

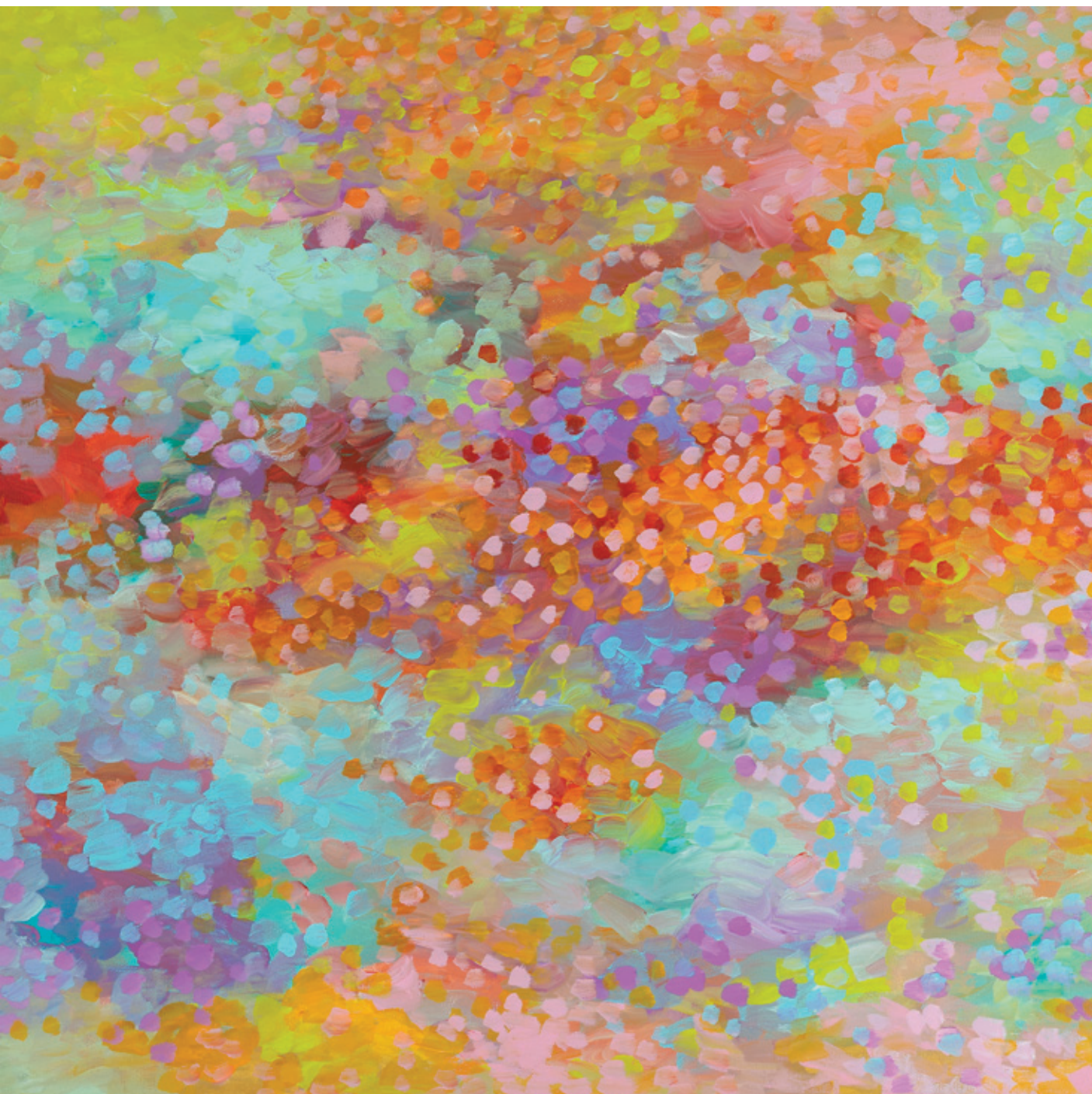


Australian Government

# Australian Public Service Gender Equality

Strategy 2021–26

*Realising the benefits for all*



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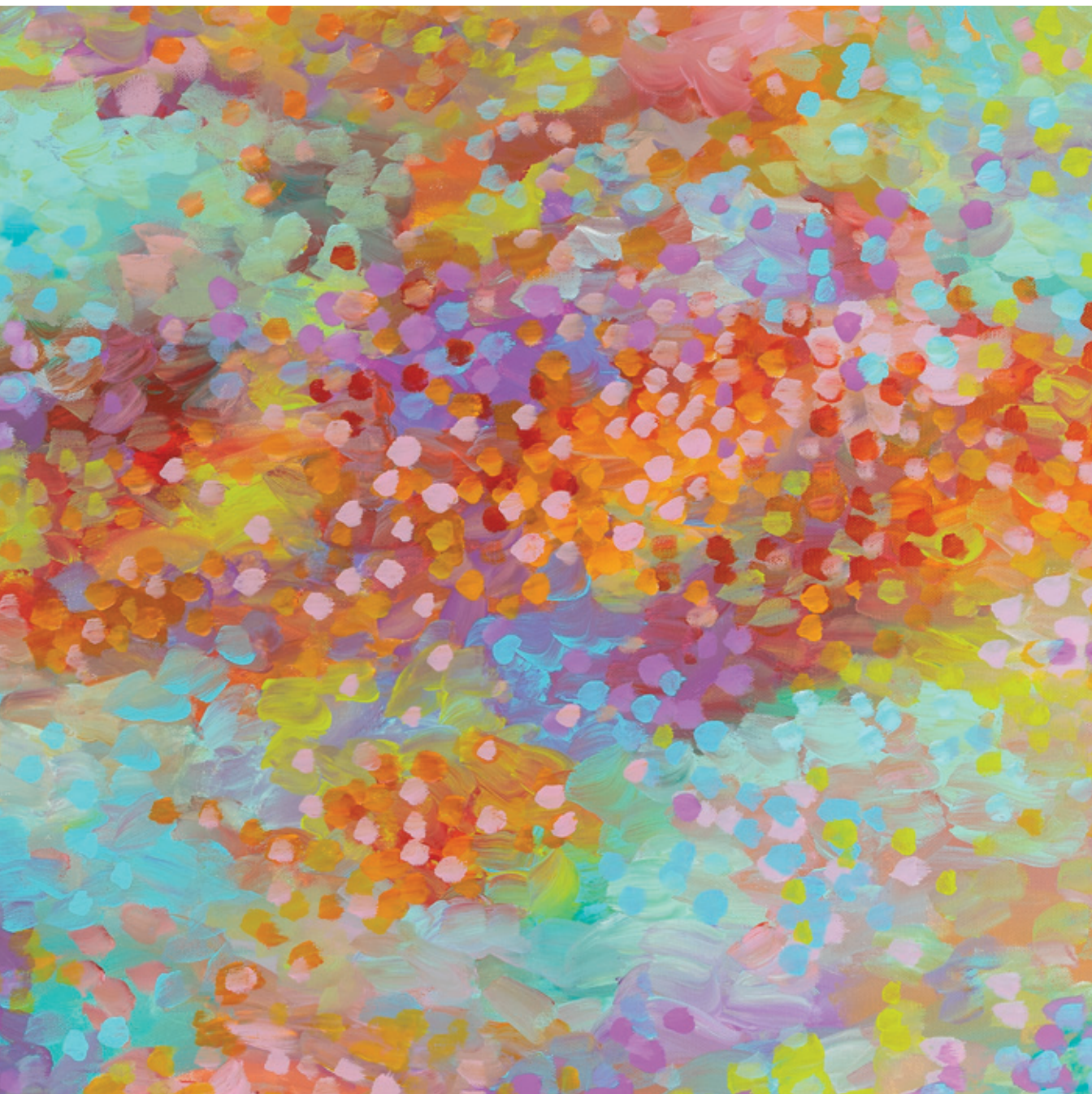




# Australian Public Service Gender Equality

Strategy 2021–26

*Realising the benefits for all*



## Ministers' foreword

Since the lifting of the Marriage Bar in 1966, there has been a major shift in gender equality in the Australian Public Service (APS). We have introduced a lot of 'firsts' with regard to legislation, policy and representation in the workforce. Each subsequent generation has benefited. We need to celebrate this and recognise what is working well!

Research has already told us there is a compelling business case for gender equality and the Government has expressed a strong commitment to progressing this in Australia. If we want to remain at the forefront on gender equality, we need to maintain this momentum. All workplaces have a role to play, but we believe the APS should be an exemplar.

The *Realising the benefits for all—APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26* (the Strategy) is an essential part of the Australian Government's commitment to gender equality.

This Strategy sets out an ambitious change in the culture and mindset of the APS—while the APS has made significant progress, the lived experience is telling us that barriers remain. To maintain momentum and sustain the gains we have achieved, the APS must broaden its approach to gender equality to ensure the benefits are shared by all into the future.

The Strategy aligns with the 2021-22 Women's Budget Statement, which outlines the Government's continued support for, and commitment to, women's safety, women's economic security, and women's health and wellbeing. The Government is focused on ensuring Australia is a place where women are able to make choices that are right for them. As the Women's Budget Statement says, this includes an Australia:

- free from violence against women and children
- where women's workforce participation continues to grow and gender pay gaps continue to narrow
- that supports women's leadership aspirations
- where families have greater choice and flexibility to manage work and care
- that is inclusive of women with diverse lived experiences.

### **The Hon Ben Morton MP**

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Minister for the Public Service  
Special Minister of State

### **Senator the Hon Marise Payne**

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Women



## Australian Public Service Commissioner's Message

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

I am pleased to present the *Realising the benefits for all—APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26* (the Strategy). Aligned with *Delivering for Tomorrow—APS Workforce Strategy 2025*, the Strategy sets out a continuing pathway to realising the benefits of a gender equal workplace.

Research over the last few decades has outlined the positive impacts of gender equality in workplaces.<sup>1</sup> The refreshed Strategy moves beyond the business case. It pursues gender equality through a holistic lens to benefit our people, workplaces and service to Government and all Australians.

To keep up with expectations of Government, Parliament and the Australian public, we must continue to see people as our greatest asset. Attracting, building, valuing and retaining skills, expertise and talent will help the APS remain an employer of choice and a world-class public service.

The benefits are clear for gender equality; respectful and safer work environments, improved employee engagement and wellbeing, increased innovation and productivity.

Underpinned by a strong focus on inclusive leadership at all levels, the Strategy seeks to shift gender norms, normalise flexible and respectful workplaces and embed gender equality in all that we do.

The Strategy provides a shared vision for gender equality toward which everyone working in the APS can contribute. It sets out clear objectives and practical actions and seeks to build on the progress we have achieved over recent years. It asks us all to ensure our practices harness the benefits of a gender equal workforce.

Building a workplace where all colleagues can access and enjoy the same rewards, resources, support and opportunities is simply the right thing to do at every level. It fits with our values. It gets the best out of people, and it leads to a public service which performs at its best.

The Strategy has benefited from the close guidance of leading researchers and practitioners, including Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, for which we are very grateful.

I commend this Strategy to you all.

**Peter Woolcott AO**

Australian Public Service Commissioner

## Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary's Message

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

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has a leading role in providing fresh thinking and sound advice to government. In particular—through the Office for Women—we focus intently on policies and programs to advance gender equality across Australia.

I am pleased to endorse the *APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26* as an important roadmap to advance gender equality in the APS.

The Strategy recognises that leaders at all levels have the greatest influence over an employee's experience at work. In 2020, the Secretaries Board endorsed an approach to succession management that measures and monitors both the strength and diversity of our leadership pipelines. It will be important to continually review these activities to nurture strong and diverse leadership capability for the future.

Future leaders are now more than ever required to engage others to innovate, collaborate and create change. The APS leadership group plays such a critical role in making gender equality an organisational priority and transforming actions from words on a page to meaningful change.

The Strategy sets out methods of accountability so that we can track our progress and maintain our reputation as a world-class public service into the future.

I urge all agencies to take a purposeful approach to gender equality to build an APS that reflects, understands and connects with the people and community it serves.

**Philip Gaetjens**

Secretary

Prime Minister and Cabinet



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## Our vision

The *Realising the benefits for all—APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26* (the Strategy) presents a pathway to realise gender equality in our Australian Public Service (APS). The Strategy builds on the outgoing strategy, *Balancing the Future: APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19*, and recognises the significant progress made by agencies to drive gender equality in our leadership and workforce, through flexibility and innovation.

The APS is a leader in gender outcomes in many respects. For example, we have achieved gender parity in the senior executive service and the gender pay gap has reduced annually, now at a level of 6.6% compared with 13.4% in the broader economy (for the same period). But there is more to do. It is clear from our consultations that work is needed to help more employees see gender equality as a strategic advantage—that is, equality of opportunity leads to better outcomes for employees, agencies and the communities we serve. There is also more work to do to develop a shared vision for what success looks like. A major aim of this Strategy is to provide a shared vision for gender equality toward which everyone in the APS can contribute.

Achieving this requires commitment from agencies, senior leaders and employees. Our 3 Strategy objectives aim to embed inclusive and respectful workplace practices to enable all genders equality of opportunity and full participation. In doing so we will ensure that the APS can deliver at its best.

**Objective 1:** To see leaders at all levels hold themselves and others to account for demonstrating gender equitable and inclusive behaviour.

**Objective 2:** To shift gender norms, and normalise respectful workplaces and access to flexibility for all.

**Objective 3:** To embed gender equality and inclusion in all that we do.

To achieve these objectives, the Strategy outlines 6 action areas for everyone to take forward:

- 1. Leadership and accountability** *that progresses gender equality through individual and collective action.*
- 2. Respectful workplaces and empowered people** *that prioritise our people's safety and wellbeing.*
- 3. Shifting gender stereotypes** *to support the career and life choices of our people.*
- 4. Flexible ways of working** *to give our people more choice and enhance their contributions at work.*
- 5. Gender data** *that ensures our efforts are informed by the evidence base and progress is visible.*
- 6. Leveraging our external influence** *to champion gender equality in our everyday work.*





# APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26

## Vision

Our workplaces are respectful, safe and inclusive. They enable all genders to fully participate and flourish.

## Strategy objectives

- 1** To see leaders at all levels hold themselves and others to account for demonstrating gender equitable and inclusive behaviour.
- 2** To shift gender norms, and normalise respectful workplaces and access to flexibility for all.
- 3** To embed gender equality and inclusion in all that we do.

### Action areas

Leadership and  
accountability

Respectful  
workplaces and  
empowered  
people

Shifting gender  
stereotypes

Flexible ways  
of working

Gender data

Leveraging  
our external  
influence

As outlined in *Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025*, we need the APS to be inclusive and representative of the Australian community to position us for the future. Drawing on whole of APS data, consultations and best practice examples, the Strategy sets out a roadmap that builds on the significant progress the APS has made on gender equality.

The flexibility built into the Strategy enables agencies to consider their current level of gender equality maturity to inform how they approach the implementation of actions. This includes consideration of their specific workforce demographics and the identity dimensions of employees in addition to gender, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, age, cultural and linguistic background, disability, or sexuality. This is important as gender-based discrimination or disadvantage may be compounded by these factors. Paying close attention to these cross-cutting issues will help agencies bring the Strategy to life in their unique context.

## **Equality versus Equity**

In the APS context, equality ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to make the most of their experiences, careers and talent. Equity is about recognising differences and providing tools and support so that everyone has an opportunity to succeed.

Equality is our end goal, and equity can help us get there.



## Lessons learned

An independent evaluation of the outgoing strategy found it had a positive impact on progressing gender equality across the APS. Most significantly, the strategy provided a flexible, APS-wide framework to enable agency-level conversations and targeted actions on shared areas of focus.

Informed by a comprehensive consultation process, the evaluation found that the outgoing strategy was a catalyst for:

- equality gains in APS leadership
- increased innovation in employment practices
- greater take up of flexible work
- improved maturity in monitoring and evaluation of progress.

These results reflect the efforts of APS colleagues at all levels to drive positive cultural change in their workplaces. However, the evaluation indicated that we cannot become complacent on gender equality. To maintain momentum and sustain the gains we have achieved, the APS must renew its energy as well as broaden its approach to gender equality to ensure the benefits are shared by all, both now and into the future.

The evaluation identified the following essential elements that agencies need to adopt and continue in order to pursue gender equality in a meaningful and impactful way:

- visible and committed senior leadership on the issue of gender equality
- corporate teams and employee networks as key infrastructure to ensure internal policies and initiatives to realise gender equality are fit for purpose and maximise employee engagement
- gender equality is prioritised and seen as critical to driving high performance and a positive workplace culture.

The full evaluation report is available online on the APSC gender equality webpage. ([www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/gender-equality-0](http://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/gender-equality-0))

# CALLING OUT THE CHALLENGES...

*a snapshot of what we heard*

## LEADERSHIP

Well-meaning managers are not always consistent or equipped to make gender equality part of their daily work.

## FLEXIBLE WORK

This is still not the norm in many agencies across the APS.

## HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Our workplaces are not safe for all.





### **PARENTAL LEAVE**

Men and supporting partners are missing out on accessing parental leave.

### **GENDER STEREOTYPES**

These unhelpfully reinforce norms about work, job roles and caring responsibilities.

### **AREN'T WE DONE WITH GENDER EQUALITY?**

Not everyone sees the benefit of continued focus on gender equality.

### **GENDER PAY GAP**

We need to continue to drive gender pay parity in the APS.

# Data Snapshot



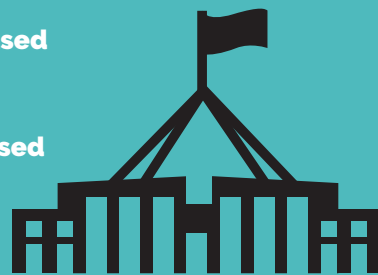
As at  
30 June 2021:

**60.2%** of the APS workforce and  
**50%** of the total SES cohort are women.<sup>2</sup>  
(also see note\*\*)

## As at 30 June 2020:

**38%** of the APS workforce was based  
in the ACT.

SES roles were predominantly ACT based  
accounting for  
**71.5%** of SES positions.<sup>3</sup>



As at 2021, only **22** APS agencies  
are accredited Breastfeeding  
Friendly Workplaces. Only 5 are  
best practice.<sup>5</sup>



While there is no APS COVID-19 related childcare data available:

**40%** of APS Employee Census respondents in 2021 reported  
having caring responsibilities (including care of children).<sup>4</sup>

**43%** of these were women and **34%** men



Of the **14.7%** of APS employees who work on a  
part-time basis, **86.2%** are women while only  
**13.8%** are men.

APS data trends indicate that less than **5%** of new hires  
to the APS are engaged on a part-time basis. This is far  
lower than the proportion of the APS who currently work  
part-time **14.7%**.<sup>7</sup>



**68%**



**62%**





As at 31 December 2020:

The gender pay gap for the APS was **6.6%**.

Women in the APS earned **93.4%** of the average base salary earned by men.<sup>8</sup>

**APS occupations where women make up the majority include:**



**Health: 77.9%**



**Administration: 75.9%**



**Service Delivery: 72.8%**

**Job types where men make up the majority include:**



**Engineering & Technical: 82.9%**



**Trades & Labour: 75.3%**



**Information & Communications Technology: 67.4%<sup>9</sup>**

A larger proportion of women than men were using flexible working arrangements.<sup>6</sup>

**11.5% of APS staff felt they had experienced discrimination in the last 12 months at work, reported by 11.8% of females and 9.4% of males.**

*This discrimination was most commonly perceived on the basis of gender followed by age and caring responsibilities.*

**Harassment or bullying was perceived by 11.7% of employees (12.4% of females compared to 9.4% of males).**

**Sexual harassment was perceived by 3.9% of these employees (4.3% of females compared to 2.7% of males).<sup>10</sup>**

According to the 2019 OECD Government at a Glance

**Australia performs above the OECD average in terms of gender equality in public sector employment.<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>\*\*</sup> The APS recognises all gender identities. Latest data indicates that 149 people across the APS identified as Gender X (indeterminate/intersex/unspecified) in HR systems.

## Building on the data—Gender equality in the APS

The following information draws together data and consultation insights, which inform the actions outlined in the Strategy.

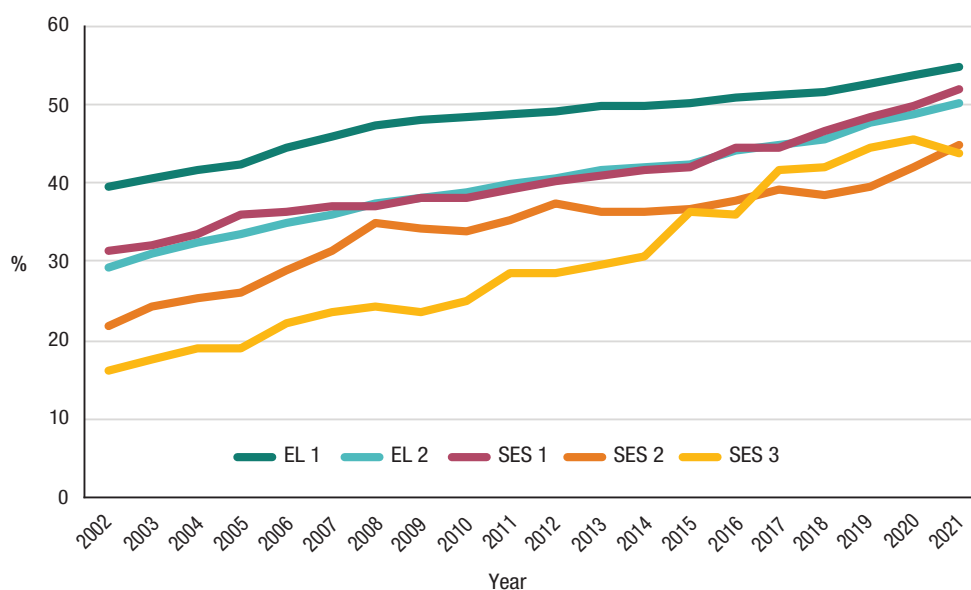
### Gender representation

In 1968, 2 years after the removal of the Marriage Bar (which forced women to leave the APS when married), men dominated the APS, and just one in 4 employees were women. Today nearly 3 in 5 employees are women. Proportionately there are now more women in the APS (60.2%) compared to the Australian labour market (47%). The APS has become an employer of choice for women, where women account for almost 3 in every 5 new ongoing recruits.

Women are well represented at all classification levels in the APS including the Senior Executive Service (SES). Women now comprise 50% of the total SES cohort for the first time. For the past 6 years, the proportion of promotions into and within the SES for women has exceeded 50% on average (Figure 1). In 2020-21, almost 60% of promotions at SES 1 (62.7%) and SES 2 (56.6%) and only 26.7% at SES 3 were women.

While we must continue to embed the gains made by women in the APS, this Strategy is not only about women. A range of actions are required to benefit representation of all gender identities and the importance of promoting gender inclusivity.

**Figure 1. Proportion of women in leadership roles (30 June 2021).**



Source: APSED





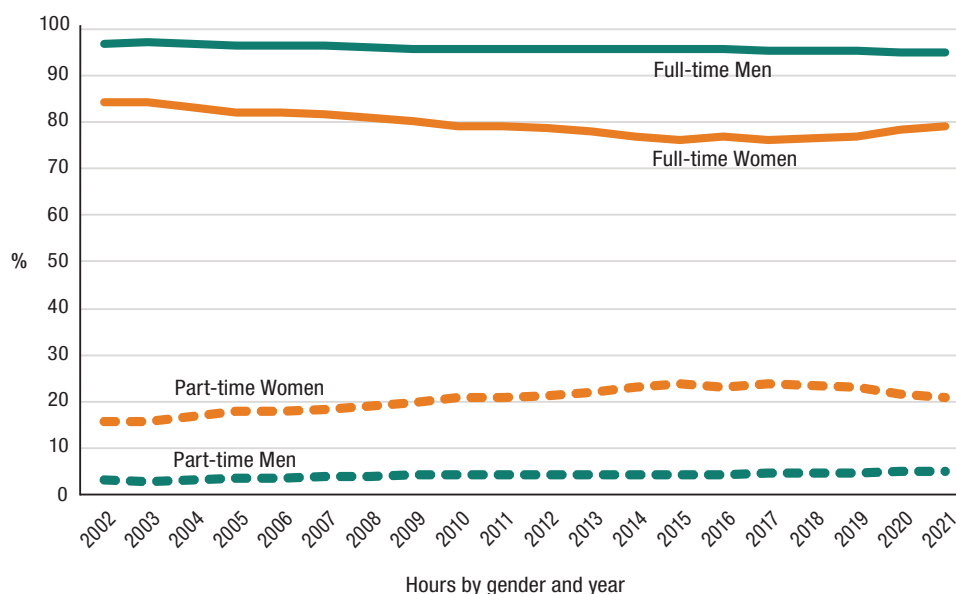
## Flexible work and part-time

Flexible working is about rethinking the where, when and how work can be done, in a way that maintains or improves business outcomes. It can improve employee engagement and commitment in the workforce; increase productivity; help attract and retain talent across diverse workforce demographics; foster a sense of reciprocity among employees, which can improve customer service; and can enable new business models with broader benefits to customers and society more generally.<sup>12</sup>

There is a strong gender equality rationale for providing flexible ways of working for all employees. Encouraging men's uptake of flexible work, for example, enables sharing of caring responsibilities. Research suggests that men who work flexibly are more productive in their jobs, experience less stress and burnout and have a higher sense of purpose and wellbeing.<sup>13</sup> Not relying on women to manage all of the caring responsibilities can enable women to increase their hours, ultimately helping to increase women's workforce participation, close the superannuation gap and potentially increase promotion opportunities.

Over the past 20 years, while part-time work (one aspect of flexible work) for women has increased steadily, for men it has remained largely unchanged (Figure 2). Our consultations indicated a range of reasons why men are less likely to work part-time, including judgement from others about their commitment to their work and career, as well as the reduced salary as a result of part-time work.

**Figure 2. Hours by gender and year (30 June 2021).**



Source: APSED

COVID-19 has amplified the fact that capacity to work flexibly is critical to business continuity, health and wellbeing, workforce planning and risk management. The pandemic has also reinforced some very human aspects of flexible work, including the importance of connection, caring, collaboration and getting to know our colleagues.

## **Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces**

Only a small number of APS agencies are accredited Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces. This is despite the launch of the *Australian Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond*,<sup>14</sup> endorsed by the Health Council, which includes a priority action for governments at all levels to take steps towards becoming 'breastfeeding friendly'. This statistic accords with what we heard from employees during consultations that there remains inconsistent support from workplaces for breastfeeding on return to work, with some employees reporting a lack of appropriate facilities to express milk during lactation breaks, or simply the privacy to feed their child whether it be through breastfeeding, or by bottle.

A related theme was about support for employees while on an extended period of leave. We heard that managers lack information about their role in supporting employees during this time, including to assist employees transition back to work.

## **Harassment and bullying**

While there has been some increase in formal complaints in relation to workplace harassment and bullying over the last 3 years, the numbers remain small relative to the size of the APS workforce. However, our consultations indicated that APS employees across agencies experience everyday sexism and more insidious forms of harassment and bullying, which often go unreported.

Employees told us of unacceptable workplace behaviour from colleagues that related to a range of gendered issues including sexual harassment, caring responsibilities, judgements about career aspirations and breastfeeding, to name a few. While there are a number of reasons why employees did not report such incidents, recurring concerns involved not being taken seriously or believed, as well as limited confidence in a satisfactory resolution.



We heard through our consultations about the need to provide opportunities for employees to share their experiences in a safe environment and empower others to call out inappropriate behaviour. Employees noted that creating a trusted environment may assist in calling out and reporting harassment and bullying.

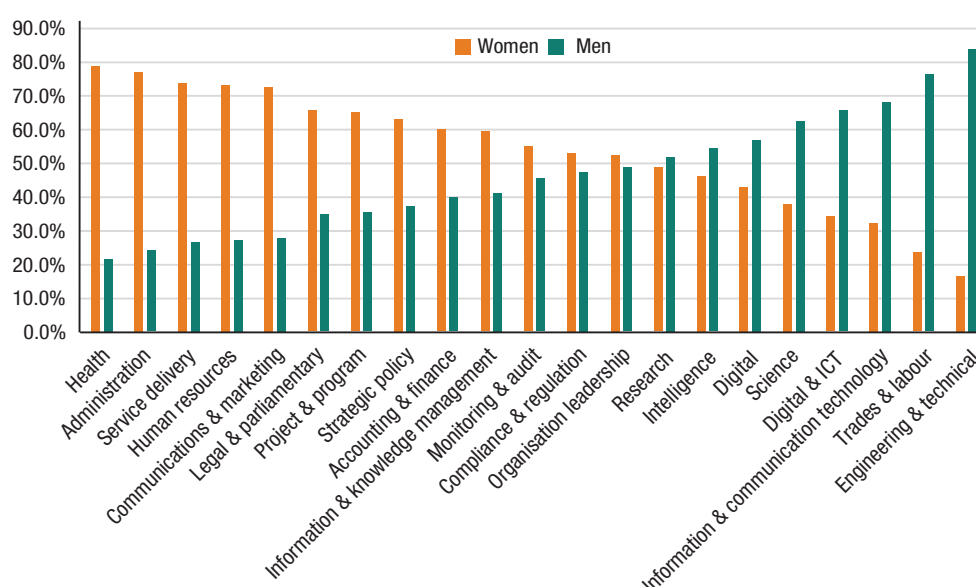
Agencies and the APSC also strongly support the implementation of recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission *Respect@Work* report, and the subsequent Government Roadmap for Respect to preventing and addressing sexual harassment, and support meaningful cultural change in Australian workplaces.<sup>15</sup>

## APS occupations

The demographics of the APS workforce (including hiring and promotion) largely reflect the Australian labour market and the gender mix of graduates from tertiary and vocational institutions. The gender balance data suggests that the APS is a leader in some of these occupations.

Gender-balanced workplaces benefit employees, families, organisations and the economy.<sup>16</sup> Yet in the APS there are many job types that are either dominated by women or dominated by men (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Gender breakdown by type of work performed.**



Source: 2021 APS Employee Census

In our consultations, male APS employees spoke about facing barriers related to working in female-dominated roles, for example executive and corporate support roles. They noted feelings of exclusion and being discouraged from highlighting these important skills and experiences on their Curriculum Vitae. In regards to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related roles, women in particular face barriers at all levels of the pipeline including during their education and at all levels in the workforce, particularly presenting at senior levels.<sup>17</sup>

To build greater gender balance in job types both in the APS and beyond, there is already work underway:

- actions at a whole of community level—for example, as part of the *Women in STEM Decadal Plan* and the *Women's Economic Security Statement 2020*
- actions at a whole of APS level—for example, as part of the *Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025* and the *Professional Streams*. These seek to address imbalances through a skills and capability lens<sup>18</sup>
- actions at an agency level—for example, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is targeting a 40/40/20 gender balance in female dominated Executive Assistant roles.

The SES are also spread similarly across occupations with many occupations dominated by one gender, although this gap is smaller.

The proportion of other gender identities by type of work performed in the APS ranges from 0% to 1% across all occupations. This further demonstrates the need for better analysis of gender data and reporting systems.



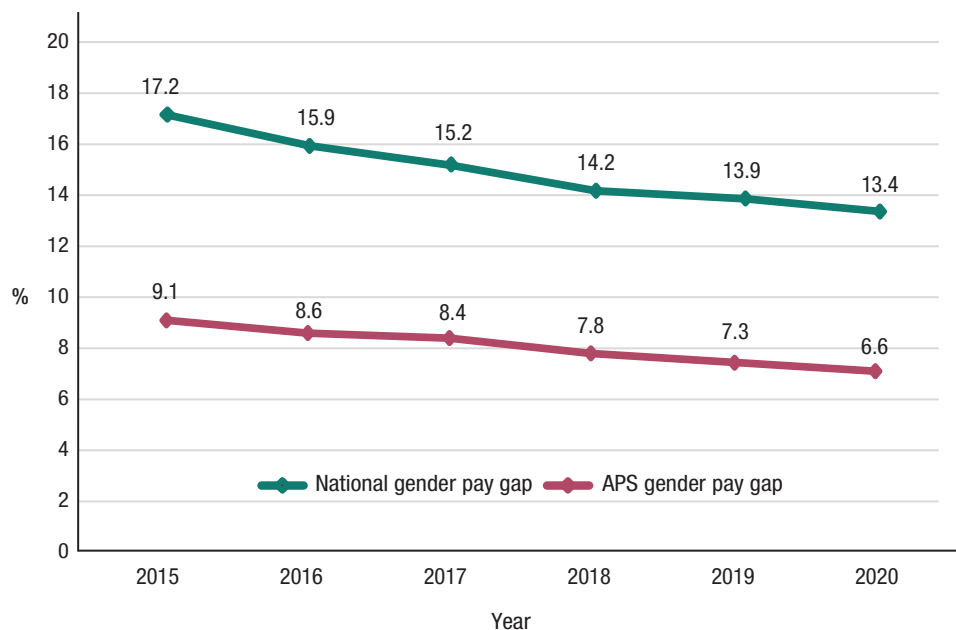


## Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between male and female employees' average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, expressed as a percentage of male earnings. Based on 2020 APS average base salaries for men (\$99,082) and women (\$92,536), the gap in the APS is less than half of the national gender pay gap of 13.4% for the same period (Figure 4). It is slightly higher than the gender pay gap for the Public Administration and Safety industry category (7.3%) which is the sector with the lowest gap.<sup>19</sup>

The gender pay gap reflects differences in representation of males and females at each classification level. More specifically, this involves overrepresentation of females at lower classification levels (APS 2–6).<sup>20</sup> In the APS, women are considered to be at pay parity for most classification levels with the differences in these classifications in the range of +/- 1%. Graduate, APS 2, SES 2 and SES 3 classifications have slightly larger pay differences.<sup>21</sup> The representation of male and female employees at the highest classification levels is moving towards parity and this is reflected in a reduced gender pay gap across the APS.

**Figure 4. Average gender pay gap trends with data table, 2015–20.**



Source: APSED

## Superannuation

On average, male public sector superannuation balances are 19.8% higher than females across all age groups. Since 2015, male median pension amounts have been consistently between 40% and 50% higher than female annual pensions. However, females are not retiring any earlier than males.<sup>22</sup>

The *Retirement Income Review*<sup>23</sup> noted that the retirement income gap for women 'is the accumulated result of economic disadvantage faced by women in their working life—lower wages than men, more career breaks for child-rearing and caring for others, and more part-time work.'

This is compounded by the findings of the *2019 Community and Public Sector Union What Women Want Survey*<sup>24</sup>, which found that:

- a third of women did not know what type of superannuation scheme they belonged to
- 1 in 10 women do not know how much money they have in their superannuation account
- over half of women had never been to any superannuation information/training sessions.

The survey noted the need for all employees to have a basic level of superannuation knowledge early on in their career.

*NOTE: All actions have been specifically designed to improve equality for all gender identities as an outcome. We will continue to seek opportunities to broaden the data analytics to give insights into the issues, and where there is opportunity to broaden our actions.*



## Taking action on gender equality—minimum standards for agencies

The APS must aim to be more than simply compliant with diversity and inclusion, we need to change mindsets and behaviours and ingrain diversity and inclusion in the way the APS does business.

All agencies will consider the following minimum standards as a starting point or in refreshing their current action plans. These minimum standards align with the action areas outlined in the Strategy and build on actions in the outgoing strategy.

Many agencies are well underway in implementing these minimum standards. Agencies are encouraged to share good practice to assist with implementation both within their portfolios and across the APS.

### Leadership and accountability

- **Leaders are visible role models at any level and show their commitment to gender equality through their actions and words**—senior leaders should consider how to support gender equality leadership in their organisation (consider specific KPIs in senior leader performance agreements).
- **Agencies publish (on the internet) targeted plans for gender equality**—informed by data and aligned to agency priorities.
- **Dedicated resources and governance arrangements are in place to support this work**—Gender Champions and employee-led gender networks are involved. Regular tracking of progress and impact is transparent to employees.
- **Agencies include their commitment to gender equality and inclusion in induction and recruitment materials**—including roles and expectations of all employees.

### Respectful workplaces and empowered people

- **Preventing gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault and bullying**—leaders reinforce respectful standards of behaviour. Policies outline strategies for prevention, formal reporting and review processes and consequences.
- **Supporting employees experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV)**
  - agency FDV policy is well-communicated and sets out supports available. Agencies will ensure there is availability of, and access to support (including access to





flexible working arrangements, Employee Assistance Programs, paid and/or unpaid leave and other support(s) as appropriate to the employee's individual situation.

- manager training is provided and includes an emphasis on an individual-led approach to support, noting that access to a secure workplace, phone and computer can be incredibly important.

## Shifting gender stereotypes

- **Ensuring gender diversity in selection processes, including internal processes and Expressions of Interest (EOI)**—selection panels are gender-balanced and are equipped to call-out any potential bias during the process.

## Flexible ways of working

- **Access to flexible work**—gender-neutral, flexible work policies are in place for all employees. Leaders and managers at all levels are able to role model flexible work where it is appropriate for the individual and the organisation.
- **Valuing and supporting all types of caring responsibilities**—managers are equipped to support all genders manage their family and caring responsibilities, including elder and disability care, such as through flexible ways of working. Managers understand leave policies and provisions as they relate to supporting those with caring responsibilities including keeping in touch days (as per the *Fair Work Act 2009*).

## Gender data

- **Understanding the pay gap**—agency-level gender pay gap is known and tracked (at both whole of agency and classification level).
- **Tracking data on gender composition**—gender disaggregated data across all classifications, geographical locations and key APS occupations is tracked.

## Leveraging our external influence

- **Agencies will drive change beyond the workplace—**
  - agency heads and senior leaders speaking about gender equality at public engagements
  - using all avenues to continue to promote gender equality, including through suppliers. Commonwealth policy prevents the Commonwealth from entering into contracts with suppliers who are non-compliant under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (refer to Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles).<sup>25</sup>

This Strategy encourages all minimum standards and action areas to be implemented, acknowledging that agencies will need to decide which actions are most relevant for their agency to focus on implementing.

To ensure this Strategy and its actions are truly inclusive, all agencies will consider gender identity and other identity dimensions including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, age, cultural and linguistic background, disability, and sexuality, in order to reduce the impact of compounding disadvantage. The model below is a useful approach to assist agencies with implementation. Underlying this is communicating gender with engagement and empathy. It's complex and not binary.

### Organisational change cycle for gender equality







## Action Area #1

### LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

***‘We need our leadership to value gender equality and for all APS employees to understand their role’***

*APS Submission Respondent*

## *Key actions*

**1A**

Secretaries and Agency Heads will be accountable for implementing the Strategy and will consider the following options to demonstrate their commitment:

- supporting leadership at all levels including through ensuring there are senior level gender champion/s, middle level advocates and employee networks that are valued and equipped to progress the agenda
- encouraging senior executives to routinely lead conversations with employees on issues relating to gender equality and to take an equitable approach to mentoring other colleagues
- providing ongoing opportunities to understand the experiences of employees including using the 'listen, learn and take action' approach.

**1B**

Leaders, at all levels, will engage with employees about the Strategy and discuss ways everyone will contribute to ensure there is both individual and collective accountability. A focus on inclusive behaviours is important to promote gender equality and will lead to a positive workplace culture for all genders.

**1C**

Informed by data and the diverse experience of employees, agencies will seek to understand the gender imbalances (across all levels), the drivers that underpin them and will consider whether specific targets are an appropriate method to drive action and provide incentive for change.



## *Tips for agencies*

Accountability for success will be at the senior leadership level. All leaders are encouraged to consider "What we say; how we act; what we prioritise; and how we measure; together, determines what gets done."<sup>26</sup>

## *Success for this action area*

Success is where inclusive leadership is demonstrated consistently with leaders at all levels reflecting on their leadership style and its impact on others. Success is all employees working in the APS having a sense of shared responsibility for progressing gender equality. Success is an APS which reflects, understands and connects with the people and community it serves.

## *Holding ourselves to account*

Agencies will establish measures to ensure leaders and employees are held to account.

Agencies will demonstrate progress is being made against a standardised diagnostic tool to provide consistency across the APS. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to develop this (in the first year of implementation) as part of a broader diversity and inclusion monitoring and evaluation framework.

## Action Area #2

### RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES & EMPOWERED PEOPLE

***‘I want to feel respected at work and be confident that our leaders care about improving the workplace’***

*APS Submission Respondent*

## *Key actions*

### 2A

Agencies will strengthen approaches to preventing and responding to bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace. This includes:

- supporting individuals who have been the victim of workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault by creating a safe place for them to be heard and report incidents
- having conversations with employees about where harmful behaviour exists, the work health and safety impacts, and putting measures in place to address it
- providing practical resources and tools to help employees recognise the many forms of sexual harassment and the range of actions or responses available to stop the behaviour and prevent its repetition or escalation—this includes calling out everyday sexism
- drawing on the findings in the Australian Human Rights Commission's report—*Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces* (2020)<sup>27</sup> to develop improved policy, guidance, transparency, reporting and support mechanisms. Agencies will analyse the effectiveness of current approaches and where effort should be targeted.

### 2B

Agencies will review internal and outward facing communication for gender inclusive language and images. This will include agency intranet, internet, internal policy documents and recruitment ads. Inclusive language and images help foster respectful workplaces and go a long way towards making all employees feel included and represented in corporate messaging.



## 2C

Agencies will provide ongoing access to superannuation resources and awareness sessions to all employees with a particular focus on annual entry level and graduate intakes (e.g. agency induction). This is to empower employees early on in their career to understand their superannuation and impacts of career and life events (e.g. consideration of career moves, taking parental leave including leave without pay, changing agencies or retiring). This will not include individual financial advice.

### *Tips for agencies*

Despite small numbers of formal complaints, it is important that everyday sexism, a driver of bullying and harassment, is called out. Listening to employees and hearing about their experiences will help agencies to tailor practical responses. Simple actions—that anyone can take—can make a difference. Something as simple as not laughing along with a sexist joke can help create a more positive workplace culture.<sup>28</sup>

### *Success for this action area*

Success is elimination of gender-based bullying, harassment and assault in the workplace. For a culture of gender equality to flourish, all manifestations of harm need to be addressed and negative behaviour called out. Success is where inclusive leadership capabilities are embedded in the daily behaviours of all employees and employees are supported to make informed decisions throughout their career to prepare for retirement.

### *Holding ourselves to account*

Agencies promote a respectful culture that empowers people through knowledge and awareness. Agencies have no tolerance for bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault in the workplace.

## Action Area #3

### SHIFTING GENDER STEREOTYPES

***‘There is no such thing as women’s work and men’s work: we need to make sure all APS employees have equal opportunities to secure jobs of their choice and access leave fairly’***

*APS Submission Respondent*

## *Key actions*

**3A**

Agencies will create opportunities to strengthen gender representation in select occupations (e.g. STEM and service delivery) and talent pipelines, in a targeted way, taking into account the broader labour market.

**3B**

The APSC, in consultation with agencies, will review APS-wide parental leave provisions, with a view to creating more flexible parental leave entitlements to enable a greater choice for parents. This seeks to enable more equitable sharing of caring responsibilities. This will include a consideration of current practices in the private and other public sector jurisdictions, and consistency of outcomes in superannuation on unpaid parental leave. The review will be conducted in the context of the *Government’s Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2020*, enterprise agreements and relevant legislation.

**3C**

Agencies will be proactive in offering parental leave and flexible work arrangements to all employees including those with caring responsibilities. Managers will favourably consider requests for flexibility for all supporting partners who are welcoming a child reflecting a strong commitment and support for flexible ways of working (data has shown that men, in particular, often do not take advantage of these opportunities). This will create a culture that helps families choose the best ways for them to manage work and caring responsibilities. The *Fair Work Act 2009* also refers to the right to request flexibility for parents of school aged and under children.



## *Tips for agencies*

Strengthen workforce diversity through business-linked workforce planning, from hire through to retire. Encourage opportunities and career planning for all employees to perform roles that match their skills and interests, regardless of their gender or their work arrangements. Find creative ways to nudge social norms and encourage behaviour change. For example, a visible intranet campaign highlighting senior men caring for elderly relatives or taking parental leave.

## *Success for this action area*

Success is where all those working in the APS have equal choice with respect to balancing their work and caring responsibilities while being supported to pursue career opportunities. The APS does not make assumptions about an employee's skills and capability based on gender. Acknowledging that we never know what capability someone has until it is tested, all employees are provided equal opportunity to demonstrate how, what and when they can contribute.

## *Holding ourselves to account*

Workplaces have a role to play by normalising parental leave for all genders. Agencies are able to highlight success through case studies that shift gender stereotypes and norms. This includes having more men work part-time and/or take parental leave.

## Action Area #4

### FLEXIBLE WAYS OF WORKING

***‘We are holding employees and our agencies back unless we embrace flexible work’***

*APS Submission Respondent*

#### *Key actions*

**4A**

Agencies will review flexible work policies and practices to ensure they provide for a variety of contexts and settings. This may include:

- drawing on a mix of working in the office and working in another location
- expanding the use of job sharing
- additional flexibility for parents with school aged children and those with other caring responsibilities
- supporting remote working requests for the purpose of accompanying a partner (nationally or internationally)
- supporting employees transitioning to retirement through flexible work options (such as, job share or flexibility in hours and patterns of work through existing provisions in enterprise agreements).

In implementing this action, agencies will have regard to the following:

- all decisions will consider the needs of the organisation, for example, productivity
- agencies with particular working restrictions (e.g. security) or workplace arrangements will maximise the flexible work options available to them
- all decisions will consider individual factors such as wellbeing, duration, location, and security
- working from home is not a substitute for accessing leave, where appropriate.

**4B**

Agencies will provide new parents a flexible, supportive and enabling environment in line with the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond*, which could include seeking accreditation as a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace'. Accreditation is awarded to agencies that provide 3 criteria to support their breastfeeding employees—space, time and support.<sup>29</sup> This support will be inclusive of all parents or caregivers regardless of gender or whether they are the birth parent.

**4C**

Agencies will enhance manager capability, including people management, and equip middle managers to lead flexible teams. This will include:

- assisting with job design
- ensuring employees are not working longer hours than necessary and they are able to balance competing priorities

## 4D

- taking responsibility for keeping in touch with employees on long periods of leave
- talking to part-time employees about options to potentially increase hours using a combination of flexible work arrangements, where employees are interested in increasing their hours. This is particularly important to increase women's workforce participation by moving beyond part-time hours as the norm for flexible working.

Agencies will consider advertising all APS positions as full time, part-time and job share.

### *Tips for agencies*

Review workforce management practices and promote flexibility to strengthen attraction and retention initiatives. Employees look to senior leaders and managers as role models for flexible work. Creating cultural change could be as simple as leaving loudly and making caring responsibilities known to employees.

### *Success for this action area*

Success is enabling all employees to maximise their contributions at an appropriate time that suits both parties and in a location that delivers results. It is acknowledged that not all requests will be possible, however it is essential to have a culture where requests are given genuine consideration including the benefits to both employee and organisation.

### *Holding ourselves to account*

Flexible work is embraced and is business as usual as a way to support work and caring responsibilities, increase employee wellbeing and career opportunities, and improve overall agency productivity. Agencies are able to report use and type of flexible working arrangements, including implementing informal tracking to help overcome any inconsistent application of managerial discretion.

## Action Area #5

### GENDER DATA

***‘Data tells a powerful story when it comes to gender equality and we need more of it to underpin our actions’***

*APS Submission Respondent*

### *Key actions*

**5A**

Agencies will progressively build their capacity and capability to collect, analyse and publish (internally) gender disaggregated data across all people-metrics. Agencies will collect and publish (internally) data disaggregated by other diversity and inclusion variables. This information will support agencies to better target their gender equality initiatives.

**5B**

Agencies will review their policies and processes for entering into an Individual Flexibility Agreement (IFA) with an employee to ensure there is equality of opportunity (a level playing field) for all genders. This will include reviewing the number of current IFAs by gender. Agencies will implement any necessary changes to the process and monitor impact.

The IFA review will focus on the process to develop IFAs, rather than the specifics of an IFA. The APSC will look to include an agency breakdown on IFAs in agency annual remuneration reports.

**5C**

The APSC, in collaboration with APS agencies, will develop a strategic research plan to better understand gender dynamics in the APS workforce. Priority research projects identified in the research plan will leverage the socio-demographic data and workforce information held by the APSC, including through research partnerships with the academic community.





## *Tips for agencies*

Agencies will consider opportunities to reflect gender disaggregated data in corporate reporting to provide further transparency.

## *Success for this action area*

Success is where data is collected, accessible (within agencies) and transparent. Agencies have disaggregated data (gender and other diversity and inclusion variables) across all people-metrics, including uptake of flexible work, carers leave, and parental leave, rates of promotion, internal mobility, higher duties, remuneration, recruitment, redundancies, and separations.

Success is when gender equality is embedded in our business systems and practices (to ensure that gains don't slip and progress can't be undone).

## *Holding ourselves to account*

Gender disaggregated data informs all gender equality initiatives and corporate planning, reporting and risk management. There is transparency in the process for requesting IFAs and gender data is published. The Government will amend the WGE Act to require public sector organisations to report to WGEA on gender equality indicators (Recommendation 43 of the *Respect@Work* report). Pending legislative amendment of the WGE Act, WGEA will adapt its reporting and data management system for the public sector and work with the APSC and relevant APS agencies to create a more comprehensive, representative and accurate data set of the Australian workforce.

## Action Area #6

### LEVERAGING OUR EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

***‘The APS can be a leader in gender equality if we see it as a core part of how we do our work as public servants’***

*APS Submission Respondent*

#### *Key actions*

**6A**

Agencies will continue to progressively embed or strengthen gender equality outcomes in the course of their everyday work. This includes considering how policy development and service delivery design may impact genders differently.

**6B**

Agencies will demonstrate leadership on gender equality beyond their workplace in their relationships with industry and communities.

#### *Tips for agencies*

Driving change beyond the workplace. This can include external advocacy by leaders, applying a gendered lens on the development and implementation of policies and practices and supply chain management. Existing and potential suppliers and/or partners can also be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to, and action on, gender equality.



## *Success for this action area*

Success is an APS that has a positive reputation for prioritising gender equality.

Our strong, APS-wide commitments to gender equality are well known. We draw on our positive workplace experiences and knowledge of 'what works' to shape approaches.

Our efforts have a positive impact on our external relationships and help to affect change in other workplaces.

## *Holding ourselves to account*

Agencies talk about their commitment to gender equality in external fora, such as conferences and industry forums, as part of promoting the APS as a gender equality leader. Agencies develop capability in gender expertise and identifying overall workforce impacts.

## Managing our risks

As with any cultural change, the Strategy is a guide for how we operate and interact in the workplace. Our risks stem from how our employees engage with the agenda.

The following table sets out the key risks that we need to manage in delivering our refreshed Strategy and the ways we will manage them.

Risks	Management strategies
We are unable to demonstrate the <i>APS Gender Equality Strategy's</i> continued relevance and value to our employees, leading to diminished employee engagement. If not managed carefully, the Strategy risks failing to resonate or having limited impact.	<p>A clear narrative that is well communicated and can be articulated by all employees.</p> <p>A regular demonstration of progress through a robust approach to monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>A range of innovative activities are undertaken throughout the Strategy to ensure currency of the narrative, including supporting the <i>Delivering for Tomorrow: APS Workforce Strategy 2025</i>.</p>
The Strategy is inaccurately seen as 'just for women' and we are unable to engage men and gender diverse employees, reducing its effective implementation.	<p>A sustained focus on how gender equality benefits all employees.</p> <p>A Strategy that promotes the role employees at all levels have to play in creating a positive workplace.</p> <p>A range of actions that benefit men, women and gender diverse employees.</p>
Our messages are not joined up with agency diversity and inclusion (D&I) agendas, and/or the Government's broader policy on gender equality. This could lead to a Strategy that does not complement, and could possibly undermine, a shared D&I agenda or is not inline with broader Government policy.	<p>Implementation is overseen by the APSC team with shared responsibility for diversity, inclusion and culture.</p> <p>Strong engagement with the APS's diversity and inclusion governance bodies including: Secretaries Board; Chief Operating Officers (COO) Committee; and the SES Band 2 Inclusion Steering Group.</p> <p>Close collaboration with the APS Human Relations (HR) Profession and associated working groups.</p> <p>A continuation of the APSC work to amplify cross-cutting issues across the Government's D&amp;I agenda.</p>

## Individual case studies: Bringing to life the benefits of gender equality

### *Leadership*

"I came to the public service through the graduate program. However, whilst my grad buddies were attending the regular Friday night drinks, I was at home looking after my two-year old. Being a mum, I bring a different perspective to the work I do. Unfortunately, I don't think everyone at work sees the value in this experience. No one has overtly said it, but I do think that there is a view that I won't be interested in promotion because I'm a new mother with caring responsibilities. My husband actually works part-time and is the primary care giver which frees me up to work longer hours and at the moment I work full-time. Most of my grad cohort are now one or two classifications above me and I worry about the longer-term financial impacts my lack of progression will have on our family. Managers need to talk with their employees and not make assumptions about their capacity or interest in promotion. I've been lucky in that I've recently moved teams and have started to have regular conversations with my manager about my career aspirations and I can now see a clear path forward. It can be a bit of a 'manager lottery' and it shouldn't be!" *APS Level 5 Employee*

It is acknowledged that agency workplace arrangements have different provisions which impact on the experiences of employees and that these are not consistent across the APS.

## *Sharing the load (literally)*

"Once I knew my wife was pregnant, I became increasingly interested in taking a significant chunk of time off, to ensure mother and baby received all the love and support I could provide, but also to immerse myself in a significant life milestone. I was not entirely sure what my options were, above and beyond the 'normal' approach of taking two or three weeks leave. I also had to give some thought to how a long break might impact my professional standing and prospects at work.

After some research and discussion with my wife, I decided to apply for an extended period of leave—a 'package' of different leave types which allowed me to take a total of 6 months off. This involved a mix of parental leave, carers leave, annual leave at full and half pay and also a 'share' of parental leave from my wife to me, via a process set out in the DFAT enterprise agreement. My supervisor was very supportive and only too happy to approve my request.

The reaction from colleagues was overwhelmingly positive, particularly from other fathers. Those who took a similar break advised that it was the best thing they could've done and those who didn't wished they had.

Work can be all consuming at times, and for me, more often than not that's a good thing, but it was important to realise that it would all still be there waiting for me when I got back. There are always going to be other opportunities to do interesting work, or to get that new position, but those first months of a baby's life are utterly irreplaceable. I have enjoyed every minute of it and in fact, I don't think I could've predicted just how much I've enjoyed it.

Our daughter was born with a medical condition which has required regular treatment throughout her first year of life, and I'm so grateful to have been able to be there for all the visits to the doctors and the hospitals (she's doing great by the way!).

2020 has been a terrible year for so many of us in so many ways. My daughter was born when the halls of the hospital stank of bushfire smoke, and we couldn't go outside for a month because of the air quality. Then the pandemic arrived and deflated any ideas we had about visiting friends and family interstate to introduce her, but honestly, the consolation of being able to spend so much time with my wife and baby, doing the housework, changing the nappies, singing the songs and making the silly faces has been worth it".

*Executive Level 1 Employee*



### *Sense of belonging*

"I am a diversity and inclusion advocate and a parent with additional caring responsibilities. I identify as a non-binary person and I am from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background with lived experience of different cultures and languages. I won't deny I have experienced discrimination and bullying, and people making assumptions about who I am and my skills. I find my lived experience has fed my passion about gender equality in leadership, creating an inclusive culture through innovative approaches to team leadership and communication. Despite my experiences it is about what I can contribute and helping people understand what I bring to the table. It is important to me, and I suspect everyone, to have a sense of belonging no matter your background, culture, or gender." *APS Level 6 Employee*

### *You can't be what you can't see—diverse leadership matters*

"I'm from a country where opportunities for women are few and far between. Then I moved to Australia. After I became an Australian citizen, I applied for a job in the public service and if I'm honest, didn't have a great experience in the beginning. Not only was it hard to find work, when I finally did, it was really challenging to be in an environment that was very foreign and one in which I couldn't see anyone like me. Thankfully, my supervisor suggested a female SES officer who identified as someone from a CALD background as a mentor. It was honestly so refreshing to hear from someone who shared the same struggles as me and gave me such a boost to be able to see someone who had progressed their career in an organisation where there wasn't a lot of diversity. Through this mentorship I've been able to develop my skills and further my career, and I'm now a manager where I mentor junior employees just coming into the organisation. It's so important to be able to see a clear path forward for yourself and a more diverse workforce enables this." *Executive Level 2 Employee*

## Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

### *Key actions*

- In the first year of the Strategy, the APSC will develop and outline a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to capture APS wide progress on gender equality. This may form part of a broader diversity and inclusion M&E framework (to streamline reporting requirements for other diversity strategies) and will include what is expected of agencies.
- As part of the above key action, the APSC will build on existing mechanisms to collect and analyse data about gender equality progress, such as the APS Employee Census, APS Agency Survey and other targeted surveys.
- All agencies will monitor the implementation of the Strategy. This includes evaluating impact and reporting progress including indicating any actions which were not able to be implemented. To achieve this, agency specific reporting mechanisms will be used to demonstrate progress to employees.

### *Tips for agencies*

- Reporting progress on gender equality and other D&I initiatives in annual reports.
- Understanding the lived experience of employees to gauge where efforts could be strengthened (i.e. APS Employee Census, senior leader listen and learn sessions).
- Encouraging robust feedback mechanisms from employee networks and middle manager advocates directly to the Agency Gender Equality Champion/s.

### *Success*

Success will be when data collection, monitoring and reporting is in place for all agencies. The status of gender equality within agencies and across the APS is well documented and processes are in place to adjust and implement changes to maintain or improve gender equality and inclusive leadership.

The APSC will support agencies to implement and measure progress, including through sharing good practice resources and publishing guidance materials.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Action matrix

The following is a summary of the actions in the *APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26*. Further details and opportunities for each action can be found in the specific Action Areas within this document and the implementation companion guide that will be shared with agencies. Agencies will determine how each action is implemented based on their individual maturity, context, resources, and demographics.

Action		Projected delivery date
<b>ACTION AREA #1: Leadership and accountability</b>		
Minimum standards	<b>Leaders are visible role models</b> at any level and show their commitment to gender equality through their actions and words. Senior leaders should consider how to support gender equality leadership in their organisation.	Ongoing
	<b>Agencies publish (on the internet) targeted plans for gender equality</b> — informed by data and aligned to agency priorities.	2021/22
	<b>Dedicated resources and governance arrangements are in place to support the work.</b> Gender Champions and employee led gender networks are involved. Regular tracking of progress and impact is transparent to employees.	2021/22
	<b>Agencies include their commitment to gender equality and inclusion in induction and recruitment materials</b> , including roles and expectations of all employees.	Ongoing
	Secretaries and Agency Heads will be accountable for implementing the Strategy and will consider options to demonstrate their commitment.	2021/22
1B	Leaders, at all levels, will engage with employees about the Strategy and discuss ways everyone will contribute to ensure there is both individual and collective accountability. A focus on inclusive behaviours is important to promote gender equality and will lead to a positive workplace culture for all genders.	2021/22
1C	Informed by data and the diverse experience of employees, agencies will seek to understand the gender imbalances (across all levels), the drivers that underpin them and will consider whether specific targets are an appropriate method to drive action and provide incentive for change.	2021/22

Action		Projected delivery date
<b>ACTION AREA #2: Respectful workplaces and empowered people</b>		
Minimum standards	<b>Preventing gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault and bullying</b> —leaders reinforce standards of behaviour. Policies outline strategies for prevention, formal reporting and review processes and consequences.	2021/22
	<b>Supporting employees experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV)</b> —agency FDV policy is well-communicated and sets out supports available. Manager training is provided and includes an emphasis on an individual-led approach to support, noting that access to a secure workplace, phone and computer can be incredibly important.	2021/22
2A	Agencies will strengthen approaches to preventing and responding to bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace.	2021/22
2B	Agencies will review internal and outward facing communication for gender inclusive language and images. This will include agency intranet, internet, internal policy documents and recruitment ads.	2022/23
2C	Agencies will provide ongoing access to superannuation resources and awareness sessions to all employees with a particular focus on annual entry level and graduate intakes (e.g. agency induction).	2021/22
<b>ACTION AREA #3: Shifting gender stereotypes</b>		
Minimum standards	<b>Ensuring gender diversity in selection processes</b> , including internal processes and EOIs. Selection panels are gender-balanced and are equipped to call-out any potential bias during the process.	2021/22
3A	Agencies will create opportunities to strengthen gender representation in select occupations (e.g. STEM and Service Delivery) and talent pipelines, in a targeted way, taking into account the broader labour market.	2024/25



Action	Projected delivery date
3B The APSC, in consultation with agencies, will review APS-wide parental leave provisions, with a view to creating more flexible parental leave entitlements to enable a greater choice for parents. This seeks to enable more equitable sharing of caring responsibilities.	2022/23
3C Agencies will be proactive in offering parental leave and flexible work arrangements to all employees including those with caring responsibilities. Managers will favourably consider requests for flexibility for all supporting partners who are welcoming a child reflecting a strong commitment and support for flexible ways of working.	2021/22
<b>ACTION AREA #4: Flexible ways of working</b>	
Minimum standards	<b>Access to flexible work</b> —gender-neutral, flexible work policies are in place for all employees. Leaders and managers at all levels are able to role model flexible work where it is appropriate for the individual and the organisation.           2021/22
	<b>Valuing and supporting all types of caring responsibilities</b> —managers are equipped to support all genders manage their family and caring responsibilities, including elder and disability care, such as through flexible ways of working.           2021/22
4A Agencies will review flexible work policies and practices to ensure they provide for a variety of contexts and settings.	2022/23
4B Agencies will provide new parents a flexible, supportive and enabling environment in line with the <i>Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond</i> , which could include seeking accreditation as a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace'.	2023/24
4C Agencies will enhance manager capability, including people management, and equip middle managers to lead flexible teams.	2022/23
4D Agencies will consider advertising all APS positions as full time, part-time and job share.	2021/22

Action	Projected delivery date
<b>ACTION AREA #5: Gender data</b>	
	<b>Understanding the pay gap</b> —agency-level gender pay gap is known and tracked (at both whole of agency and classification level). 2021/22
Minimum standards	<b>Tracking data on gender composition</b> —gender disaggregated data across all classifications, geographical locations and key job types is tracked. 2021/22
5A	Agencies will progressively build their capacity and capability to collect, analyse and publish (internally) gender disaggregated data across all people-metrics. Agencies will collect and publish (internally) data disaggregated by other diversity and inclusion variables. This information will support agencies to better target their gender equality initiatives. 2022/23
5B	Agencies will review their policies and processes for entering into an Individual Flexibility Agreement (IFA) with an employee to ensure there is equality of opportunity (a level playing field) for all genders. This will include reviewing the number of current IFAs by gender. Agencies will implement any necessary changes to the process and monitor impact. 2023/24
5C	The APSC, in collaboration with APS agencies, will develop a strategic research plan to better understand gender dynamics in the APS workforce. Priority research projects identified in the research plan should leverage the socio-demographic data and workforce information held by the APSC, including through research partnerships with the academic community. 2022/23





Action	Projected delivery date
<b>ACTION AREA #6: Leveraging our external influence</b>	
<p>Agencies will drive change beyond the workplace through:</p> <p>Minimum standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agency heads and senior leaders <b>speaking about gender equality at public engagements</b></li> <li>- Using all avenues to <b>continue to promote gender equality, including through suppliers.</b></li> </ul>	2021/22
6A	2024/25
6B	2024/25

## Appendix 2: Gathering insights

The refreshed Strategy was informed by the following extensive consultation process to ensure the Strategy reflects the diverse views and interests of APS employees. The diversity of APS employees with respect to gender identity and other identity markers was also represented across the interviews, design hubs and submission responses.



**Conducted 36 interviews with APS employees and received 1,300 survey responses to evaluate *Balancing the Future: APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016–2019*.**



**Held over 50 interviews with APS employees from 22 different agencies across APS, EL and SES levels to learn more about their experiences with gender equality.**



**Convened 7 virtual and in-person design hubs and focus groups with APS employees across Australia.**



**Received over 340 responses from 40 different agencies as part of an APS-wide submission process.**



**Engaged with experts, non-government organisations and private companies from a range of sectors including academia, advocacy, banking and consulting as well as communications and marketing to understand different approaches to gender equality.**

The Strategy is also informed by the expertise of the following key stakeholders:

- Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Kate Jenkins
- Cross-agency SES Band 1 Project Steering Group
- Cross-agency SES Band 2 Inclusion Steering Group
- SES Champions for gender equality and diversity and inclusion and
- APS employee networks representing different cohorts, including the APS Cross Agency Gender Equality Network.



## Appendix 3: Key terms to understand gender equality

### What does this mean?

**Belonging** occurs when people feel accepted, recognised, and everybody's views and contributions are integrated, valued and respected. People feel confident and inspired to bring their whole selves to work because differences are embraced as strengths.

**Cultural diversity** refers to how people identify, based on a range of dimensions including ancestry, ethnicity, ethno-religiosity, language, national origin, race, and/or religion. The term Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) is an acronym to describe people who were born overseas, have a parent born overseas or speak a variety of languages.

**Diversity** refers to the differences found in people that create their unique identity, including age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, religion, disability, cognitive diversity, gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background. It also encompasses profession, education, political views, values, work experiences, and organisational role.

**Equality** is treating people the same regardless of differences. Although all people are given equal treatment, it assumes all people are starting from the same place. It can result in unequal outcomes if some have inherent advantage.

**Equity** is treating people fairly but differently. Equity promotes fairness by identifying differences and allocating resources based on need.

**Gender balance** refers to 40% men, 40% women, and 20% of any gender.

**Gender norms** are social norms that relate specifically to gender differences. It refers to informal rules and shared social expectations that distinguish expected behaviour on the basis of gender. For example, a common gender norm is that women will do the majority of domestic work or men will work full time.

**Identity** is the way we define ourselves and includes our values, beliefs, and personality. It can include those dimensions listed under 'Diversity' and encompasses the roles we play in our society and family, our past memories, our hopes for the future, as well as our hobbies and interests.

**Inclusion** reflects people being able to access opportunities, and being regularly asked to contribute perspectives and ideas. For instance, inclusion occurs when people of different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and abilities, are included on committees, consulted, and invited to comment.

**Inclusive leadership** is the mindsets, knowledge, skills and behaviours that leaders use in an effective and inclusive organisation.

**Psychological safety** is a shared belief the environment is safe to take risks and be vulnerable. People feel valued, able to express ideas and ask questions, and do not feel they will be punished for speaking up.

**Unconscious bias** refers to the unintentional stereotypes and beliefs and about different social and identity groups that are automatic and/or ingrained and can influence behaviour and perceptions and actions.

*[Adapted from the University of Canberra Let's Dance Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan 2020.]*



## Endnotes

- 1 State of the Service 2019–20, p. 131.
- 2 APSED release 30 June 2021
- 3 APSED release 30 June 2021
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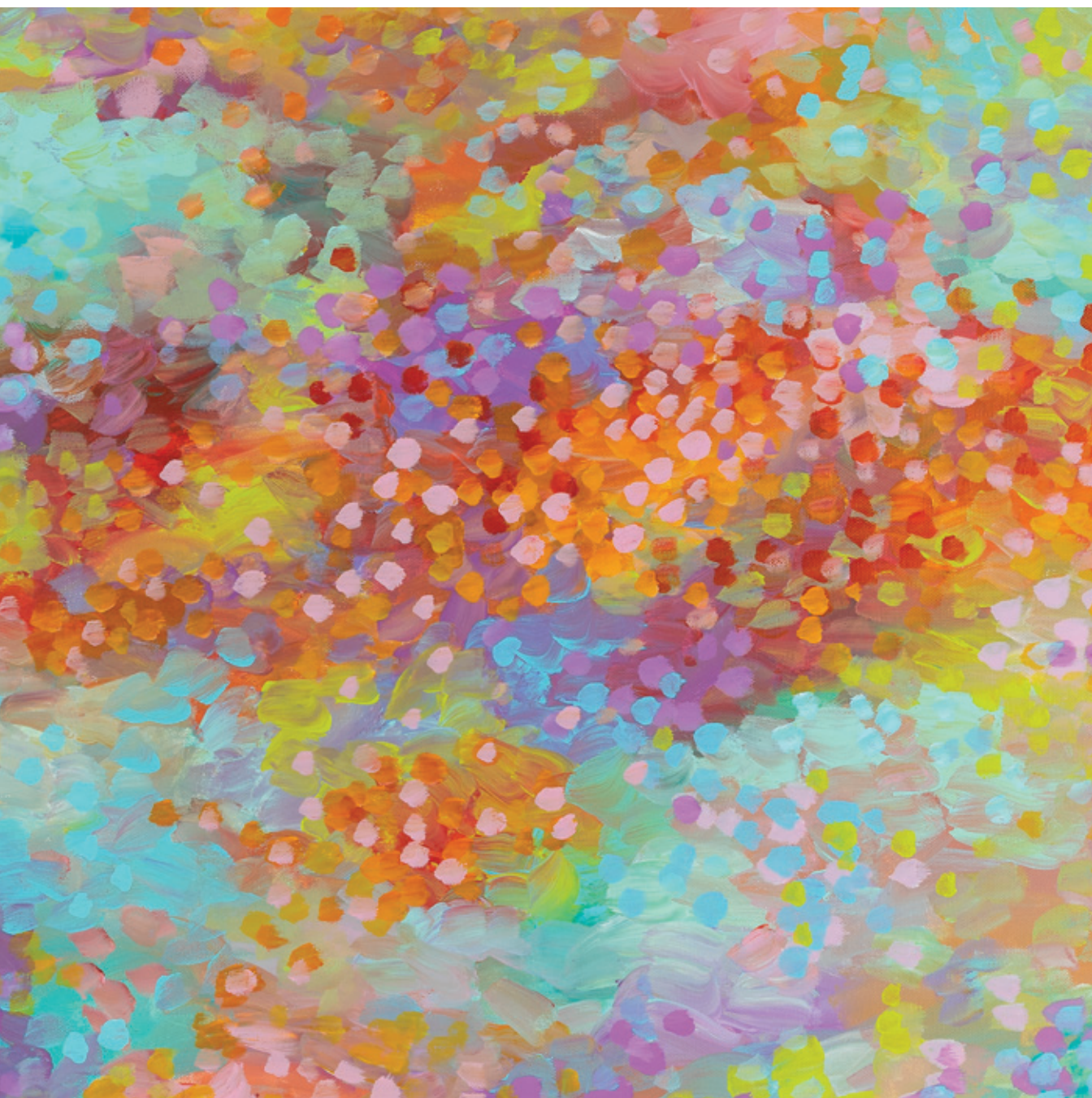


### *About the artist*

Theo Papathomas was born in Cyprus and migrated to Australia in 1975. Theo is formally trained, having completed a BA in Fine art at RMIT University, full-time artist based in Melbourne Australia. Theo considers himself an experimental artist using different mediums and various styles always challenging his practice. Theo's inspiration comes from being part of the Australian landscape, witnessing and experiencing the energy of its dramatic seasonal change. Theo's vibrant palette aims to capture the spirit of this land, often associated with the great Australian outback.

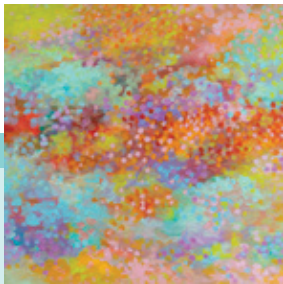






Over the Rainbow by Theo Papathomas





### *Over the Rainbow*

A very soothing and tranquil painting where sky, clouds, water and petals come together to create this beautiful landscape. A very harmonious and tranquil composition that can be enjoyed for many years to come. The petals are like musical notes dancing to their own song creating their own rainbow of love. Every petal has its beauty and presence and equally has its place to create this symphony of colours.

