face of budget restraint and changing

⁸⁰ Mary Wiley-Smith, Deputy Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. (2021). *IPAA Work with Purpose Podcast Episode #39*. 24 May.

⁸¹ McKinsey & Company. (2021). *What matters most? Five priorities for CEOs in the next normal*. 8 September.

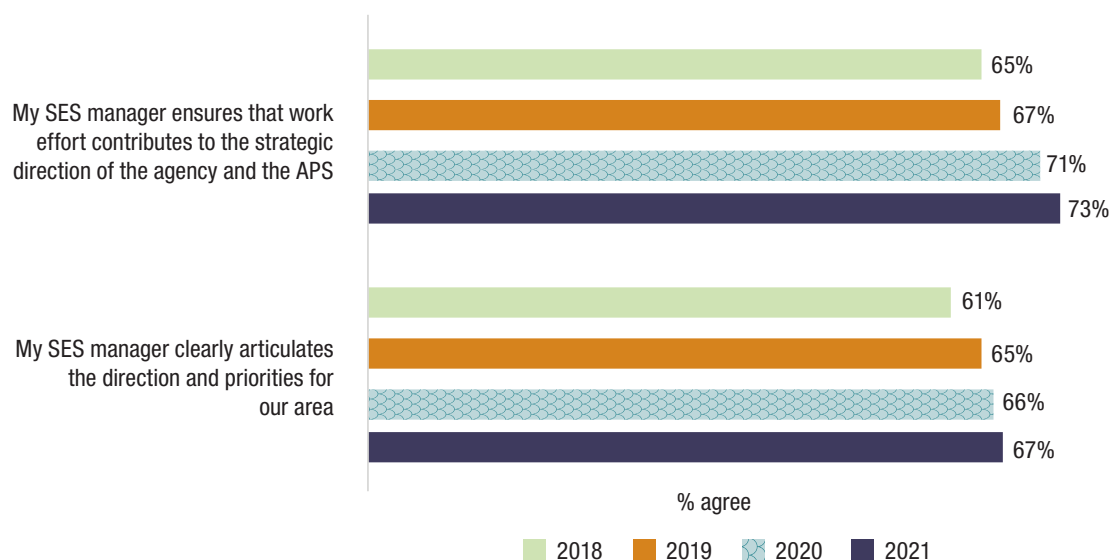
⁸² Deloitte Insights. (2019). *A new mindset for public sector leadership*. 28 June.

technology. There is also an increasing focus on collaboration across blurred boundaries of responsibility and influence, as well as on resilience and self-awareness.⁸³

Employees are seeking more meaning and value to their work, alongside increased support to balance professional and personal lives.⁸⁴ Leaders who can offer this direction and support will be much sought after.

In the APS, employees' attitudes towards senior leadership continue to improve. Over time, respondents to the APS Employee Census increasingly view their SES managers as aligning work effort to the strategic direction of their agency and to the broader APS, and as articulating the direction and priorities of their work area.

Figure 2.6: Employees' perceptions of their SES managers' performance (2018 to 2021)



Source: 2018–2021 APS Employee Census

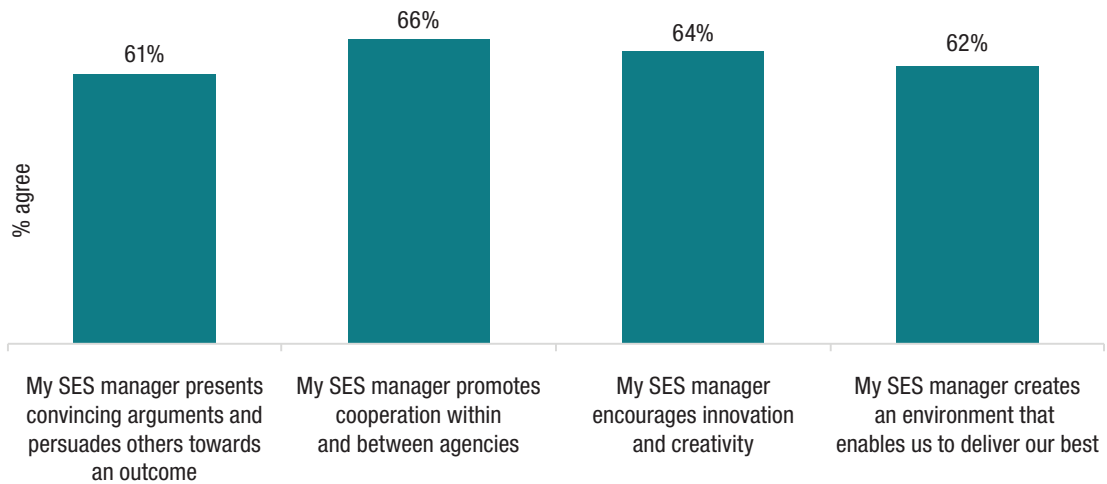
APS employees are also seeing their senior leaders demonstrate the mindset that will increasingly be required of them in the future. More than half of all 2021 APS Employee Census respondents agreed that their SES managers demonstrated behaviours that suggest they were influential, collaborative, innovative and enabling. However, as seen in these results and through the talent assessments of senior leaders, there is still work to be done to continue to build on these capabilities.

⁸³ Deloitte Development LLC. (2021). *Transforming government post-COVID-19: How flipping orthodoxies can reinvent government operating models*. n.d.

⁸⁴ IBM. (2021). *What employees expect in 2021*. n.d.



Figure 2.7: Employees' perceptions of their SES managers (2021)



Source: 2021 APS Employee Census

Since 2014, the APSC has delivered a range of leadership development initiatives to increase participants' leadership capability. Each year more than 500 SES and EL staff from across the APS participate in APSC leadership development activities through longitudinal programs that include workshops, coaching, peer learning, and on-the-job activities or secondments. Evaluation data indicates strong shifts in capability as a result of participating in these activities. With the establishment of the APS Academy, a broader range of support for leaders will be available as resources to support manager performance. Program Alumni will support implementation of learning and performance on the job.

ENSURING HIGH PERFORMANCE

The APS must remain high-performing to meet the growing expectations of Government, parliament and the Australian community. Achieving these levels of performance is the responsibility of every APS employee. This is made clear in the July 2019 amendments to the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016*. The amendments clarified the obligations of agency heads, supervisors and all employees in achieving, promoting and fostering a high-performance culture. In late 2020, the APSC surveyed departments and agencies to understand how they implemented amendments to the Directions and found that agencies have established fit-for-purpose performance frameworks that now align with the intention of the revised Directions.⁸⁵ Consistencies across these performance frameworks include the 'no surprises principle' for the management of underperformance and the importance of regular performance conversations and frequent feedback to support high performance.

⁸⁵ Agency Performance Frameworks Survey.

Achieving a high-performance culture involves more than just managing underperformance or rewarding high performers. It is also about developing the capability of employees and providing regular constructive feedback. Evidence suggests that not all managers are prioritising these activities. Just under three-quarters (73%) of respondents to the 2021 APS Employee Census thought their immediate supervisor was invested in their development.⁸⁶ A similar proportion (74%) agreed that their immediate supervisor provided them with helpful feedback to manage their performance.⁸⁷ Other research suggests that managers are often both directly and indirectly encouraged to prioritise the delivery of outcomes for Government over the other duties of their roles, such as people management and development.⁸⁸

In recognising the importance of people management, the APS Learning Board has recommended focused training for leaders in how to engage in conversations about staff development. The APS Academy is reviewing existing programs to make sure there is support for managers and employees to more constructively engage in development discussions to build workforce capability and performance. These programs, along with the focus on performance frameworks, will enable the APS workforce to meet today's increasing and changing expectations.

⁸⁶ 2021 APS Employee Census.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ APSC Centre for Leadership and Learning, APS Learning and Development Strategy user research 2020.

CHAPTER THREE

YOUR APS

The scale of the complexity we face, whether in managing our relationship with China, or in positioning Australia to prosper in a more unstable world, demands that we have our most dynamic, creative and talented people on the case. This means actively cultivating diverse and inclusive teams.⁸⁹

Frances Adamson AC, then Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

⁸⁹ Frances Adamson AC, then Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2021). *National Press Club Address*. 23 June.



The APS operates in more than 567 locations across Australia and the globe. As at 30 June 2021, the APS employed 153,945 people across 97 agencies in 14 portfolios, an increase of 3,528 (2.3%) since 30 June 2020.⁹⁰ APS employee numbers have fallen by 8% from their peak of 167,339 in June 2012.

ONGOING AND NON-ONGOING EMPLOYEES

The number of ongoing employees at 30 June 2021 was 133,952, an increase of 1,730 (1.3%) from 30 June 2020. Ongoing employees make up 87% of the APS workforce, down slightly from 87.9% in 2020. This is the lowest proportion of ongoing employees in the APS over the last 20 years.

There were 19,993 non-ongoing APS employees at 30 June 2021, an increase of 1,798 (9.9%) from the previous year. This is the highest proportion of non-ongoing employees over the last 20 years.

This increase in non-ongoing employees reflects an increase in demand to assist the Government's COVID-19 recovery plan, supporting jobs and providing essential services, including support payments, health and aged care. During this period, the ABS also required extra staff to prepare for the 2021 Census. As such, the agencies with the largest increase in non-ongoing employees during the last financial year were Services Australia (an increase of 2,952 non-ongoing employees) and the ABS (an increase of 409 non-ongoing employees).

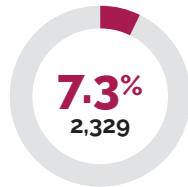
Non-ongoing employees in the APS are employed for a specified term, or for the duration of a specified task, or to perform duties that are irregular or intermittent (casual). Of all non-ongoing employees at 30 June 2021:

- 11,469 (57.4%) were employed for a specified term or the duration of a specified task
- 8,524 (42.6%) were employed on a casual basis.

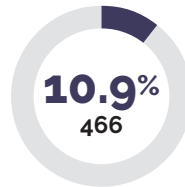
⁹⁰ See Appendix 2 for a full list as at 30 June 2021.

Largest additions of employees in 2020–21 financial year

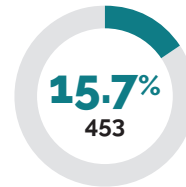
Services Australia



Health

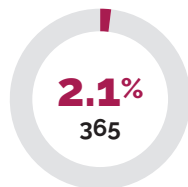


ABS

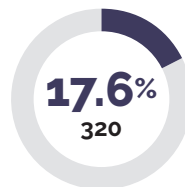


Largest reductions of employees in 2020–21 financial year

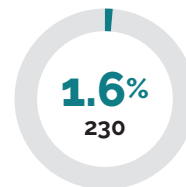
Defence



Australian Electoral Commission



Home Affairs



Note: excludes Machinery of Government changes

APS STAFFING LEVELS

The 2021–22 Federal Budget signalled an uplift in ASL resources across Commonwealth entities to support recovery from the pandemic. As a product of continued deliberate APS workforce planning, it is expected that over the medium and longer term there will be a modest increase in underlying ASL as the growth of the Australian population and economy recovers. As a result, the departmental funding provided to administer Government services will increase in 2021–22, which largely reflects an increase in service delivery operations. However, as a proportion of Government expenditure, departmental allocations continue to be lower than the average over the last 10 years.⁹¹

⁹¹ Commonwealth of Australia. (2021). *Agency Resourcing: Budget Paper No. 4 2021–22*. 11 May.

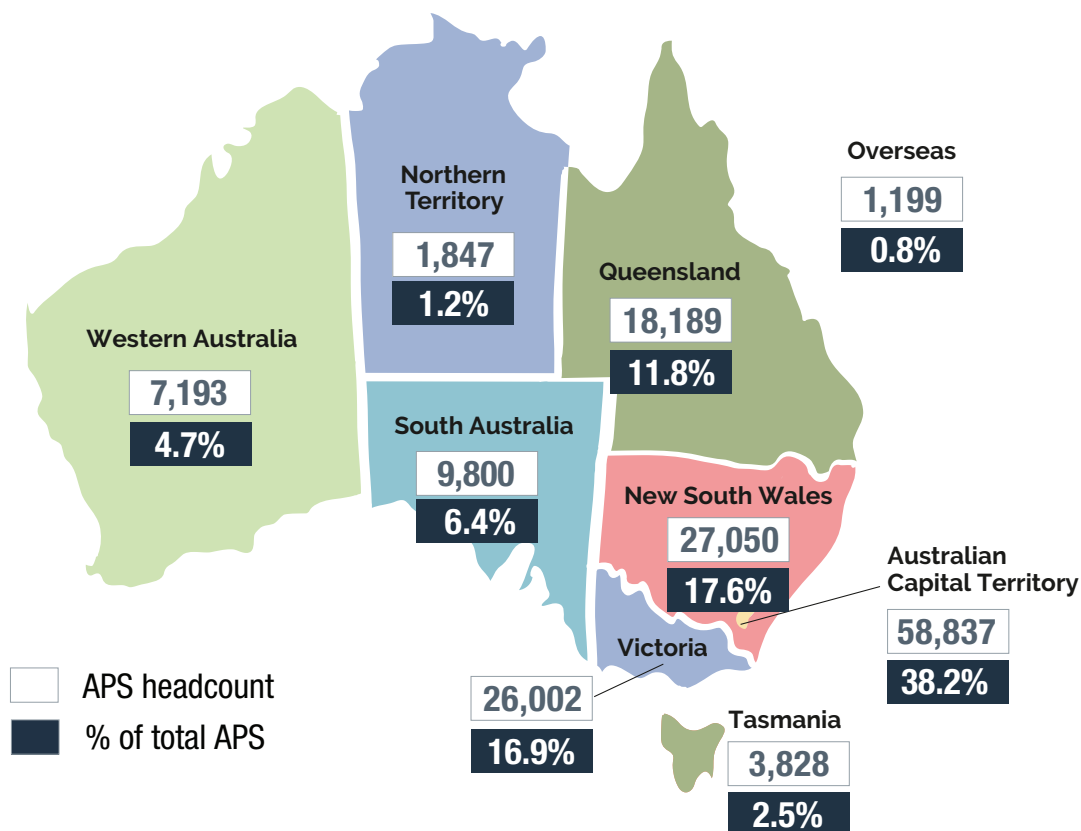
WHAT WE DO AND WHERE WE WORK

There is an enormous variety and diversity of roles, workplaces and locations for APS employees. The nature and scope of work varies between sections, branches, divisions and agencies located right across the globe.

Services Australia, the Department of Defence, the Australian Taxation Office and the Department of Home Affairs remain the 4 largest agencies, together employing 56% of the APS (86,071 employees). Similarly, Service Delivery continues to be the most common job family in the APS, with close to one-quarter of employees working in these types of roles.

At 30 June 2021, 13.8% of APS employees were located in regions outside Australia's capital cities. The growth in employee numbers outside capital cities has occurred mainly in New South Wales, which has the largest percentage of APS employees outside the Australian Capital Territory.

Figure 3.1: APS employee numbers by location (30 June 2021)



Source: APSED

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

A diverse and inclusive APS contributes to better outcomes in service to the Government and the Australian community.

In 2021, the OECD noted Australia's high performance on diversity and inclusion in the public service. Australia ranks 8th in the OECD for women in senior management and 9th on the development of a diverse workforce, and Australia's central Government workforce is relatively younger (more employees aged 18 to 54 years) than the OECD average.⁹²

APS leaders recognise that harnessing diversity in its many dimensions is a key element to agency success, especially when it comes to tackling problems of increasing complexity and on a global scale. Cultural diversity in the workplace, supported by an inclusive work environment, enables innovation, strong contestability and better outcomes.

Diversity and inclusion has often been perceived as a stand-alone effort undertaken by HR, or a 'tick box' exercise. However, there has been a considered effort across the APS over the last 12 months to ensure diversity and inclusion becomes embedded in everyday work, and that it is a part of workforce planning activities and good people management practices.

APS agencies host a wide range of employee or advocate networks to support people who identify with diversity groups in the workplace. The most common are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employee networks (43 agencies), LGBTIQ+ employee networks (36 agencies), disability employee networks (33 agencies) and gender employee networks (33 agencies).⁹³

APS agencies also collaborate to promote best practice and share lessons learned in workforce diversity and inclusion (70 agencies). For 1 in 3 agencies, this collaboration extends outside the APS to organisations such as the Diversity Network Australia, Diversity Council of Australia, Pride in Diversity, Science in Australia Gender Equity, Champions of Change Coalition, and the Australian Network on Disability.

GENDER EQUALITY

Workplace gender equality is associated with increased organisational productivity and innovation, and improved attraction and retention of talent. According to the 2021 OECD *Government at a Glance Report*, Australia performs above the OECD average in terms of gender equality in public sector employment.⁹⁴

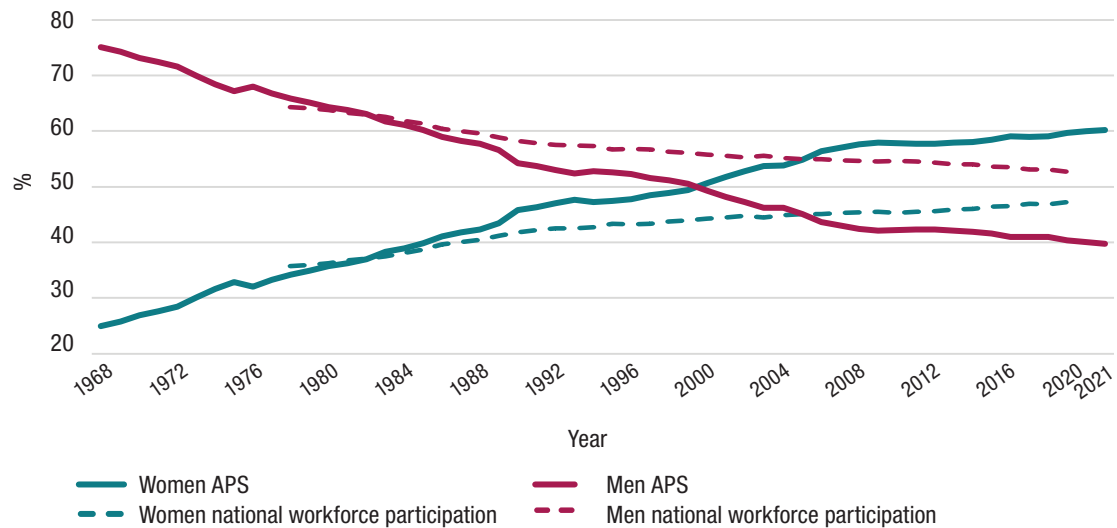
Proportionately, there are now more women in the APS (60.2%) than in the wider Australian labour market (47.6%).

⁹² OECD. (2021). *Government at a Glance 2021 Country Fact Sheet: Australia*. 9 July.

⁹³ 2021 Agency Survey. A total of 95 agencies responded to the 2021 Agency Survey.

⁹⁴ OECD. (2021). *Government at a Glance 2021 Country Fact Sheet: Australia*. 9 July.

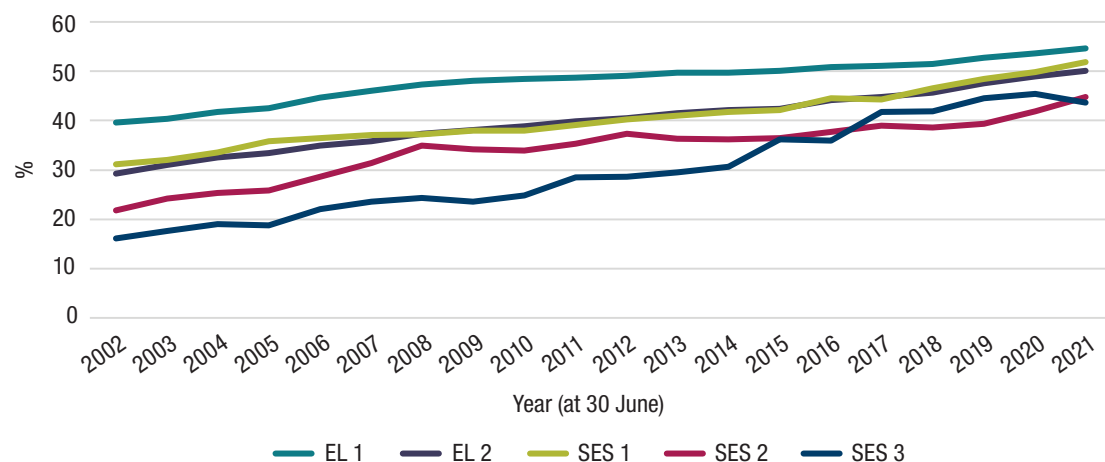
Figure 3.2: Proportion of women and men in the APS (ongoing), compared with Australian workforce participation rate (1968 to 2021)



Source: APSED and Australian Bureau of Statistics

Women in the APS have reached, and in most cases exceeded, parity with men at every level up to and including the collective SES cohort. For the first time, women have achieved parity at the EL 2 (50.1%) and SES classifications (50.0%), although there is still a lower proportion of women at the individual SES 2 (44.8%) and SES 3 (43.7%) bands. For the past 8 years, the proportion of promotions into and within the SES for women has exceeded 50%, on average.⁹⁵ In 2020-21, more women were promoted to the SES 1 (62.7%) and SES 2 (56.6%) bands than men, however, only 26.7% of promotions to the SES 3 band were women.

Figure 3.3: Proportion of women in mid to senior leadership roles EL 1 to SES 3 (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED

⁹⁵ Promotions, as opposed to new hires, account for around 70% of new SES employees.



A renewed APS Gender Equality Strategy

To support the APS commitment to gender equality, the APSC, in partnership with the Office for Women, is renewing the APS Gender Equality Strategy.

The independent evaluation of the previous strategy, *Balancing the Future: Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19*, found it had a positive impact on progressing gender equality across the APS. The evaluation noted that the APS cannot become complacent and must renew its energy to ensure that benefits of gender equality are shared by all both now and into the future.

The updated strategy will drive practical action for change by helping to shift gender norms, normalise flexible and respectful workplaces, and embed gender equality in all that the APS does.



It will strengthen APS approaches to preventing and responding to gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault and bullying.

Work on the strategy will be informed by the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Respect@Work* report and the subsequent Government response, *A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*.⁹⁶

The APSC undertook extensive consultation to inform the strategy and will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Australian Human Rights Commission, state and territory Public Service Commissions and international partners, throughout its implementation.

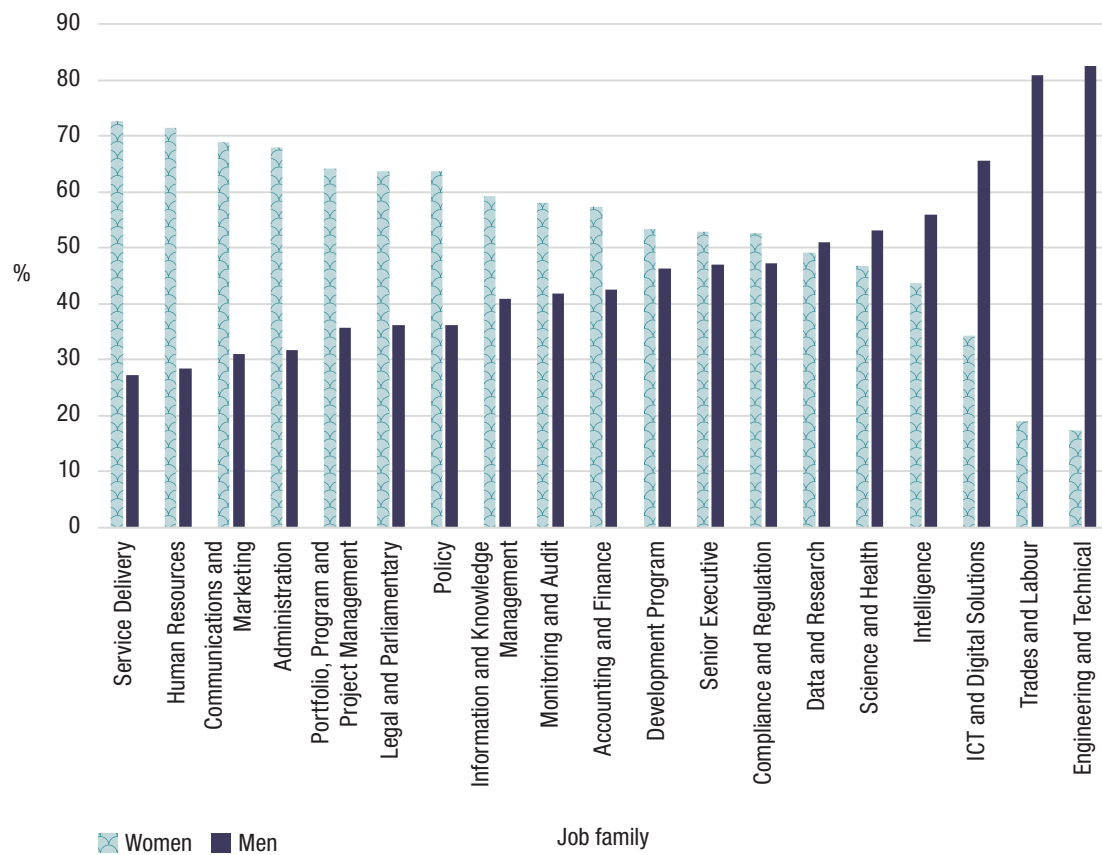
The renewed strategy is expected to be released in late 2021.

⁹⁶ Attorney-General's Department. (2021). *A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*. 8 April.

In the APS, women are more likely to be working part-time (21.1%) compared with men (5.0%). This pattern is also reflected in the broader Australian labour market for June 2021, where 21.3% of women and 10.1% of men worked part-time.⁹⁷

In the APS, almost two-thirds (63.7%) of non-ongoing roles are occupied by women. This is slightly higher than the proportion of women in ongoing roles (59.6%). According to APS job family data, more women work in service delivery (72.6%), HR (71.5%) and communications and marketing (68.8%) roles, and more men work in engineering and technical (82.6%), trades and labour (80.9%) and ICT and digital solutions (65.6%) roles.⁹⁸

Figure 3.4: Proportion of job family by gender (30 June 2021)



Source: APSED

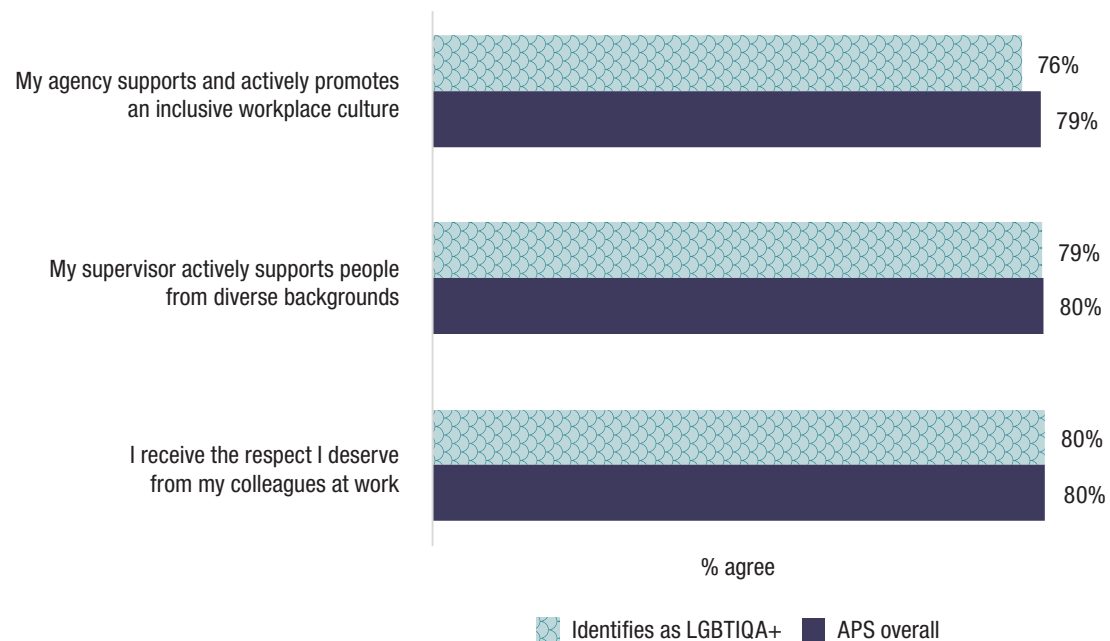
⁹⁷ ABS. (2021). *Labour Force, Australia*. 14 October. Part-time employment is defined as less than 35 hours of work a week.

⁹⁸ See Appendix 3 for more information on APS job family data.

Since 2014, respondents to the APS Employee Census could identify their gender as X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified). This question was reviewed in 2021 to align with the updated standard released by the ABS and to better provide employees the opportunity to more accurately reflect their situation.⁹⁹ Respondents can now describe their gender as man or male, woman or female, non-binary or that they use a different term. In 2021, 0.3% described their gender as non-binary and another 0.2% said they use a different term.

In 2021, 7% of APS Employee Census respondents identified as LGBTIQ+¹⁰⁰, up from 4.1% in 2017. The majority of LGBTIQ+ respondents to the 2021 APS Employee Census perceive respect and inclusion in their workplaces.

Figure 3.5: Employees' perceptions of an inclusive workplace culture (2021)



Source: 2021 APS Employee Census

⁹⁹ ABS. (2021). *Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables*. 14 January.

¹⁰⁰ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Questioning and/or Asexual.

Connecting through pride in diversity

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's (DAWE) LGBTIQ+ Pride Network has had an impactful first year. The network has grown to more than 170 members in all states across the nation.



DAWE Executive showing their support for IDAHOBIT 2021 by wearing brightly coloured ties, scarves and shirts. L-R: Rebecca Dann—Pride Network Chair, Desmond Healey—Pride Network Co-Champion, Andrew Metcalfe AO—Secretary, and Cindy Briscoe—Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer.

A key network focus is recognising that its members are more than a gender and/or their sexuality. They are individuals with interests, backgrounds, and heritages that make them who they are. This is celebrated through the recognition of LGBTIQ+ days of significance, including the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia & Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and the International Day of LGBTQIA+ People in STEM.

On International Non-Binary People's Day, the Pride Network released the educational video, *Supporting non-binary people*. The video, developed with the DAWE's Learning and Development team, explains what non-binary means, and how to support non-binary people through acceptance, support and the use of inclusive language.

The Pride Network is leading work on promoting the importance, visibility and access to allies not only for LGBTIQ+ people but for all people in DAWE. This leadership extends to active participation in the APS Pride Champions Network, giving departments and agencies the opportunity to connect with the Pride Network for support through events and materials for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies.



ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYEES

My view on this is that the only way to cement changes, and it's a slow way, but it's one person at a time. And every single person has to be involved in our reconciliation journey, and they have to do it through the contacts they make, the way they talk, the way they interact, the way they listen. It's not just learning about Indigenous culture, it's about how different cultural perspectives knit together ... in our workplace, we're well down that reconciliation path. And as we go out into the broader community, we hopefully take that with us.¹⁰¹

Ray Griggs AO CSC, then Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Australians Agency

As employers, all Commonwealth agencies have a responsibility to contribute to Australia's Closing the Gap priorities, especially around strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce participation. In fulfilling this responsibility, the APS is well placed to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through career development, retention and advancement. There are also significant benefits to agencies and the broader public service from this approach. Workplace environments that demonstrate cultural integrity drive better policy development and service delivery outcomes to meet the needs of the Australian community. Benefits of increased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation include increased diversity of employee experience and opinion, and improved connection to Indigenous communities.

The APS has committed to a range of programs and measures designed to increase the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the service. APS agencies are encouraged to increase their use of Affirmative Measures Indigenous recruitment, and the APS has also run dedicated Indigenous graduate and internship programs for several years.

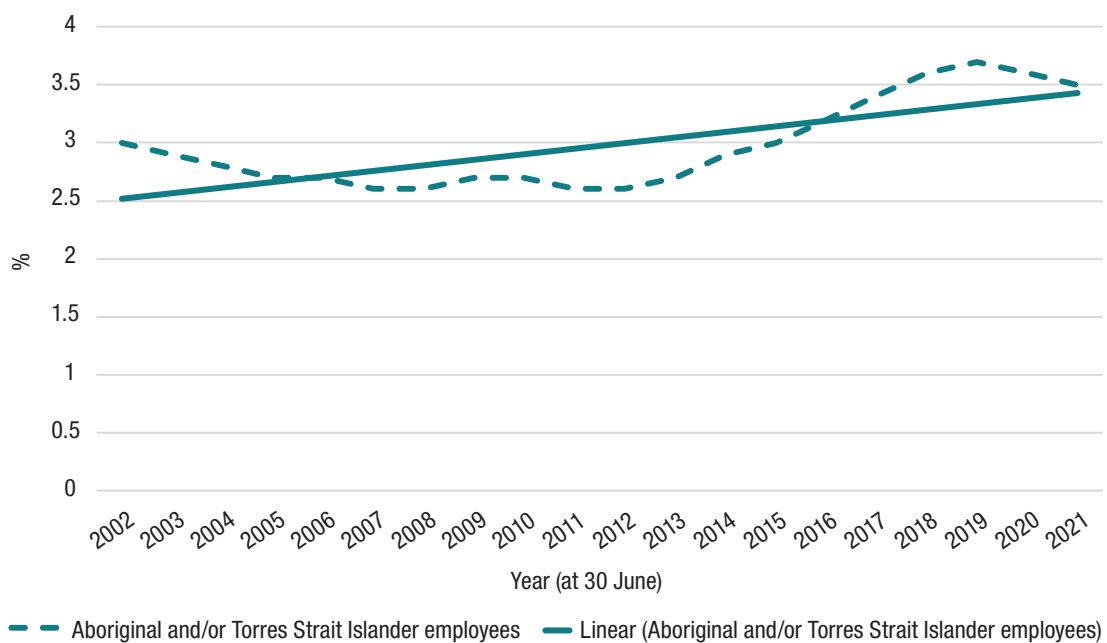
Implementation deliverables of the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–2024* include a review of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-specific entry level programs and an expansion of the Indigenous Graduate Pathway.¹⁰² In consultation with other APS agencies, the APSC is developing an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-specific Employee Value Proposition.

¹⁰¹ Ray Griggs AO CSC, then Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Australians Agency. (2020). *IPAA Work with Purpose Podcast Episode #14*. 6 July.

¹⁰² APSC. (2020). *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–2024*. 3 July.

The proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS has steadily increased over time, from 2.6% in 2012 to 3.5% in 2021.¹⁰³ However, overall representation has remained steady in the past couple of years. A slightly higher proportion of respondents to the anonymous 2021 APS Employee Census (3.8%) identify as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Figure 3.6: Proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED

Annual engagement rates (as a proportion of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees) are high, at around 13% on average over the past 2 decades (compared with 7% for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees). However, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees only stay in the service for a median 4.3 years compared with 12.9 years for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. The separation rate is also higher for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees – 8.3% left the APS within the past year compared with 6.2% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ APSED.

¹⁰⁴ APSED.



To address this, the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy* includes several deliverables focused on retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. These deliverables will be evaluated iteratively throughout the life of the strategy and adjusted as required.

One of these deliverables is about supporting agencies to improve the cultural capability of their non-Indigenous staff. Understanding that agencies are at varying levels of maturity for cultural capability, the strategy identifies different action items agencies can undertake to improve and embed understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures in the workplace. The strategy also specifically references the need for agencies to have Reconciliation Action Plans as a mechanism for supporting the development of culturally safe workspaces and services. Work is continuing across the service, with two-thirds of APS agencies now having Reconciliation Action Plans in place.¹⁰⁵

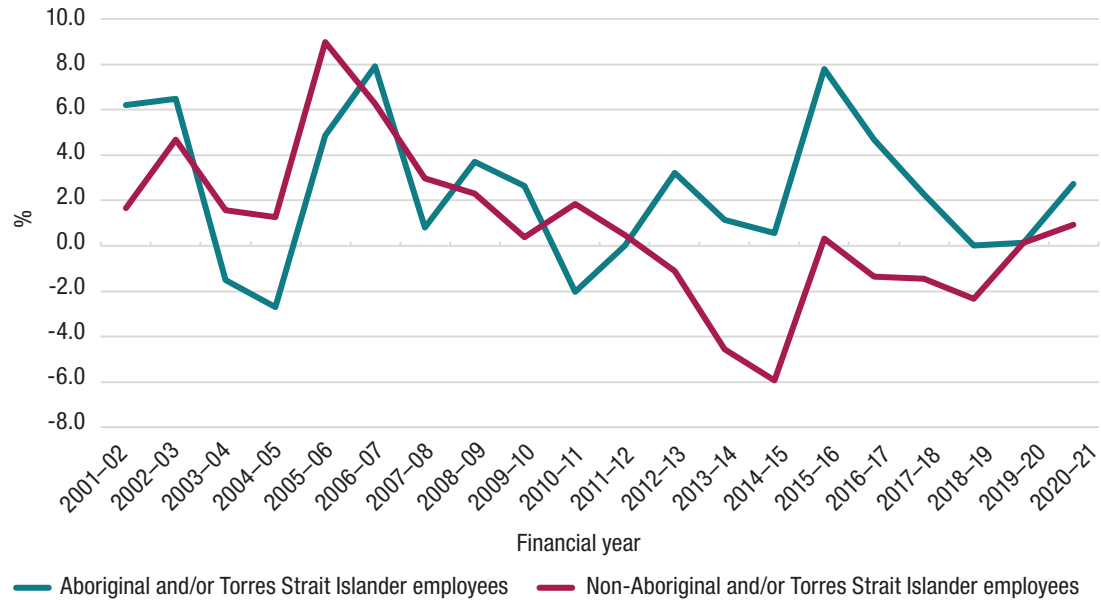
The strategy's workforce representation targets are also designed to build and progress a talent pipeline. This includes developing employees within the public sector to enable promotion into the more senior roles and decreasing the relative separation rates of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. Two of the strategy's core focus areas support the progression of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. Action items under *Career advancement and development* and *Career pathways* aim to diversify and strengthen pathways and development opportunities.

Find out more about what the APS will be doing to improve workforce outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as part of the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24*.



¹⁰⁵ 2021 APS Agency Survey.

Figure 3.7: Net engagement, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED

Figure 3.8: Median length of service at separation, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees (2001-02 to 2020-21)



Source: APSED



Preserving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages for future generations

When Doug Marmion took up a teaching role in Alice Springs in 1983, he was not familiar with any of the distinct Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages spoken across the country. Doug's young students shared the Pitjantjatjara language with him through songs and stories. Doug's interest soon found him completing Honours in Linguistics and working at the Yamaji Language Centre in Geraldton, Western Australia.



"My work focused on collecting language and cultural information from the elderly speakers of the Geraldton area," says Doug.

"I became close to many of the elders who were among the last speakers of their languages, and it was a privilege to be able to work with them."

Dr Doug Marmion PSM

As a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Doug has worked on the maintenance and revival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. This includes developing AUSTLANG, a definitive thesaurus and online database of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages. The database has become the world authoritative standard and contains more than 1,200 records of language varieties. Doug's work was recognised in 2021 with a Public Service Medal.



Pink Lakes near Geraldton, Western Australia.

Doug is particularly proud of his work to reawaken the endangered Ngunnawal language.

The Ngunnawal Language Revival Project brought together AIATSIS linguists with members of the Ngunnawal community to develop a suitable writing system and initiate early development of school lessons in the language.

'It was amazing to see the change in people as they learnt more about their language and culture. It was a profound and powerful experience for them,' he says.

Doug has led engagement with Australian Government ministers, the Governor-General and senior APS executives, coaching them to embed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander acknowledgements into APS protocols.

DISABILITY

In Australia, the number of people living with disability is estimated to be 1 in 6, or about 4.4 million people. Around 48% of people aged 15 to 64 with disability are employed.¹⁰⁶ This is far lower than those without disability (80%). The unemployment rate for people with disability has risen from 8% in 2003 to 10% in 2019, while the rate for people without disability has remained steady.¹⁰⁷

With 4.4 million people in Australia identifying as having a disability, improving the representation of people with disability is vital to building a [APS] workforce that better reflects the diversity of the Australian community we serve.¹⁰⁸

Kathryn Campbell AO CSC, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and former Secretary of the Department of Social Services

In the 2021 APS Employee Census, 9.3% of employees reported having a disability, an increase from 8.5% in 2020.¹⁰⁹ The proportion of APS employees who identify as having an ongoing disability in their agencies' HR systems is lower at 4.1%. This figure may be underreported due to a number of factors. An employee who does not require workplace adjustments may see no value in disclosure on a formal HR system. Employees who acquire a disability after they have been employed may not update their details in agency records. Alternatively, employees with a disability may only feel comfortable disclosing this information anonymously in the APS Employee Census due to concerns about the impact on their employment or because of previous negative experiences with disclosure.

Agencies that employ a high proportion of employees identifying as having a disability are the National Disability Insurance Agency (10.8%), the APSC (8.4%), Safe Work Australia (8.3%), and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (7.6%).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020). *People with disability in Australia*. 2 October.

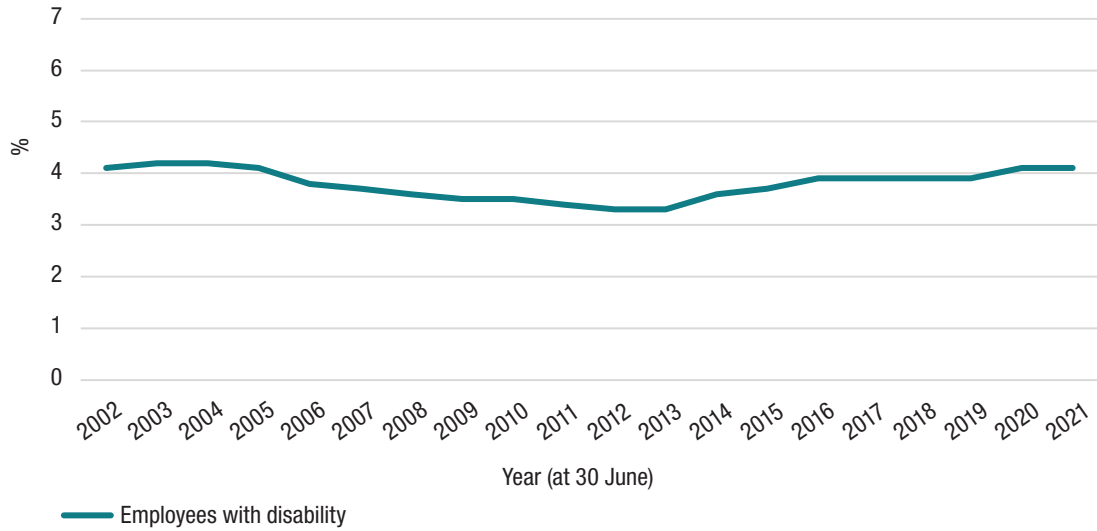
¹⁰⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *People with disability in Australia 2019: in brief*. 3 September.

¹⁰⁸ APSC. (2020). *Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25*. 3 December.

¹⁰⁹ The definition of 'disability' used in the APS is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. More information is available at: APSC. (2019). *Definition of disability*. 9 September.

¹¹⁰ At 30 June 2021.

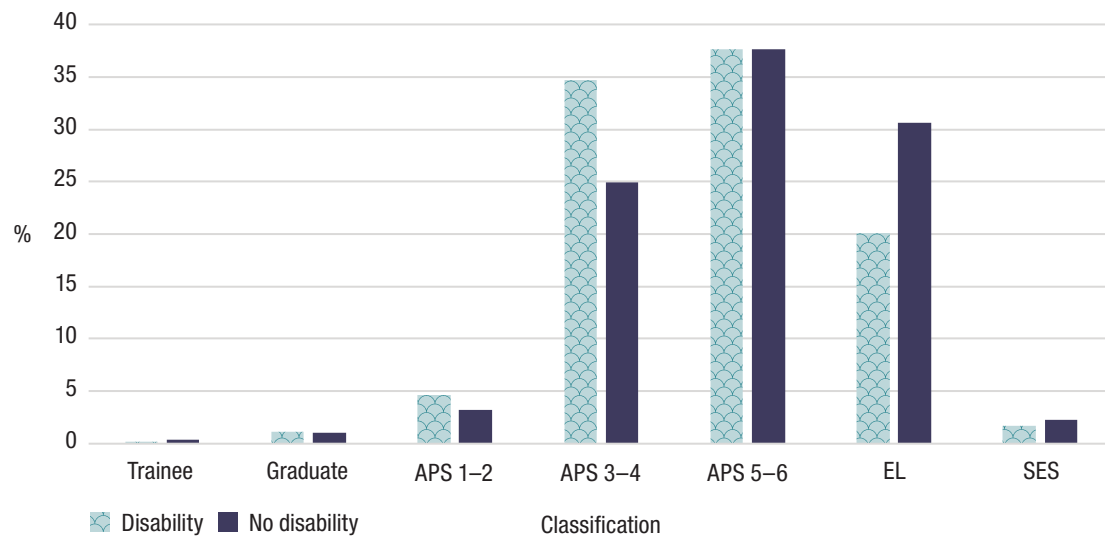
Figure 3.9: Proportion of APS employees with disability (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED

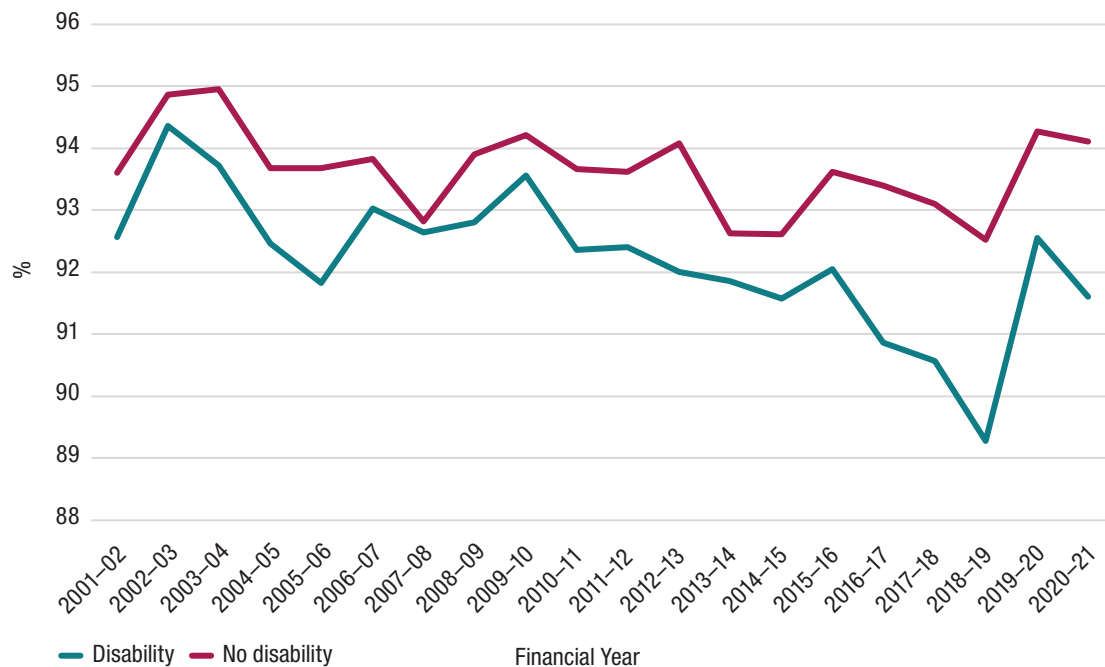
At 30 June 2021, the classification distribution of employees with disability largely mirrored that of employees without disability, with the exception of APS 3–4 and EL classifications. At the APS 3–4 classifications, employees with disability are in greater relative proportion than employees without disability, while at the Executive Level the reverse is true. This difference may be explained by the high proportion of employees with disability working in service delivery where most roles are at the APS 3–4 classifications.

Figure 3.10: Classification by disability status (30 June 2021)



Source: APSED

Figure 3.11: Retention rate of APS employees with and without disability (2002-03 to 2020-21)



Source: APSED

Over the last 20 years, employees with disability have consistently had a lower retention rate than employees without disability. The *APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25*, launched in December 2020, was developed to address this and other challenges facing employees with a disability.¹¹¹ The strategy was developed in partnership with the Department of Social Services following extensive consultation with stakeholders including the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Ben Gauntlett, the Australian Human Rights Commission, those with lived experience of disability, and APS agencies and staff.

The strategy focuses on ways to attract, recruit and retain more people with disability into the APS, and to create accessible and inclusive workplace cultures and environments. It includes a 7% employment target for people with disability in the APS by 2025. This reflects the Government's commitment (announced May 2019) of 7% of disability employment in the APS.

¹¹¹ APSC. (2020). *Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25*. 3 December.



Implementation of the practical actions in the strategy, along with existing agency-led initiatives, will support improved employment outcomes for people with disability in the APS. While Affirmative Measures recruitment rounds and Recruitability continue to be used widely by agencies to attract talented people with disability, there will be a focus on strengthening their effectiveness and better supporting their use in agencies. Along with Affirmative Measures rounds, agencies have developed specific programs and partnerships to improve the representation of people with disability in the APS. Examples include Services Australia's *Dandelion Program*,¹¹² the Department of Defence's collaboration with *WithYouWithMe*¹¹³ and the *Ability Apprenticeship Program*¹¹⁴ in the Department of Social Services.

The APS remains committed to ensuring that, once recruited, employees with disability are well supported and provided with career development opportunities. APS Disability Champions and staff networks within agencies continue to drive actions in the strategy, such as the establishment of disability contact officers and the review of the accessibility of APS workplaces.

An interim evaluation of the strategy will be undertaken in 2022, with a final evaluation in 2025.

Find out more about the Department of Social Services Ability Apprenticeship Program, which starts in early 2022 and is designed to create pathways for people with disability into secure, ongoing APS employment.



¹¹² Autism Spectrum Australia Launchpad. (2020). *The Dandelion Program - Specialisterne Australia*. 18 September.

¹¹³ WithYouWithMe. (2021). *WithYouWithMe: For Government*. n.d.

¹¹⁴ DSS. (2021). *Ability Apprenticeship Program*. 12 October.

The most accessible Australian Census in history

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has delivered the most accessible Australian Census ever. Teresa Dickinson, Senior Responsible Officer for the 2021 Census, explained that “Everyone plays their part in helping paint a picture of the economic, social and cultural make up of Australia and so it is important that everyone is able to participate easily.”



People completing the Census together

‘For example, 83 Auslan video guides were available to provide supporting information for the deaf community about each question on the Census form. All video content included closed captioning and transcripts. A range of services were provided for people who are blind or have low vision, including Braille and large print Census forms, and audio grabs for each of the questions. Census information was also translated into 48 different languages, including 19 Indigenous languages.’

The 2021 Census website was developed following the Digital Transformation Agency’s Digital Service Standard and was designed to meet the Australian Government’s web accessibility requirements and the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 at the AA level. The website included new features that enabled people to participate without the use of special codes or letters from the ABS. The design was informed by extensive testing with members of the public, including those using assistive technologies. The 2021 Census website included a link to the National Relay Service and Translating and Interpreting Service to make it easier for people to receive assistance.

Dr David Gruen, Australian Statistician, was mindful of the importance of the 2021 Census in the context of what has been happening globally and locally. “The Census will provide further insights into the impacts of COVID-19 across the Australian population,” says Dr Gruen.

“We need everyone to be counted to tell the story of how Australia has changed and to plan for the future. As always, the Census will provide invaluable information including at the local level that governments, businesses, communities, and individuals can trust to make important decisions.”¹¹⁵

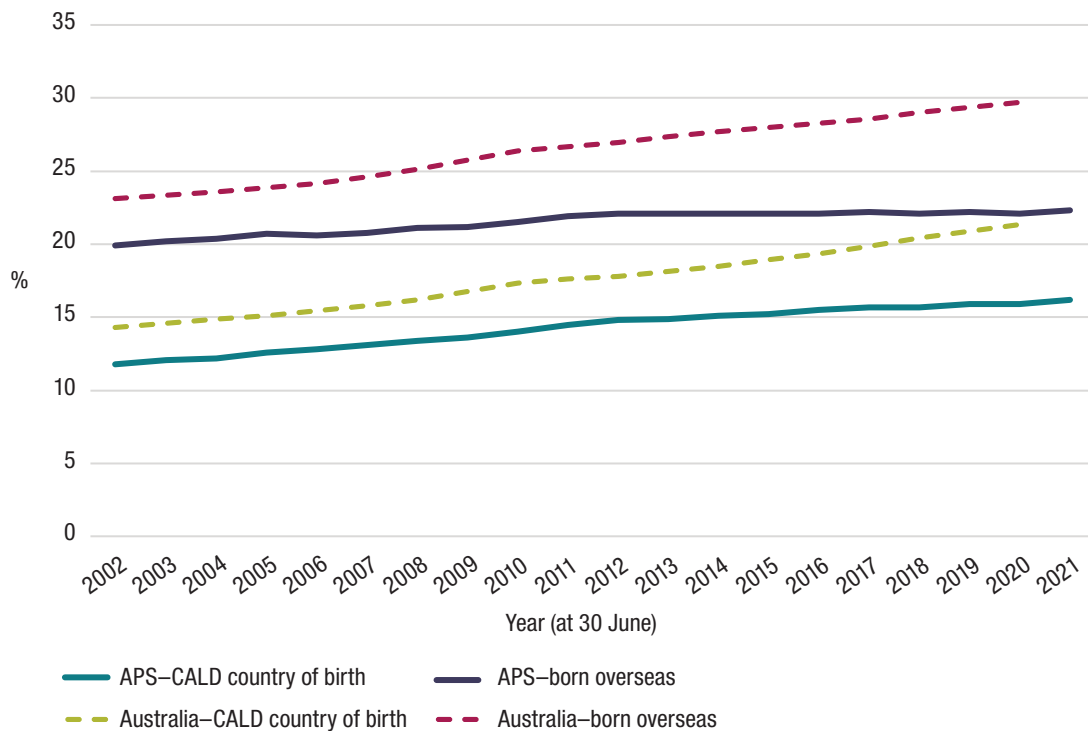
¹¹⁵ Dr David Gruen, Australian Statistician and Head of Data Profession. (2021). *2021 Census Press Conference*. 18 June.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups describe those who were born overseas, have a parent born overseas or speak a variety of languages.¹¹⁶ In Australia in 2020, 29.8% of Australians were born overseas and 21.3% were from a non-English speaking country.¹¹⁷ At 30 June 2021, 22.3% of APS employees were born overseas with 16.2% from non-English speaking countries.

Since 2002, there has been an increase in the proportion of APS employees born overseas, especially those coming from non-English speaking countries.

Figure 3.12: Proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees, APS and Australia (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED and Australian Bureau of Statistics¹¹⁸

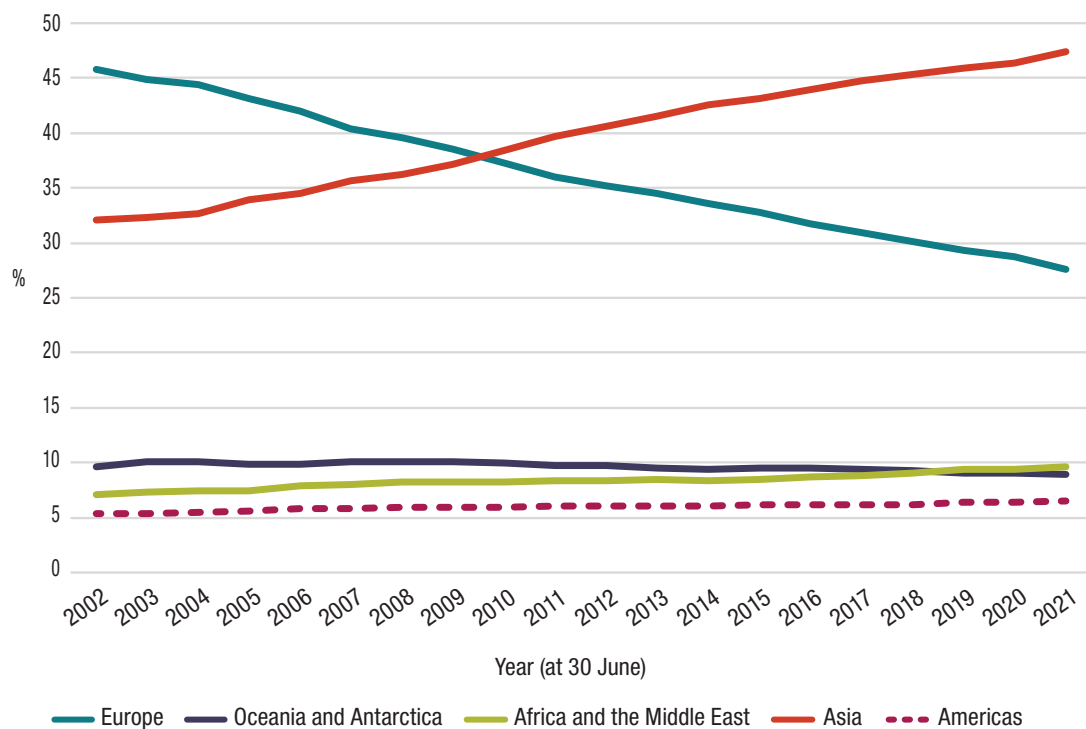
¹¹⁶ Country of birth, first language spoken, mother's and father's first language, language spoken at home and year of arrival in Australia data elements are collected in the APSED. The ABS defines the CALD population mainly by country of birth, language spoken at home, self-reported English proficiency, or other characteristics including year of arrival in Australia, parents' country of birth and religious affiliation. The APSC is currently reviewing its data collection to move towards metrics that more closely align with the CALD metrics used by the ABS. More information is available at: ABS. (1999). *Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity, 1999 (ABS cat. no. 1289.0)*. 22 November.

¹¹⁷ ABS. (2021). *Migration, Australia*. 23 April.

¹¹⁸ A CALD country is defined as a country that is not in the list of Main English-Speaking Countries as described by the ABS. More information is available at: ABS. (2020). *Migrant Data Matrices*. 22 December.

In 2020–21, of those APS employees born overseas, most were born in either Asia (47.4%) or Europe (27.6%). Other regions make up less than 10% each and have only changed marginally over the last 20 years. Compared with the Australian population, the proportion of APS employees born in Asia is relatively higher while all other regions have a slightly lower representation.

Figure 3.13: Region of birth for APS employees born overseas (2002 to 2021)



Source: APSED

At June 2021, the proportion of APS employees whose first language was ‘English only’ has dropped from 82.1% in 2002 to 77.3% in 2021. In contrast, APS employees who first spoke ‘English and another language’ has increased from 7.2% in 2002 to 12.1% in 2021. Over the last 20 years, the proportion of APS employees who did not speak English as a first language has remained relatively stable at around 10.6%. Of employees who first spoke a language other than English¹¹⁹, the most commonly spoken first languages were Vietnamese (5.8%), Italian (5.7%) and Chinese (5.5%).

¹¹⁹ This includes employees who first spoke another language in addition to English.



While there is not currently a whole-of-APS strategy for employees from CALD backgrounds, work is being done in the APS to strengthen diversity and inclusion that will benefit this cohort. Recent feedback from a range of APS agencies provided insight into how agencies are positively contributing by:

- exploring innovative ways to work more effectively across international programs, including leveraging locally-engaged staff knowledge on cultural issues
- promoting diversity in specific areas, such as in National Security/Terrorism, where CALD perspectives can provide valuable insights
- promoting mentorship, networks, exchange programs and training for CALD staff and managers to support the retention and promotion of CALD staff
- hosting events to celebrate significant occasions such as Lunar New Year and Ramadan—these events provide opportunities to discuss issues facing CALD communities and foster greater inclusion and diversity
- creating 'CALD Officer' roles to provide guidance and troubleshooting for all staff to create a more inclusive culture.

National Library of Australia goes digital to celebrate Pacific Island cultures

Libraries, museums, galleries, archives and other cultural heritage organisations have within their collections items and records about the people of the Pacific Islands. It is estimated there are over half a million cultural heritage objects from the Pacific Islands held in more than 650 cultural institutions around the globe.



Robin Smith, [1968], Dancers in elaborate costumes dance outside Angoram Haus Tambaran, East Sepik District, Papua New Guinea, National Library of Australia, nla.obj-256793677

A pilot project brought together representatives from the Pacific Islander communities, the National Library of Australia, National Library of New Zealand and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to co-design and deliver the site, www.digitalpasifik.org.

The goal was to empower people in and of the Pacific Islands, enabling them to see, discover and explore items of digitised cultural heritage that are held in collections around the world.

Since its launch in November 2020, the website has been connecting people living across the Pacific Ocean, and those living far from the Pacific, with the histories and cultures of their communities. The cultural heritage of the Pacific Islands is a lived one, brought alive by storytelling and knowledge passed on.

The website was designed by, with and for Pacific peoples, educators, learners and researchers. Communities are using it to

connect and contribute to records of traditional knowledge, as an academic and research resource, and an educational resource. It is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and administered by the National Library of New Zealand.

The co-design approach ensures content is presented within a cultural heritage framework that considers cultural and intellectual property protocols, ethical issues and cultural sensitivities. The project actively seeks to honour the work that has been done and is underway within the cultural heritage sector. All Australian collections are provided in a single and combined Australian feed via Trove, an initiative of the National Library of Australia that brings together online the collections of hundreds of organisations from around Australia. Using Trove saved time, money and effort, and enabled teams across the Pacific to work remotely—united in their goal to share their culture online.



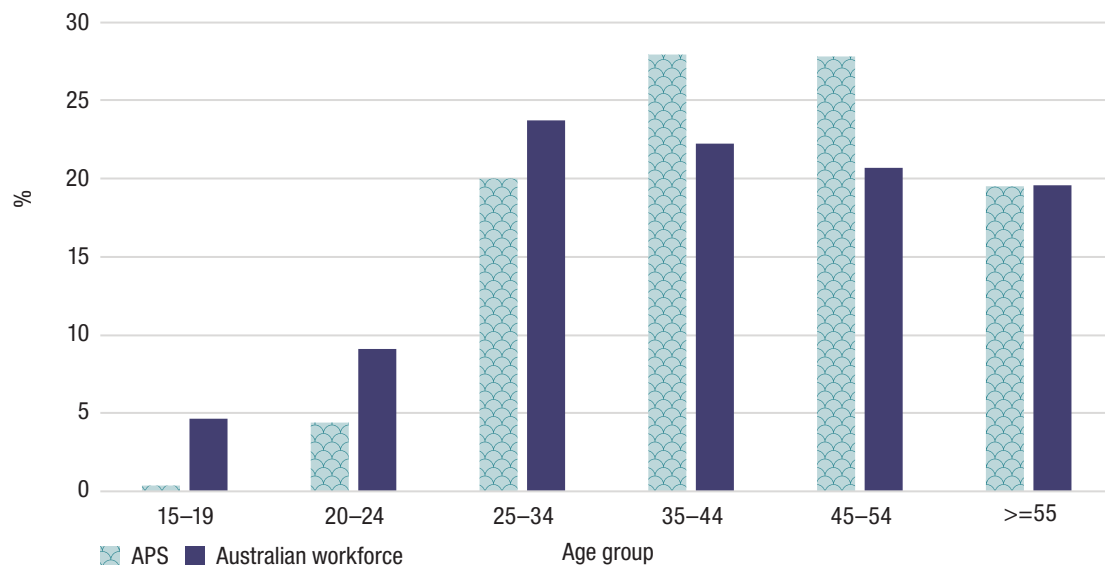
Explore, discover, view and celebrate the rich diverse cultural heritage of the Pacific in www.digitalpasifik.org virtual museum.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL

Australia's population and the APS workforce are ageing.¹²⁰ At 30 June 2021, the average age of APS employees was 43.5 years, increasing steadily from 40.2 years in 2002. This is in line with the trends in ageing across the general Australian workforce.

The proportion of the APS population that is 50 years or older has increased from 20.8% in 2002 to 33% in 2021. At 30 June 2021, 8.5% of APS employees were aged 60 years and over. The number of employees under the age of 30 has declined from 17.9% in 2002 to 13.7% in 2021.

Figure 3.14: Age distribution comparison between APS and Australian workforce (30 June 2021)

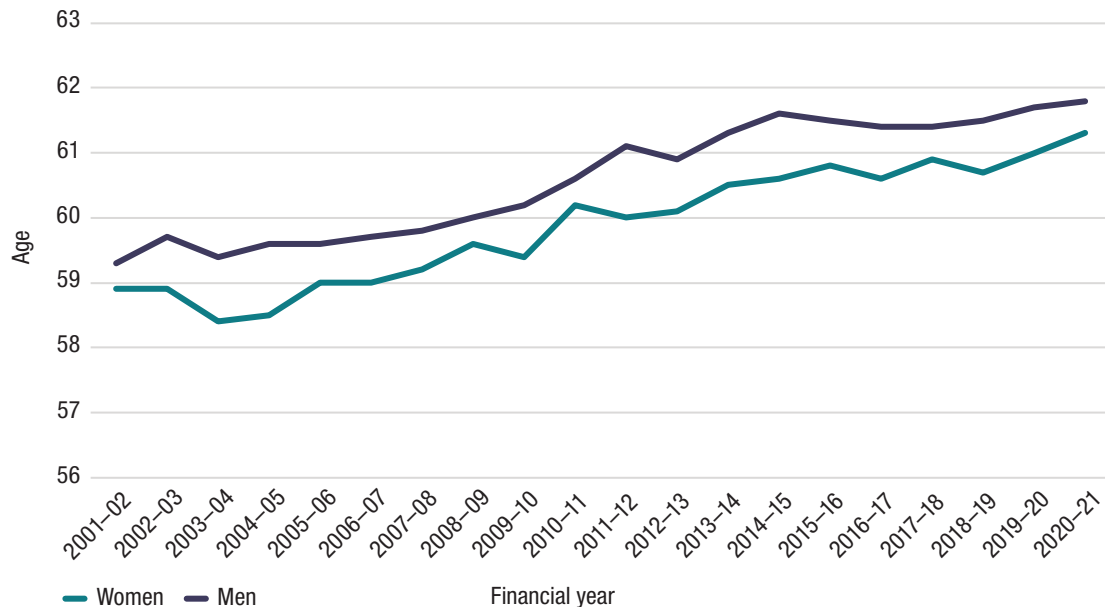


Source: APSED and Australian Bureau of Statistics

The APS does not have a maximum retirement age; employees choose when to retire. The average retirement age within the APS has been increasing over time, from 59.4 years of age in 2001-02, to 61.5 in 2020-21. This remains higher than the national average retirement age of 55.4 years in 2018-19.¹²¹

¹²⁰ ABS. (2018). *Population Projections, Australia (2017 (base) - 2066)*. 22 November.

¹²¹ ABS. (2020). *Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia*. 8 May.

Figure 3.15: APS average retirement age by gender (2001-02 to 2020-21)

Source: APSED

While overall the trend is toward an ageing workforce, the APS workforce is also becoming more age-diverse. People are working longer and employee expectations are changing. Access to flexible work is and will continue to be a core component of enabling an APS workforce that now stretches across 4 generations. Building a multigenerational workplace where all employees can equally access resources, support and opportunities is important to ensure the public service performs at its best.

Through the Government's *Delivering for Australians* reform agenda, the APS is working to ensure it does more to retain and recruit older Australians. A Mature Age Action Plan specifically targeting mature age workers, defined by the ABS as those aged 45 years or over¹²², will be released in late 2021. The Plan will provide a range of practical actions to build an APS workplace that embraces and supports an age-inclusive, multigenerational public service.

¹²² ABS. (2008). *Health of mature age workers in Australia: a snapshot 2004-2005*. 29 July.

APPENDIXES



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APPENDIX 1:

APS WORKFORCE DATA

APS EMPLOYMENT DATABASE

The Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) contains employment, diversity and education details for all people employed in the APS under the authority of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth).

Information on staffing, including trends in the size, structure and composition of the APS, contributes to research and evaluation work on the changing nature of the APS. This, in turn, assists agencies to formulate their people management policies and practices.

APSED is the definitive source of APS employment data, supporting strong evidence-based APS workforce policy, people management and advice.

APSED SCOPE AND COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

APSED stores the employment data of all current and former APS employees. The database was established in 1999 but contains data on APS employees from 1966. The most recent snapshot, conducted on 30 June 2021, contains records relating to 153,945 employees.

APSED is maintained by the APSC and the data is supplied to APSED from the HR systems of APS agencies.

Two types of data files are used to update and maintain APSED: movement files and snapshot files. In general, both file types contain the same data items, but they differ in purpose.

1. Movement files are provided to the APSC from each agency every month. They are used to document changes in employment history (for example, engagements, promotions and maternity leave) for all people employed under *the Public Service Act 1999* on a monthly basis.
2. Changes in employment characteristics every month are recorded using movement codes. Movement files contain a record for every movement relevant to updating and maintaining employee records in APSED that has been processed in an agency's HR system during the month. Therefore, if an employee undertakes multiple movements within a reference period, the corresponding movement files will contain multiple records for that employee. Conversely, if an employee has no movements during the reference period, they will not appear in the movement file.
3. Snapshot files are provided to the APSC from each agency on a six-monthly basis. They are used to verify that all the information stored in APSED is correct and current at 31 December and 30 June each year. Snapshot files contain a single record for every APS employee employed by a particular agency on 31 December and 30 June.



APSED ITEMS

Agency HR systems supply APSED with unit records containing this personal information:

- Personal particulars: Australian Government Staff number, name, and date of birth.
- Diversity data: gender, Indigenous identification, country of birth, year of arrival, first and main languages spoken, parents' first languages, disability status.
- Employment data: classification, email address, date of engagement, employment status, standard hours, workplace postcode, any movement details and dates, operative status, previous employment, job family, job function, job role, current and previous agencies.
- Educational qualifications and main fields of study.

Under Section 50 of the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016*, an Agency Head must ensure measures are in place to collect information from each employee in the agency and give collected information to the Australian Public Service Commissioner. While individuals do not explicitly consent to the collection of their movement and employment data, they can choose to supply or withhold all diversity data except gender data. An Agency Head must allow APS employees to provide a response of 'choose not to give this information'.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Agency HR systems collect relevant data items and supply these to the APSC through secure or encrypted means. Agencies are responsible for the collection, security, quality, storage, access, use, and disclosure of their HR data as well as compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles. While agency HR systems capture detailed information on each APS employee's pay, leave history and entitlements, these are out of scope for APSED. Only data fields supplied to the APSC are in scope.

Upon receipt, each data file is corrected in an iterative process. Once validated and transferred to the APSC, error checks on the new files are performed by the APSC against the extant data in APSED. The APSC and the agency work together to resolve these differences. Once resolved, cleaned data is incorporated into APSED.

APSED data is stored on a secure information technology system that is password protected and accessible only by a team in the APSC who have been granted access by team supervisors and trained in protecting and using these collections. Standard operating procedures dictate when personal information can be added or changed. All changes to the database are logged in an audit file.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

APSED is compliant with the APSC's privacy policy, which sets out the kinds of information collected and held, how this information is collected and held, its purposes, and authority for its collection. The full APSC privacy policy, which includes specific information related to APSED collection, is available at <https://www.apsc.gov.au/privacy>. The APSC has undertaken a detailed privacy impact assessment in relation to APSED, concluding that it complies with all relevant Australian Privacy Principles.

Data protections within APSED include secure transfer of information between agencies and the APSC, storage of data on APSC servers requiring individual logins to access, restriction of access to a small number of authorised users, and ensuring public release of data is undertaken in aggregate format only.

APS EMPLOYEE CENSUS

The APS Employee Census is an annual employee perception survey of the APS workforce. All eligible personnel employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* are invited to participate. The Employee Census has been conducted since 2012 and collects APS employee opinions and perspectives on important issues, including employee engagement, wellbeing, leadership, and general impressions of the APS.

APS EMPLOYEE CENSUS COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the workforce, the 2020 APS Employee Census was postponed from its usual May to June delivery timeframe and deployed from 12 October to 13 November 2020. This change in timeframes meant that 2020 APS Employee Census results were not available for reporting in time for publication within the 2019–20 State of the Service Report, but are included within this report.

In 2021, the APS Employee Census returned to its usual timeframe and was administered to eligible APS employees during the period 10 May to 11 June 2021.



Although participation is encouraged, the APS Employee Census is voluntary. If a respondent chooses to participate, only a limited number of demographic-type questions must be answered. The remaining questions do not require a response.

APS EMPLOYEE CENSUS DESIGN

Questions from previous years were used as the basis for the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census questionnaires with the aim of maintaining a reliable longitudinal dataset. Questionnaire content was evaluated, reviewed and updated; new questions were included to address topical issues or to improve the quality of the data collected. In particular, an underlying framework was applied to the 2021 APS Employee Census questionnaire. This framework applied a model from the field of organisational psychology and served to better define a core question set and how results could be interpreted and reported. While a standardised questionnaire was employed, at each administration of the APS Employee Census, agencies could ask their employees a limited number of additional questions.

APS EMPLOYEE CENSUS DEVELOPMENT

The 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census questionnaires both included 137 individual questions. These questions were grouped into sections addressing key aspects of working for an APS agency.

Each year the content of the APS Employee Census is reviewed to ensure each question has value and meets a specific purpose. The APSC researches and consults broadly to develop and select questions for inclusion. In 2020 and 2021, the APSC:

- considered strategic-level priorities coming from the Secretaries Board and other senior-level committees to ensure the Employee Census would capture appropriate information to inform these priorities
- consulted with subject matter experts from within the APSC and other APS agencies to seek their input to question design and information requirements for supporting APS-level policies and programs
- researched contemporary understanding of issues and options for questionnaire content
- provided participating agencies with an opportunity to give feedback and input to questionnaire design.

The resulting questionnaires covered numerous themes and measures. Central to these are three indices addressing employee engagement, innovation and wellbeing.

APS EMPLOYEE CENSUS DELIVERY

In 2020 and 2021 the APS Employee Census was administered using these collection methods:

- online, through a unique link provided to each employee by email from Engine, the contracted Employee Census administrators
- telephone surveys with employees who did not have available supportive information technology to provide reasonable adjustment for their disability
- paper-based surveys for employees who did not have access to an individual email account or did not have suitable access to the Internet.

SAMPLING AND COVERAGE

The population for the APS Employee Census is provided by participating agencies. It is up to individual agencies to set their eligibility criteria. For example, some agencies removed employees on long-term leave, while others contact employees on long-term leave to check if they would like to participate.

2020 APS Employee Census

The 2020 APS Employee Census covered eligible ongoing and non-ongoing employees from 100 APS agencies. One APS agency elected not to participate.

Invitations to participate in the 2020 APS Employee Census were sent to employees from 12 October 2020. The number of invitations was adjusted as new employees were added, separations processed, and incorrect email addresses corrected. The deadline for survey completion was 13 November 2020.

The final sample size for the 2020 APS Employee Census was 137,897. Overall, 108,085 APS employees responded, giving a response rate of 78%.

2021 APS Employee Census

The 2021 APS Employee Census covered eligible ongoing and non-ongoing employees from 102 APS agencies. Four APS agencies elected not to participate.

Invitations to participate in the 2021 APS Employee Census were sent to employees from 10 May 2021. The number of invitations was adjusted as new employees were added, separations processed, and incorrect email addresses corrected. The deadline for survey completion was 11 June 2021.

The final sample size for the 2021 APS Employee Census was 142,493. Overall, 109,537 APS employees responded, giving a response rate of 77%.



MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The APS Employee Census is managed and coordinated by the APSC's Strategic Policy and Research Group. The APSC contracts an external service provider to support survey administration and reporting activities. Engine was this service provider in both 2020 and 2021.

PUBLIC RELEASE

The public release of agency Employee Census data is aggregated and de-identified to protect individuals' privacy. The release complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), and the principles and codes under the Act.

Individual agencies may elect to publically release their agency-level Employee Census results on their respective websites after this report is tabled. These results can also be centrally accessed on the APSC website.

PRIVACY

The APSC employs specific rules around how results are reported. Such rules protect the privacy of respondents and individual agency results.

De-identification of data is undertaken in accordance with guidance provided by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Further information about how privacy is maintained can be found within the APSC Privacy Policy, which is available at <https://www.apsc.gov.au/privacy>.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INDEX

The APS Employee Census uses a model of employee engagement developed by Engine. This model addresses three attributes associated with employee engagement and measures the emotional connection and commitment employees have to working for their organisation. In this model, an engaged employee will:

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

First introduced in 2017, the Say, Stay, Strive employee engagement model is flexible and the APSC has tailored the questions for the APS context.

INNOVATION INDEX

The 2021 APS Employee Census addressed innovation through a set of dedicated questions that contribute to an index score. This Innovation Index score assesses both whether employees feel willing and able to be innovative, and whether their agency has a culture that enables them to be so.

WELLBEING INDEX

The Wellbeing Index in the APS Employee Census measures both the practical and cultural elements that allow for a sustainable and healthy working environment. The APS has long been focused on the wellbeing of its employees. As employers, APS agencies have obligations under work health and safety legislation. Together with these obligations is an acknowledgement that high performance of employees and organisations cannot be sustained without adequate levels of employee wellbeing.

The results for the wellbeing index are presented in Appendix 4.

CALCULATING AND INTERPRETING INDEX SCORES

The questions comprising the Employee Engagement, Innovation and Wellbeing indices were asked on a five-point agreement scale. To calculate the index score, each respondent's answers to the set of questions were recoded to fall on a scale between 0 and 100%.

The recoded responses were then averaged across the five or more index questions to provide the index score for that respondent. An individual only receives an index score if they have responded to all questions comprising that index.

**Figure A1.1: Example of how to calculate index scores (for one APS employee)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Score
Weight	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%	
Example question 1		✓				75%
Example question 2		✓				75%
Example question 3			✓			50%
Example question 4				✓		25%
Example question 5	✓					100%
Sum of question weights for this employee						325%
Index score for this example respondent (325/5)						65%

Index scores for groups of respondents are calculated by averaging the respondent scores that comprise that group.

An index score on its own can provide information about the group to which it relates.

Index scores, however, have the most use when compared with scores over time or between work units, organisations and demographic groups.

TREATMENT OF RESPONSES OF 'DON'T KNOW' AND 'NOT APPLICABLE'

Specific questions included within the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Censuses enabled respondents to provide responses of 'don't know', 'not applicable' or similar. Responses of this nature were typically excluded from the calculation of results for inclusion within this report. This was so that results reflected respondents who expressed an informed opinion to the relevant question.

Depending upon the intent, other products generated from the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Censuses may not apply these same rules. The method in analysis and reporting will be made clear within these products.

APS AGENCY SURVEY

The APS Agency Survey is conducted annually and collects information on a range of workforce initiatives, strategies and compliance matters, including the number and type of APS Code of Conduct breaches. APS agencies with at least 20 APS employees complete the survey. The information collected through the APS Agency Survey is used to inform workforce strategies and for other research and evaluation purposes.

Since 2002, the APS Agency Survey has been administered to APS agencies with employees employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. The survey assists the Australian Public Service Commissioner to fulfil a range of duties as specified in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- informing the annual State of the Service Report
- strengthening the professionalism of the APS and facilitating continuous improvement in its workforce management
- monitoring, reviewing and reporting on APS strategies, initiatives, and policies.

APS AGENCY SURVEY COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

In 2021, the APS Agency Survey was administered to 95 agencies during 21 June to 30 July 2021. The response rate for 2021 was 100%, which is typical for this survey.

Each year the APS Agency Survey is sent to the contact officers nominated for each agency. These contact officers are responsible for coordinating the input from relevant areas and uploading responses to an APS Agency Survey portal managed by ORIMA Research. The survey requires each Agency Head to verify the agency's submission for completeness and accuracy of responses.

APS AGENCY SURVEY MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The APSC's Strategic Policy and Research Group manages and coordinates the APS Agency Survey. The APSC contracts an external service provider to support survey administration. ORIMA Research was this service provider in 2021.

PRIVACY

All APS Agency Survey data are stored in a secure password-protected environment. Where results are included in reporting, agency results are de-identified or aggregated.



COLLECTION OF DIVERSITY DATA

Concise demographic information enables the APS to produce accurate workforce descriptions to support the management of its workforce. The APSC collects personal data including diversity information concerning all employees employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. On engagement to the APS, employees provide personal information to their employing agencies. This information is provided to the APSC to enable the execution of the APS Commissioner's functions.

With the exception of gender, the provision of diversity data is voluntary for APS employees. As a result, diversity rates represent the proportion of employees who identify as belonging to that diversity group, and actual diversity rates may be underestimated. The APS Employee Census, in which responses are de-identified, records higher rates for some diversity groups.

This difference is historically largest for the proportion of employees with ongoing disability. The Employee Census likely attracts higher disclosure rates as responses are not readily identifiable to individual employees, unlike the more formal human resources system. Many people are likely to regard their diversity information as sensitive information and it has long been established that people avoid reporting details they regard as sensitive.¹²³ Employees may decide to withhold information when they believe it does not affect their ability to carry out their role. Some may have concerns about possible impacts to their future employment or how it will affect them socially within the workplace. The APS takes pride in its ability to foster inclusive workplaces but also respects employees' rights to privacy regarding personal information.

COLLECTING GENDER INFORMATION

Individuals may identify and be recognised within the community as a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth or during infancy, or as a gender which is not exclusively male or female. Therefore, where gender information is collected and recorded in a personal record, individuals should be given the option to select M (Male), F (Female) or X (Indeterminate / Intersex / Unspecified).

Since 2014, respondents to the APS Employee Census could identify their gender as X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified). This question was updated in 2021 to align with the updated standard released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics¹²⁴ and better provide all employees the opportunity to more accurately describe their situation. For the first time, APS Employee Census respondents could describe their gender as man or male, woman or female, non-binary or that they used a different term.

¹²³ Tourangeau R, Yan T. (2007). Sensitive questions in surveys. *Psychological bulletin*. 133(5):859.

¹²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables*. 14 January.



APPENDIX 2:

APS AGENCIES

This appendix covers a range of data about APS agencies.

Table A2.1 lists all APS agencies and employee numbers and reflects data in APSED as at 30 June 2021. These are headcount numbers and include ongoing, non-ongoing and casual (intermittently engaged) employees.

APS agencies are grouped into 'functional clusters' to allow comparisons to be made between agencies with similar primary functions. The functional clusters applied to APS agencies are:

- Policy: agencies involved in the development of public policy.
- Smaller operational: agencies with fewer than 1,000 employees involved in the implementation of public policy.
- Larger operational: agencies with 1,000 employees or more involved in the implementation of public policy.
- Regulatory: agencies involved in regulation and inspection.
- Specialist: agencies providing specialist support to government.

**Table A2.1: List of APS agencies by portfolio**

This list contains 97 agencies and 5 Category E entities (bodies which employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999* and operate with some degree of independence). This list can also be found on the APSC website at <https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-agency-listing-agencies-covered-public-service-act-1999>.

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Larger operational	7,066
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	Regulatory	161
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	Regulatory	181
Bureau of Meteorology	Larger operational	1,651
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Specialist	244
Murray Darling Basin Authority	Policy	296
Attorney-General's	Policy	1,998
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	Smaller operational	616
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency	Specialist	18
Australian Building and Construction Commission	Regulatory	168
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	Specialist	69
Australian Financial Security Authority	Smaller operational	441
Australian Human Rights Commission	Specialist	175
Australian Law Reform Commission	Policy	13
Comcare	Smaller operational	624
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman	Specialist	231
Fair Work Commission	Smaller operational	297
Federal Court of Australia	Specialist	1,266
National Archives of Australia	Specialist	378
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	Specialist	111
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	Regulatory	135
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Smaller operational	418
Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman and Registered Organisations Commission Entity	Regulatory	948
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	Specialist	37
Safe Work Australia	Policy	96
Defence	Larger operational	17,049

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Defence Housing Australia	Smaller operational	535
Education, Skills and Employment	Policy	3,767
Australian Research Council	Specialist	142
Australian Skills Quality Authority	Regulatory	191
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	Regulatory	95
Finance	Policy	1,746
Australian Electoral Commission	Smaller operational	1,503
Future Fund Management Agency	Specialist	201
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	Specialist	62
Foreign Affairs and Trade	Policy	3,915
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	Specialist	56
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	Specialist	785
Health	Policy	4,752
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	Regulatory	593
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	Specialist	89
Australian Digital Health Agency	Smaller operational	59
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Specialist	372
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	Specialist	140
Sport Integrity Australia	Regulatory	359
Cancer Australia	Specialist	68
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	Regulatory	109
National Blood Authority	Specialist	63
National Health and Medical Research Council	Specialist	209
National Health Funding Body	Specialist	23
National Mental Health Commission	Specialist	35
Organ and Tissue Authority	Specialist	22
Professional Services Review	Regulatory	29
Home Affairs	Larger operational	13,787
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	Specialist	762
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)	Regulatory	437
Industry, Science, Energy and Resources	Policy	3,097



Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Clean Energy Regulator	Regulatory	333
Climate Change Authority	Specialist	10
Geoscience Australia	Specialist	619
IP Australia	Larger operational	1,134
National Offshore Petroleum Safety And Environmental Management Authority	Regulatory	129
Questacon	Policy	230
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications	Policy	1,694
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Regulatory	444
Australian National Maritime Museum	Specialist	115
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	Specialist	114
National Capital Authority	Specialist	56
National Faster Rail Agency	Specialist	10
National Film and Sound Archive	Specialist	181
National Library of Australia	Specialist	377
National Museum of Australia	Specialist	249
National Portrait Gallery	Specialist	62
North Queensland Water Infrastructure Authority	Specialist	2
Screen Australia	Specialist	6
Prime Minister and Cabinet	Policy	1,110
Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	Smaller operational	470
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	Specialist	134
Australian National Audit Office	Specialist	312
Australian Public Service Commission	Policy	262
Digital Transformation Agency	Smaller operational	293
National Indigenous Australians Agency	Policy	1,288
National Recovery and Resilience Agency	Policy	151
Office of National Intelligence	Specialist	281
Old Parliament House	Specialist	99
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Specialist	153
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	Specialist	32
Social Services	Policy	2,356

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Australian Institute of Family Studies	Specialist	109
National Disability Insurance Agency	Larger operational	4,313
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	Regulatory	329
Services Australia	Larger operational	34,056
Treasury	Policy	1,362
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Specialist	3,343
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	Regulatory	1,245
Australian Office Of Financial Management	Specialist	45
Australian Taxation Office	Larger operational	21,179
Commonwealth Grants Commission	Specialist	31
Office of the Inspector-General of Taxation	Specialist	28
Productivity Commission	Specialist	161
Royal Australian Mint	Specialist	240
Veterans' Affairs (Defence portfolio)	Larger operational	1,772
Australian War Memorial	Specialist	336
Total		153,945

Source: APSED 30 June 2021



APPENDIX 3:

WORKFORCE TRENDS

This appendix summarises some overall trends in the APS for 2020–21, and over the past 10 years. The primary source of data is the APS Employment Database (APSED).

While this appendix briefly summarises APS workforce trends, the June 2021 APS employment data release provides detailed data. Each published report provides current

and previous years' data. Historical records can be adjusted at this time to pick up information that affects previously reported data. For this reason, the current publication is always the most accurate data source for APS employment data, including for historical data.



**Access the
June 2021 APS
employment data
release here.**

APS EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

As at 30 June 2021, there were 153,945 employees in the APS, comprising:

- 133,952 ongoing employees, up by 1.3% from 132,222 ongoing employees in June 2020
- 19,993 non-ongoing employees, up by 9.9% from 18,195 non-ongoing employees in June 2020.

During 2020–21:

- 10,157 ongoing employees were engaged, up by 3.5% from 9,811 ongoing engagements in 2019–20
- 8,430 ongoing employees separated from the APS, down by 14.4% from 9,848 separations of ongoing employees in 2019–20.

**Table A3.1: Ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees (2017 to 2021)**

Year	Ongoing APS employees	Non-ongoing APS employees
June 2021	133,952 (87.0%)	19,993 (13.0%)
June 2020	132,222 (87.9%)	18,195 (12.1%)
June 2019	132,220 (90.1%)	14,550 (9.9%)
June 2018	136,198 (90.6%)	14,065 (9.4%)
June 2017	137,276 (90.3%)	14,672 (9.7%)

Source: APSED

JOB FAMILIES

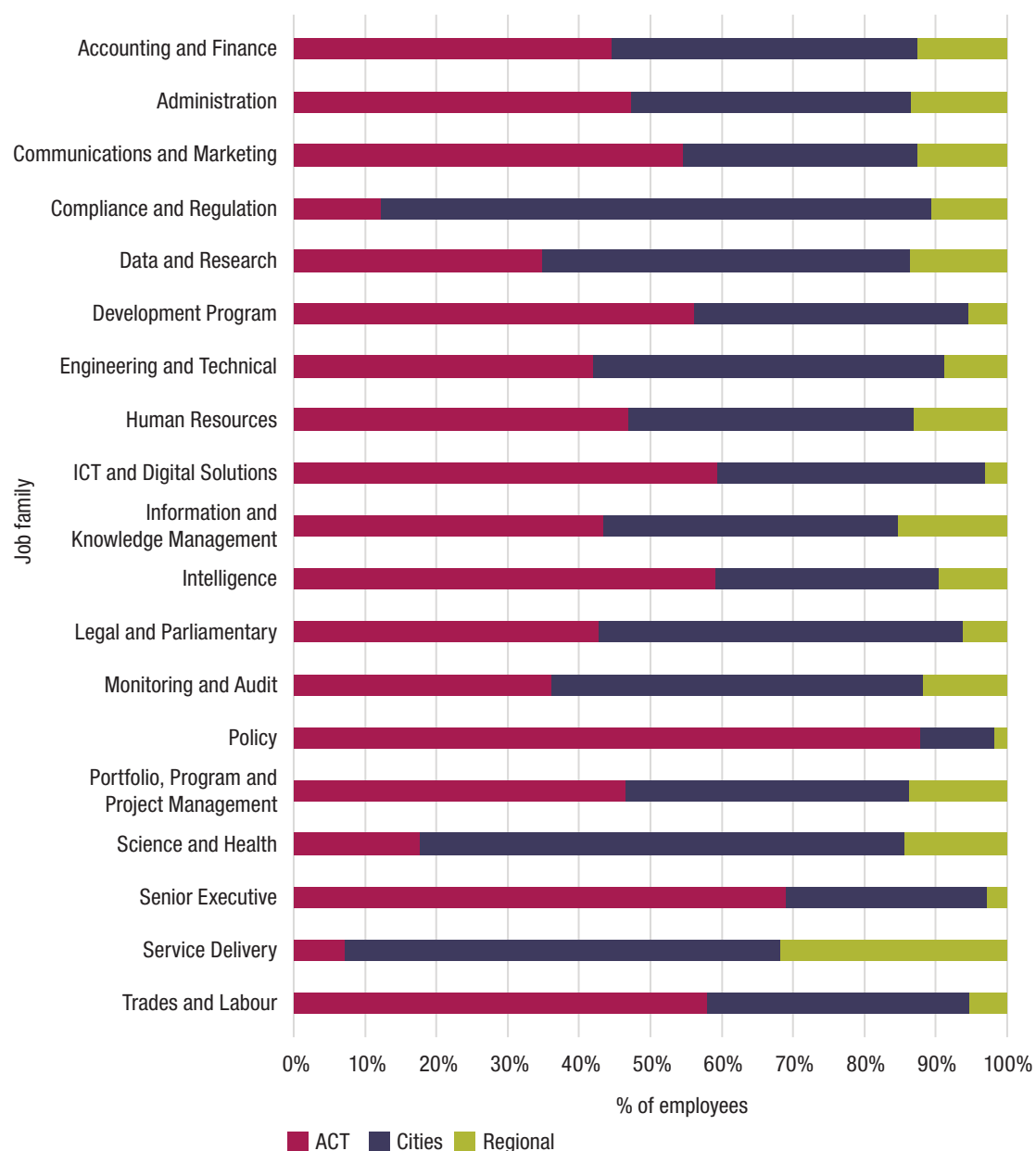
The APS Job Family Model groups functionally similar jobs that perform related tasks and require similar or related skills and knowledge. The model classifies jobs at 3 levels: family, function and role. There are 19 job families, which are broken down into clusters of job functions and further into job roles.

As at 30 June 2021, 35 agencies supplied job family data relating to 130,799 (85.0%) of APS employees.

Location

Figure A3.2 presents the dispersion of job families across Canberra, other cities and regions across Australia.

Figure A3.2: Job families, by location (30 June 2021)



Source: APSED



ENGAGEMENTS AND SEPARATIONS

Engagement numbers have fluctuated over the last 10 years, ranging from 11,271 in 2011–12, to 2,367 in 2014–15 during the APS-wide recruitment freeze, and then back up to 10,157 in 2020–21.

Tables A3.3 and A3.4 cover ongoing APS engagements by classification and by age group.

Table A3.3: Ongoing APS engagements by classification (2011–12 to 2020–21)

Classification	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Trainee	299	283	251	130	584	558	641	442	503	491
Graduate	1,398	1,237	1,152	1,037	1,437	1,484	1,247	1,205	1,393	1,372
APS 1	160	130	181	36	47	57	44	46	62	86
APS 2	458	271	282	151	486	456	172	165	195	449
APS 3	2,019	1,298	533	247	2,493	1,632	2,085	773	1,561	1,260
APS 4	1,768	1,222	462	142	2,021	1,544	1,522	1,567	1,660	1,583
APS 5	1,600	880	427	157	1,318	1,066	1,071	1,525	1,382	1,648
APS 6	1,831	1,148	673	241	1,321	1,305	1,214	1,634	1,793	1,795
EL 1	1,215	778	467	140	787	685	673	794	847	1,000
EL 2	437	346	185	58	360	292	268	323	342	385
SES 1	51	44	24	17	157	47	47	57	46	66
SES 2	26	13	12	9	31	17	26	15	25	19
SES 3	9	1	1	2	9	6	5	10	2	3
Total	11,271	7,651	4,650	2,367	11,051	9,149	9,015	8,556	9,811	10,157

Source: APSED

Table A3.4: Ongoing APS engagements by age group (2011-12 to 2020-21)

Age group (years)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Under 20	232	152	108	74	157	169	126	149	143	158
20-24	2,368	1,691	1,095	703	2,021	1,812	1,751	1,475	1,785	1,953
25-29	2,481	1,716	1,034	632	2,534	2,100	1,940	1,836	2,126	2,139
30-34	1,624	1,148	674	317	1,796	1,361	1,429	1,288	1,466	1,544
35-39	1,277	838	470	166	1,297	1,001	1,097	1,043	1,236	1,275
40-44	1,133	732	380	163	1,061	874	878	861	950	960
45-49	896	553	340	130	894	717	744	772	853	851
50-54	660	420	254	102	685	592	534	560	637	636
55-59	411	278	187	55	425	379	342	373	427	421
60 and over	189	123	108	25	181	144	174	199	188	220
Total	11,271	7,651	4,650	2,367	11,051	9,149	9,015	8,556	9,811	10,157

Source: APSED

Table A3.5 covers ongoing APS separations by classification. In 2020-21 there were 8,430 ongoing separations. The number of separations decreased from 9,848 in 2019-20. Unlike engagements, separations have remained relatively steady over time.

Table A3.5: Ongoing APS separations by classification (2011-12 to 2020-21)

Classification	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Trainee	52	40	44	38	59	61	75	120	80	69
Graduate	76	55	60	38	42	60	59	91	115	57
APS 1	135	123	100	85	59	61	69	51	49	24
APS 2	363	315	328	331	279	241	306	246	249	213
APS 3	1,452	1,235	1,273	1,139	991	1,190	1,219	1,048	911	816
APS 4	1,768	1,627	1,800	1,748	1,554	1,689	1,887	2,225	1,573	1,500
APS 5	1,436	1,354	1,422	1,391	1,285	1,434	1,479	1,786	1,293	1,226
APS 6	2,161	2,052	2,272	2,302	1,911	2,123	2,319	2,886	2,248	2,036
EL 1	1,841	1,736	2,375	2,191	2,275	1,756	1,733	2,226	1,849	1,468
EL 2	951	931	1,363	1,148	1,082	882	920	1,175	1,249	772
SES 1	130	142	189	170	177	174	160	178	148	176
SES 2	57	47	78	72	70	65	65	64	71	59
SES 3	15	15	13	13	14	20	18	15	13	14
Total	10,437	9,672	11,317	10,666	9,798	9,756	10,309	12,111	9,848	8,430

Source: APSED



CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURES

As at 30 June 2021, the most commonly engaged classification was at the APS 6 level.

This continues the trend of the last decade since APS 6 became the most common classification in 2011 (Table A3.6).

Table A3.6: Number of APS employees by base classification at 30 June (2012 to 2021)

Classification	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Trainee	367	356	346	221	581	618	764	564	612	558
Graduate	1,528	1,413	1,318	1,196	1,571	1,686	1,487	1,452	1,604	1,572
APS 1	4,010	5,262	4,945	4,351	3,900	2,903	2,679	2,852	2,229	1,727
APS 2	5,994	5,224	5,071	4,671	5,001	4,602	4,699	4,413	6,250	4,826
APS 3	20,909	20,468	19,203	19,400	20,766	18,423	17,212	15,324	15,727	16,860
APS 4	32,010	31,856	30,707	30,639	30,579	29,496	29,485	28,095	27,324	28,350
APS 5	22,548	22,244	21,241	20,672	20,932	21,235	20,852	20,587	21,144	21,676
APS 6	33,904	33,678	32,405	31,246	32,668	33,121	32,972	32,969	33,975	34,344
EL 1	29,539	29,308	27,568	25,852	25,485	25,543	25,657	26,016	26,943	28,504
EL 2	13,702	13,552	12,544	11,524	11,489	11,666	11,754	11,730	11,814	12,669
SES 1	2,096	2,055	1,918	1,821	1,964	1,976	2,023	2,047	2,064	2,095
SES 2	592	598	552	531	544	559	555	584	601	629
SES 3	140	132	121	116	125	120	124	137	130	135
Total	167,339	166,146	157,939	152,240	155,605	151,948	150,263	146,770	150,417	153,945

Source: APSED

AGE PROFILE

As at 30 June 2021, the average age of APS employees remained steady at 43.5, with most APS employees still aged between 35 and 54 (Table A3.7).

Table A3.7: Number of APS employees by age group at 30 June (2012 to 2021)

Age group (years)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Under 20	659	725	469	457	577	406	456	432	574	583
20–24	7,730	7,042	5,643	5,238	5,885	5,509	5,528	5,310	6,295	6,784
25–29	18,888	18,050	15,834	14,394	14,322	13,650	12,947	12,587	13,136	13,722
30–34	21,896	21,985	21,030	20,149	20,263	19,180	18,434	17,216	17,054	17,135
35–39	22,221	21,897	21,145	20,589	21,306	21,258	21,128	20,681	20,990	21,399
40–44	23,088	23,136	22,438	22,086	21,981	21,282	20,852	20,754	20,975	21,604
45–49	23,459	22,839	21,835	21,057	21,702	21,786	21,905	21,708	22,014	21,918
50–54	23,860	24,034	23,183	22,351	22,172	21,260	20,632	19,975	20,153	20,841
55–59	15,330	15,665	15,582	15,410	16,168	16,360	16,696	16,403	16,758	16,841
60 and over	10,208	10,773	10,780	10,509	11,229	11,257	11,685	11,704	12,468	13,118
Total	167,339	166,146	157,939	152,240	155,605	151,948	150,263	146,770	150,417	153,945

Source: APSED

GENDER

The gender profile of the APS has been skewed towards women since 1999, when they became the majority of employees. However, in the last 10 years the proportion of women has grown from 57.7% to 60.2% (Table A3.8).

Table A3.8: Gender representation in the APS at 30 June (2012 to 2021)

Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Men	70,798	69,867	66,221	63,231	63,708	62,296	61,502	59,176	60,147	61,173
Women	96,517	96,252	91,689	88,979	91,865	89,620	88,719	87,540	90,208	92,623
X	.	.	.	.	.	32	42	54	62	149
Total	167,339	166,146	157,939	152,240	155,605	151,948	150,263	146,770	150,417	153,945

Source: APSED



For the first time, the proportion of women at EL2 and SES Band 1 levels are higher than that of men. There remains a lower proportion of women at SES Band 2 and 3 levels compared to men. However, the numbers at these levels continue to rise (Table A3.9).

Table A3.9: Gender representation by classification at 30 June (2012 to 2021)

Classification	Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Trainee	Men	187	146	152	112	275	321	405	252	293	249
	Women	180	210	194	109	306	297	357	312	319	304
Graduate	Men	778	658	678	628	792	831	754	744	817	783
	Women	750	754	640	568	779	854	732	703	782	783
APS 1	Men	1,332	1,832	1,727	1,452	1,220	969	899	913	728	572
	Women	2,678	3,429	3,217	2,898	2,679	1,934	1,780	1,939	1,499	1,150
APS 2	Men	2,227	1,949	1,930	1,802	1,975	1,834	1,864	1,745	2,411	1,848
	Women	3,767	3,275	3,141	2,869	3,026	2,768	2,833	2,664	3,835	2,973
APS 3	Men	7,078	6,908	6,444	6,508	7,003	6,238	5,828	5,257	5,319	5,805
	Women	13,828	13,556	12,755	12,889	13,759	12,181	11,376	10,055	10,404	11,017
APS 4	Men	9,782	9,921	9,554	9,576	9,387	9,058	9,183	8,728	8,509	8,892
	Women	22,220	21,928	21,144	21,052	21,182	20,427	20,288	19,354	18,793	19,421
APS 5	Men	9,254	9,060	8,605	8,322	8,343	8,383	8,177	7,909	7,979	8,144
	Women	13,292	13,181	12,633	12,347	12,586	12,850	12,672	12,673	13,159	13,513
APS 6	Men	15,258	15,041	14,461	13,825	14,267	14,242	14,087	13,706	14,108	14,205
	Women	18,642	18,633	17,940	17,417	18,396	18,874	18,881	19,256	19,857	20,119
EL 1	Men	15,023	14,735	13,855	12,903	12,517	12,471	12,431	12,290	12,489	12,924
	Women	14,510	14,567	13,706	12,942	12,961	13,065	13,219	13,719	14,445	15,568
EL 2	Men	8,155	7,930	7,260	6,638	6,420	6,437	6,380	6,147	6,038	6,322
	Women	5,546	5,621	5,283	4,885	5,067	5,227	5,373	5,582	5,776	6,346
SES 1	Men	1,253	1,213	1,119	1,054	1,090	1,101	1,081	1,055	1,036	1,006
	Women	843	842	799	767	874	875	942	992	1,028	1,088
SES 2	Men	371	381	352	337	339	341	341	354	349	347
	Women	221	217	200	194	205	218	214	230	252	282
SES 3	Men	100	93	84	74	80	70	72	76	71	76
	Women	40	39	37	42	45	50	52	61	59	59

Source: APSED

Table A3.10 presents the proportion of APS employees belonging to each diversity group.

Table A3.10: Proportion of APS employees by diversity group (2012 to 2021)

Diversity group	2012 (%)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)	2017 (%)	2018 (%)	2019 (%)	2020 (%)	2021 (%)
Women	57.7	57.9	58.1	58.4	59.0	59.0	59.0	59.6	60.0	60.2
Indigenous	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5
People with disability	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1
Non-English speaking background	14.6	14.7	14.9	15.0	15.0	15.1	15.1	15.1	14.8	14.7

Source: APSED



APPENDIX 4:

SUPPORTING STATISTICS TO THE REPORT

This appendix presents additional data that supports the content included in the main chapters of this report.

CHAPTER 1: WORKING AS ONE APS

COMMITTED TO SERVICE

Table A4.1 presents employee responses in the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census to questions about their commitment to service.

Table A4.1: Perceptions of APS employees' commitment to service

Statement	Agree (%)		Neither agree nor disagree (%)		Disagree (%)	
	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020
The work I do gives me a sense of accomplishment	78	79	12	12	9	9
I am happy to go the 'extra mile' at work when required	91	92	6	5	3	2
I work beyond what is required in my job to help my agency achieve its objectives	83	83	14	14	3	3

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census



MOBILITY

Table A4.2 presents employee responses in the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census to questions about when and where they last took a temporary move.

Table A4.2: When and where employees took a temporary move

Question	Response	% in 2021	% in 2020
When did you last take a temporary move?	In the past 12 months	20	22
	1 to 3 years ago	13	11
	More than 3 years ago	13	12
	I have not taken a temporary move	53	54
Where have you taken temporary moves?	Within my current agency	83	84
	In another APS or Commonwealth government agency	18	17
	In a state or territory government agency	1	1
	In the private, not-for-profit, or academic sectors	1	1
	In a Minister's Office	1	-
	Overseas/international outside my current agency	1	-
	Other	1	1

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census. Only respondents who indicated they had taken a temporary move 'in the past 12 months' or '1 to 3 years ago' were asked where they had taken their temporary moves. As respondents could select more than one location of a temporary move, total percentages may exceed 100%. 'In a Minister's Office' and 'Overseas/international outside my current agency' were not included as options in 2020.

CHAPTER 2: HARNESSING MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Table A4.3 presents the responses in the 2021 APS Employee Census about the barriers to high performance.

Table A4.3: The extent to which each of the following acted as a barrier to respondents performing at their best

Statement	Not at all (%)	Very little (%)	Somewhat (%)	To a great extent (%)	To a very great extent (%)
Lack of clarity around my role and responsibilities	28	36	25	8	3
Lack of clarity around priorities	26	37	24	9	4
Too many competing priorities	13	24	33	20	11
Administrative processes within my agency	11	23	35	20	12
The technology within my agency	12	25	32	18	13
The internal communication within my agency	15	36	31	12	6
The lack of inclusiveness in my workgroup	49	32	12	4	2
Multiple layers of decision making within my agency	12	26	32	18	12
Authority for decision making is at a higher level than required	18	31	27	14	10
The appetite for risk within my agency	19	34	28	11	7
Resistance to experimentation with new ideas	20	38	26	10	6
Mobility opportunities are not supported	35	34	19	7	5
Flexible work practices are not supported	42	31	16	6	5
Limited instances of working as one APS	31	35	23	7	4

Source: 2021 APS Employee Census



Table A4.4 presents the responses in the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census about access to flexible working arrangements.

Table A4.4: Currently accessed flexible working arrangements

Response	% in 2021	% in 2020
Part time	15	16
Flexible hours of work	28	27
Compressed work week	3	3
Job sharing	<0.5	<0.5
Working away from the office/working from home	46	53
None of the above	34	29

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

RESILIENT WORKFORCE

Wellbeing Index trends

Table A4.5 presents the 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census results for the individual elements of the APS Wellbeing Index.

Table A4.5: Wellbeing Index items

Statement	Strongly agree (%)		Agree (%)		Neither agree nor disagree (%)		Disagree (%)		Strongly disagree (%)	
	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020
I am satisfied with the policies/practices in place to help me manage my health and wellbeing	16	16	51	56	20	18	9	7	4	3
My agency does a good job of communicating what it can offer me in terms of health and wellbeing	16	17	49	54	21	19	10	7	3	2
My agency does a good job of promoting health and wellbeing	17	18	46	52	23	20	11	8	4	3
I think my agency cares about my health and wellbeing	16	16	42	46	24	23	11	10	7	5
I believe my immediate supervisor cares about my health and wellbeing	42	39	41	45	10	10	3	3	3	2

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census

CODE OF CONDUCT

Breaches of the APS Code of Conduct

In the 2021 APS Agency Survey, agencies reported that 571 employees were the subject of an investigation into a suspected breach of the APS Code of Conduct that was finalised in 2020-21. Table A4.6 presents the number of APS employees investigated by agencies for suspected breaches of individual elements of the APS Code of Conduct and the number of breach findings in 2020-21. One employee can be investigated for multiple elements of the Code of Conduct of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Table A4.6: Number of APS employees investigated and found in breach of elements of the APS Code of Conduct

Element of Code of Conduct	Investigated	Breached
Behave honestly and with integrity in connection with APS employment (s. 13(1))	254	223
Act with care and diligence in connection with APS employment (s. 13(2))	134	114
When acting in connection with APS employment, treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment (s. 13(3))	127	99
When acting in connection with APS employment comply with all applicable Australian laws (s. 13(4))	37	22
Comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the employee's Agency who has authority to give the direction (s. 13(5))	137	111
Maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that the employee has with any Minister or Minister's member of staff (s. 13(6))	1	1
Take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent), and disclose details of any material personal interest of the employee, in connection with the employee's APS employment (s. 13(7))	64	50
Use Commonwealth resources in a proper manner and for a proper purpose (s. 13(8))	105	93
Not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes in connection with the employee's APS employment (s. 13(9))	47	40
Not make improper use of: inside information, or the employee's duties, status, power or authority, in order to: a) gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the employee or any other person; or b) cause, or seek to cause, a detriment to the employee's Agency, the Commonwealth or any other person (s. 13(10))	36	17



Element of Code of Conduct	Investigated	Breached
At all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and APS Employment Principles, and the integrity and good reputation of the employee's Agency and the APS (s. 13(11))	403	364
While on duty overseas, at all times behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of Australia (s. 13(12))	1	1
Comply with any other conduct requirement that is prescribed by the regulations (s. 13(13))	3	2

Source: 2021 APS Agency Survey

Sources of reports

Table A4.7 presents the number of APS employees investigated for suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct during 2020–21 that resulted from each type of report.

Table A4.7: Type of reports leading to finalised APS Code of Conduct investigations

Type of report	Number of employees
A report generated by a compliance/monitoring system (e.g. audit)	256
A report made to a central conduct or ethics unit or nominated person in a human resources area	181
A report made to an email reporting address	57
A report made to a fraud prevention and control unit or hotline	44
A Public Interest Disclosure	12
A report made to an employee advice or counselling unit	0
A report made to another hotline	0
Other	29

Source: 2021 APS Agency Survey

Outcomes of reports

Table A4.8 presents the outcomes for APS employees investigated for suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct during 2020-21.

Table A4.8: Outcome of investigations into suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct

Outcome	Number of employees
Breach found and sanction applied	364
Breach found but no sanction applied: employee resigned prior to sanction decision	85
No breach found (for any element of the Code)	60
Breach found but no sanction applied: other reason	37
Investigation discontinued: employee resigned	16
Investigation discontinued: other reason	8

Source: 2021 APS Agency Survey

Table A4.9 presents the sanctions applied to APS employees found to have breached the APS Code of Conduct during 2020-21.

Table A4.9: Sanctions imposed for breaches of the APS Code of Conduct

Sanction	Number of employees
Reprimand	259
Deduction from salary by way of a fine	101
Reduction in salary	100
Termination of employment	57
Reduction in classification	27
Re-assignment of duties	12

Source: 2021 APS Agency Survey



Harassment and bullying

In the 2021 APS Employee Census, 11.7% of respondents indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census (11.8% in 2020).

Table A4.10 presents the types of behaviour perceived by respondents.

Table A4.10: Type of harassment or bullying perceived by respondents

Type of behaviour	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the 2021 APS Employee Census	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the 2020 APS Employee Census
Verbal abuse	44.8	45.4
Interference with work tasks	40.6	43.2
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules	35.7	38.4
Cyberbullying	7.9	7.7
Interference with your personal property or work equipment	4.6	4.6
Physical behaviour	4.3	4.9
Sexual harassment	3.9	3.5
Initiation or pranks	2.8	2.7
Other	19.7	20.0

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census. Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A4.11 presents the perceived source of the harassment or bullying indicated by respondents in 2021.

Table A4.11: Perceived source of harassment or bullying

Perceived source	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the 2021 APS Employee Census
Co-worker	37.1
Someone more senior (other than your supervisor)	34.4
A previous supervisor	26.9
Your current supervisor	18.0
Someone more junior than you	9.0
Client, customer or stakeholder	3.8
Contractor	3.3
Consultant/service provider	0.8
Representative of another APS agency	0.8
Minister or ministerial adviser	<0.5
Unknown	1.6

Source: 2021 APS Employee Census. Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A4.12 presents the reporting behaviour of respondents who had perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census (this question was not asked in 2020).

Table A4.12: Reporting behaviour of harassment or bullying

Reporting behaviour	% who perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace during the 12 months preceding the 2021 APS Employee Census
I reported the behaviour in accordance with my agency's policies and procedures	33.6
It was reported by someone else	7.4
I did not report the behaviour	59.0

Source: 2021 APS Employee Census



Table A4.13 presents the reasons for not reporting harassment or bullying given by respondents who had perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and who did not report the behaviour.

Table A4.13: Reasons for not reporting harassment or bullying

Reason	% who perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace during the 12 months preceding the 2021 APS Employee Census and did not report the behaviour
I did not think action would be taken	53.0
I did not want to upset relationships in the workplace	45.3
It could affect my career	43.4
I did not think it was worth the hassle of going through the reporting process	36.7
Managers accepted the behaviour	32.7
I did not have enough evidence	19.0
I did not think the harassment or bullying was serious enough	17.5
The matter was resolved informally	8.9
I did not know how to report it	5.8
Other	16.6

Source: 2021 APS Employee Census. Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace and did not report the behaviour. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Table A4.14 presents the number of recorded complaints of harassment and bullying made by APS employees within APS agencies during 2020–21.

Table A4.14: Complaints to agencies about harassment and bullying

Type of harassment or bullying	Number of complaints
Verbal abuse (e.g. offensive language, derogatory remarks, shouting or screaming)	155
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules (e.g. performance management, access to leave, access to learning and development)	78
Sexual harassment	78
Interference with work tasks (e.g. withholding needed information, undermining or sabotage)	56
Cyberbullying (e.g. harassment via IT, or the spreading of gossip/materials intended to defame/humiliate)	23
Physical behaviour	10
Interference with personal property or work equipment	4
Initiations or pranks	3
Other	208
Total number of complaints about bullying/harassment	588

Source: 2021 APS Agency Survey

Corruption

Table A4.15 presents the proportion of respondents who, during the previous 12 months, had witnessed another APS employee within their agency engaging in behaviour they considered may be serious enough to be viewed as corruption.

Table A4.15: APS employee perceptions of corruption

Potential corruption witnessed	% in 2021	% in 2020
Yes	3.8	3.5
No	89.5	89.8
Not sure	4.4	4.3
Would prefer not to answer	2.3	2.3

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census



Of those who had witnessed potential corruption, the types of corruption are presented in Table A4.16.

Table A4.16: Type of potential corruption witnessed

Type of potential corruption witnessed	% who has witnessed potential corruption in 2021	% who had witnessed potential corruption in 2020
Cronyism—preferential treatment of friends, such as appointing them to positions without proper regard to merit	69.6	67.2
Nepotism—preferential treatment of family members, such as appointing them to positions without proper regard to merit	28.0	28.3
Acting (or failing to act) in the presence of an undisclosed conflict of interest	18.7	23.4
Fraud, forgery or embezzlement	11.8	14.5
Green-lighting	9.9	8.4
Theft or misappropriation of official assets	4.9	7.0
Unlawful disclosure of government information	4.7	4.6
Perverting the course of justice	2.6	2.9
Bribery, domestic and foreign—obtaining, offering or soliciting secret commissions, kickbacks or gratuities	1.8	2.8
Blackmail	1.3	1.6
Insider trading	1.6	1.5
Colluding, conspiring with or harbouring, criminals	1.0	1.1
Other	9.6	14.2

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census. Percentages are based on respondents who said they witnessed potential corruption. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.

Discrimination

In the 2021 APS Employee Census, 11.5% of respondents indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment (11.7% in 2020).

Table A4.17 presents the types of the discrimination perceived by respondents during the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment.

Table A4.17: Type of discrimination perceived by respondents

Category	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the 2021 APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the 2020 APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment
Gender	32.3	31.9
Age	27.2	27.5
Caring responsibilities	22.7	22.5
Race	20.8	19.9
Disability	14.9	14.6
LGBTI+/LGBTIQA+ (e.g. sexual orientation)	4.6	4.0
Religion	4.6	4.0
Identification as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	3.6	4.2
Other	18.3	18.1

Source: 2020 and 2021 APS Employee Census. Percentages are based on respondents who said they had perceived discrimination during the 12 months preceding the APS Employee Census and in the course of their employment. As respondents could select more than one option, total percentages may exceed 100%.



MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES

Machinery of Government (MoG) changes involve the movement of functions, resources and people from one agency to another and are executed by Government decisions; predominantly through Administrative Arrangement Orders (AAOs), the engagement of employees under the *Public Service Act 1999* or the compulsory movement of employees outside of the APS.

In total, there were 8 MoGs executed over the 2020–21 financial year. The most significant changes were:

- Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority functions (296 employees) transferring to the newly established agency Sport Integrity Australia.
- Industry, Science, Energy and Resources functions (84 employees) transferring to the Department of the Treasury.
- Prime Minister and Cabinet function (77 employees) transferring to the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency.

Table A4.18: Machinery of Government changes (2020–21)

Date	AAO
1 July 2020	The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority was abolished. The Sport Integrity Australia agency was established and 296 employees were moved from the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority.
9 July 2020	The Department of Health moved 12 employees to Sport Integrity Australia. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment moved 6 employees to the Attorney-General's Department.
1 January 2021	The Department of Health moved one employee to Sport Integrity Australia. The Infrastructure and Project Financing Agency moved 24 employees to the Treasury.
15 April 2021	Two hundred and twenty employees were moved under the employment coverage of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> in the Australian Taxation Office from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.
5 May 2021	The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet moved 77 employees to the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency.
6 May 2021	The Infrastructure and Project Financing Agency was abolished and its functions transferred to the Department of the Treasury on 6 May 2021.
9 June 2021	The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources moved 84 employees to the Department of the Treasury.



APPENDIX 5:

UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE

The methodology used to calculate the unscheduled absence rate for 2020–21 has changed.

The previous measure of APS unscheduled absence rate was determined by calculating the unscheduled absence rate for each agency individually and then obtaining the average of those agency rates. In this method, all agencies had equal influence on the overall unscheduled absence rate irrespective of agency size.

It is well established that larger agencies tend to have a higher unscheduled absence rate than smaller agencies. As a result, this method underestimated the true unscheduled absence rate across the APS as it was biased towards smaller agencies—who make up more than half of APS agencies, yet only 3.8% of APS employees.

The new method incorporates the headcount of agencies when calculating the APS unscheduled absence rate. In practice, every agency's unscheduled absence days and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) are summed, and the unscheduled absence rate is calculated by dividing the total number of unscheduled absence days by the total FTE of the APS.

$$\text{APS unscheduled absence rate} = \frac{\text{Total days of unscheduled absence across APS}}{\text{Total FTE of APS}}$$

The new method will show an increased unscheduled absence rate for the whole APS of around two days. The method of calculating each individual agency's unscheduled absence rate remains the same.

Table A5.1 compares the unscheduled absence rate between the new and old methods of calculations across the whole-of-APS and broken down by agency size. Over the last five years, the trend remains; however, the new method adds about two days to the APS unscheduled absence rate. The new method also increases the unscheduled absence rate for small and large agencies while there is not much difference for medium size agencies.

**Table A5.1: Adjusted unscheduled absence rates**

Year	APS		Small		Medium		Large	
	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old
2015–16	13.2	11.5	11.7	10.7	11.6	12.0	13.5	12.6
2016–17	13.1	11.4	11.5	10.6	12.0	12.1	13.3	12.3
2017–18	13.3	11.4	11.0	10.5	11.9	11.9	13.5	12.5
2018–19	13.4	11.4	11.0	10.7	11.7	11.7	13.7	12.4
2019–20	13.1	11.1	11.1	10.6	11.4	11.6	13.3	11.9
2020–21	12.2	10.1	9.8	9.5	10.5	10.6	12.5	10.9

Unscheduled absence includes personal, carers' and miscellaneous leave (bereavement, compassionate and emergency leave). It includes instances of these leave types with or without a supporting medical certificate, whether paid or unpaid.

Table A5.2 shows unscheduled absence rates by agency size for the financial year 2020–21. The absence rate by agency size has dropped significantly from 2019–20, influenced by a reduction in large agency unscheduled absence rates. This could be a reflection of the change in working conditions due to COVID-19.

Table A5.2: Unscheduled absence by agency size (2019–20 and 2020–21)

Agency size	Unscheduled absence 2019–20 (days)	Unscheduled absence 2020–21 (days)
Small agencies	11.1	9.8
Medium agencies	11.4	10.5
Large agencies	13.3	12.5
Overall APS	13.1	12.2

Table A5.3 provides personal and miscellaneous leave use and unscheduled absence rate by agency for 2019–20 and 2020–21 (expressed as an average number of days). It should be noted, for small agencies a small number of individuals with high leave levels can influence the unscheduled absence rate substantially.

Table A5.3: Sick leave, carer's leave, miscellaneous leave and unscheduled absence rate by agency (2019-20 and 2020-21) (expressed as an average number of days)

Agency name	Sick leave 2020-21	Carer's leave 2020-21	Miscellaneous leave 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2019-20
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	13.5	1.7	0.6	15.7	15.1
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	7.2	1.3	0.7	9.2	10.5
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	5.7	0.2	2.0	8.0	11.7
Agriculture, Water and the Environment	10.2	2.4	0.9	13.5	13.1
Attorney-General's Department	7.6	1.6	0.3	9.5	9.6
Australian Building and Construction Commission	10.1	3.0	0.3	13.4	12.3
Australian Bureau of Statistics	8.5	2.0	0.5	11.0	12.0
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	7.3	2.9	0.0	10.3	10.6
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission	6.5	1.2	0.0	7.7	9.7
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	6.3	0.7	0.1	7.1	9.0
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	4.6	1.6	0.4	6.6	9.4
Australian Communications and Media Authority	9.6	2.4	0.3	12.3	12.6
Australian Competition Consumer Commission	5.4	1.6	0.6	7.6	8.4
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	7.1	2.0	0.3	9.3	9.8

APPENDIX FIVE: UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE



Agency name	Sick leave 2020-21	Carer's leave 2020-21	Miscellaneous leave 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2019-20
Australian Digital Health Agency	9.2	2.3	0.5	12.1	9.9
Australian Electoral Commission	11.1	2.1	0.4	13.6	14.4
Australian Financial Security Authority	9.5	2.1	0.2	11.7	10.8
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	9.7	2.3	0.2	12.2	15.2
Australian Human Rights Commission	4.7	1.5	0.4	6.6	7.3
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies	7.3	1.8	0.6	9.7	11.7
Australian Institute of Family Studies	6.2	2.8	0.0	9.0	11.3
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	9.0	2.2	0.6	11.8	11.7
Australian National Audit Office	7.7	2.1	0.4	10.2	8.8
Australian National Maritime Museum	7.6	1.5	0.4	9.4	9.8
Australian Office of Financial Management	3.8	2.5	0.0	6.4	7.7
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	5.5	2.2	1.5	9.1	7.5
Australian Public Service Commission	6.0	1.7	0.2	7.9	13.0
Australian Radiation Protection & Nuclear Safety Agency	5.7	1.6	0.1	7.4	12.3
Australian Research Council *	8.1	2.4	1.4	11.8	13.6
Australian Skills Quality Authority	8.9	1.4	2.1	12.4	11.5

Agency name	Sick leave 2020-21	Carer's leave 2020-21	Miscellaneous leave 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2019-20
Australian Taxation Office	7.9	1.5	0.3	9.8	11.6
Australian Trade Commission	5.4	1.5	0.2	7.1	8.9
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	5.0	2.0	0.2	7.2	9.0
Australian Transport Safety Bureau *	7.1	1.4	0.2	8.7	9.3
Australian War Memorial	8.1	2.9	0.4	11.4	13.5
Bureau of Meteorology	4.8	2.1	0.2	7.0	8.8
Cancer Australia *	4.6	1.3	0.2	6.1	5.5
Clean Energy Regulator	8.2	1.2	0.4	9.7	15.0
Comcare	9.3	2.1	0.7	12.1	16.2
Commonwealth Grants Commission	7.2	1.9	0.3	9.4	12.2
Commonwealth Ombudsman	10.4	2.6	0.5	13.5	12.9
Defence	9.2	1.7	0.3	11.2	12.4
Defence Housing Australia	8.7	2.7	0.5	11.9	12.7
Digital Transformation Agency	8.1	2.2	0.3	10.6	9.7
Director of Public Prosecutions	5.4	1.9	0.2	7.5	8.4
Education, Skills and Employment	8.8	2.2	0.4	11.3	13.1
Fair Work Commission *	5.4	1.3	0.7	7.4	8.8
Federal Court Statutory Agency	6.0	1.1	0.3	7.4	8.7
Finance	7.9	1.7	0.3	9.9	10.9

APPENDIX FIVE: UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE



Agency name	Sick leave 2020-21	Carer's leave 2020-21	Miscellaneous leave 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2019-20
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	7.2	2.3	0.2	9.7	9.6
Foreign Affairs and Trade	7.1	2.4	0.2	9.6	10.4
Future Fund Management Agency	1.7	1.2	0.1	3.0	3.6
Geoscience Australia	7.8	3.3	0.3	11.4	11.2
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	6.2	2.2	0.6	8.9	15.5
Health	8.0	1.6	0.5	10.2	11.7
Home Affairs	10.9	3.1	0.3	14.3	14.9
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	12.2	2.6	0.4	15.2	14.4
Industry, Science, Energy and Resources	8.7	1.6	0.4	10.7	9.8
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications	8.7	2.1	0.3	11.1	10.7
Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman	3.1	1.6	0.2	4.9	8.7
IP Australia	7.7	2.6	0.4	10.7	11.7
Murray-Darling Basin Authority	7.6	2.1	0.3	9.9	9.8
Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House	8.5	1.4	0.5	10.4	12.1
National Archives of Australia	12.7	2.3	0.3	15.2	14.2
National Blood Authority	9.9	2.3	0.2	12.4	9.9
National Capital Authority	6.2	1.6	0.3	8.1	8.7

Agency name	Sick leave 2020-21	Carer's leave 2020-21	Miscellaneous leave 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2019-20
National Disability Insurance Agency	10.5	1.9	0.3	12.6	13.1
National Film and Sound Archive	5.8	1.9	0.5	8.1	13.7
National Health and Medical Research Council	5.4	2.2	0.3	7.9	11.7
National Health Funding Body	6.9	1.7	0.7	9.3	8.9
National Indigenous Australians Agency	11.9	2.1	0.5	14.5	14.9
National Library of Australia	11.8	2.3	0.6	14.7	15.3
National Museum of Australia	9.6	3.8	0.4	13.8	13.2
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	6.9	1.9	0.3	9.0	8.4
National Portrait Gallery	7.7	1.4	0.6	9.7	10.3
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	7.6	1.4	0.3	9.3	11.0
Office of National Intelligence	5.9	2.2	0.6	8.7	11.6
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	6.3	0.7	0.6	7.6	7.4
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner *	6.3	1.1	0.3	7.8	9.4
Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman	7.9	1.8	0.3	10.1	11.4
Organ and Tissue Authority	7.0	1.8	0.2	9.0	10.5
Prime Minister and Cabinet	6.8	1.4	0.2	8.4	10.1

APPENDIX FIVE: UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE



Agency name	Sick leave 2020-21	Carer's leave 2020-21	Miscellaneous leave 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2020-21	Total unscheduled absence rate 2019-20
Productivity Commission	6.4	1.9	0.2	8.5	8.2
Royal Australian Mint	11.9	3.1	0.3	15.3	17.0
Safe Work Australia	9.4	2.0	0.7	12.1	12.8
Services Australia	13.6	2.4	0.6	16.6	16.7
Social Services	10.8	2.5	0.3	13.6	13.2
Sport Integrity Australia	7.9	2.1	0.6	10.6	.
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	6.5	1.4	0.0	7.9	8.7
Torres Strait Regional Authority	9.7	3.6	1.8	15.0	11.4
Treasury	6.8	1.6	0.3	8.7	9.4
Veterans' Affairs	9.0	2.0	0.5	11.5	13.7
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	6.3	1.1	0.2	7.6	11.7

* Agency provided headcount (not full-time equivalent) data.

ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Description
3SC	Secretaries' Strategic Security Committee
AAOs	Administrative Arrangement Orders
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AC	Companion of the Order of Australia
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AGGP	Australian Government Graduate Program
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ANZSOG	Australia-New Zealand School of Government
AO	Officer of the Order of Australia
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
APS professions	APS Professional Stream Strategies
APSED	Australian Public Service Employment Database
ASL	Average Staffing Level
AUSTLANG	Database that provides information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
COO Committee	Chief Operating Officers' Committee
COVID	Coronavirus disease
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CSC	Conspicuous Service Cross
Cth	Commonwealth of Australia
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
DSS	Department of Social Services
DTA	Digital Transformation Agency

ABBREVIATIONS



Term	Description
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
EL	Executive Level
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FTSE	Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences
H1N1 virus	Swine flu virus, a subtype of influenza A virus
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDAHOBIT	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia & Transphobia
IPAA	Institute of Public Administration Australia
IT	Information Technology
L&D	Learning and Development
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning/Queer +
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning/Queer, Asexual +
MP	Member of Parliament
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PSM	Public Service Medal
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
SES	Senior Executive Service
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency

GLOSSARY

Term	Description
Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG)	ANZSOG was established by the Australian and New Zealand governments. It works to strengthen the quality of public sector leadership in Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand through education programs, thought leadership and government-focused research that meet the contemporary challenges faced by public services.
APS Agency Survey	The agency survey is an annual survey of all Australian Public Service (APS) agencies with at least 20 employees.
APS Employee Census	The APS Employee Census is an annual employee perception survey of the APS workforce.
APS agency	An APS agency operates under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth). This includes departments, statutory agencies and executive agencies. APS agencies are a subset of Commonwealth agencies. A list of APS agencies is available on the APSC website at https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-agency-listing-agencies-covered-public-service-act-1999 .
APS craft	APS craft encompasses the fundamental capabilities that APS employees need to deliver great policy and services.
APS employee	An APS employee is an employee engaged under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth).
APSED	The Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) contains employment, diversity and education details for all people employed in the APS under the authority of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth).
APS Surge Reserve	The APS Surge Reserve provides the capacity to rapidly mobilise APS volunteers in large numbers.
APS Values	The APS Values are set out in Section 10 of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth). The APS Values articulate the Parliament's expectations of public servants in terms of their performance and standards of behaviour. The values are: impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.
Base classification	Another term for substantive classification, which is the classification level an APS employee has been engaged at, or were last promoted to.
Commonwealth agency	An agency under the Commonwealth of Australia, including those not covered under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth).

Term	Description
Commissioner's Directions	The Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016 are made under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth). The directions prescribe standards with which agency heads and APS employees must comply to meet their obligations under the Act. In 2019, the Commissioner updated parts of the directions.
Chief Operating Officers (COO) Committee	The Chief Operating Officers Committee was established by the Secretaries Board with a remit to embed an enterprise-wide approach to APS operations and management. It first met in February 2020 and its membership includes the COOs from all departments and major agencies.
Engagement	An engagement refers to the engagement or re-engagement of employees under Section 22 of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth). Employees of agencies moving into coverage of the Act are counted as engagements. Engagement can be employment as an ongoing APS employee; for a specified term or for the duration of a specified task; or for duties that are irregular or intermittent.
Job family/ies	The APS Job Family Model groups functionally similar positions that have related skills, tasks and knowledge requirements. The model does not reflect work level classification.
Machinery of Government	A Machinery of Government change occurs when the Government decides to change the way Commonwealth responsibilities are managed. It can involve the movement of functions, resources and people from one agency to another.
Non-ongoing	Non-ongoing employment is a generic term which refers to the engagement of APS employees for either a specified term or for the duration of a specified task or for duties that are irregular or intermittent as mentioned in sections 22(2)(b) and (c) of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation founded in 1961. It aims to find evidence-based solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges.
Ongoing	Ongoing employment refers to the employment of an APS employee as an ongoing employee as mentioned in Section 22(2) (a) of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Paid classification	The actual classification that an employee is currently working in. It includes employees on temporary assignment to a higher or lower classification.
Planned leave	Planned leave includes annual leave and long service leave.
Promotion	A promotion is when an existing APS employee moves to a higher classification level. For example, an APS 6 employee is successful in gaining a promotion to an EL 1 classification.

Term	Description
Secretaries Board	The Secretaries Board was established by the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth) to set the direction for the APS, drive collaboration and draw together advice from senior government leaders, business and the community. It is made up of secretaries from each APS department and the Australian Public Service Commissioner. Currently the Director-General of the Office of National Intelligence also sits on the board.
Secretaries Digital Committee	The Secretaries Digital Committee was established in 2020 to help deliver digital transformation commitments and to ensure effective APS digital governance.
Separation	A separation occurs when an employee ceases to be employed under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth). It does not refer to employees moving from one APS agency to another. Separations include retirement, resignations, and terminations of employment for grounds stated at section 29 in the Act.
Stewardship	Stewardship in the public sector context refers to the effective planning, management and protection of resources; as well as to the role of building a culture of innovation and integrity in policy advice. Under section 57 of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (Cth), as part of their roles, Secretaries are expected to provide stewardship to their departments.
Unplanned leave	Includes the following leave types: sick, community service, compassionate, Defence Reservist, leave without pay, miscellaneous, parental, and workers compensation.
Unscheduled absence	Includes the following leave types: personal, carers' and miscellaneous leave (bereavement, compassionate and emergency leave).

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