

OFFICIAL

# APS Reform

Thodey Review Progress Report as at  
November 2023

OFFICIAL

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several thin, wavy lines in shades of blue, purple, and pink, creating a sense of movement and depth.



## Executive Summary

APS Reform has been an ongoing effort for a number of years and momentum is accelerating. While the *Independent Review of the Australian Public Service* (the Thodey Review) remains an important bedrock for the APS Reform agenda, the operating context of the Australian Government has shifted since 2019. This includes changes in the public's expectations of the APS, and in the challenges and opportunities the service faces. The APS Reform agenda builds on a range of reform efforts to date and positions the APS to be future fit and capable of adapting and evolving to changing and rising expectations.

In addition to the Thodey Review, the APS Reform agenda draws on a broad set of source materials:

- Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap;
- International experience of public sector reform, including recent reforms in New Zealand and the United Kingdom; and
- The Government's election commitments, such as commitments to establish a National Anti-Corruption Commission and achieve Net Zero in the APS by 2030.

This document outlines how the APS Reform agenda, having built on the preceding foundations of reform, supports all 40 Thodey Review recommendations, either in part or in full. It represents a non-exhaustive and once-off update on the APS's progress on implementing the recommendations of the Thodey Review as at November 2023. Best efforts have been made to capture areas of progress across the APS, though there may be examples of progress not captured herein.

A fit-for-purpose approach to implementation and tracking of APS Reform progress has been developed to ensure clear and measurable reporting. Further detail on the current APS Reform agenda, with progress framed within the context of the Government's agenda and its four reform pillars, eight outcomes, and underpinning initiatives, can be found in the [APS Annual Progress Report](#). All future reporting on APS Reform progress will be structured consistent with this APS Reform program outcomes framework.

This document outlines that:

- 13 Thodey Review recommendations are complete, including:
  - Recommendation 1: Implement APS transformation through strong leadership, clear targets, and appointment of a secretary-level transformation leader.
  - Recommendation 19: Develop a whole-of-service workforce strategy to build and sustain the way the APS attracts, develops and utilises its people, to ensure that it can perform its function.
  - Recommendation 20: Establish an APS professions model and a learning and development strategy to deepen capability and expertise.



- 27 Thodey Review recommendations are underway, including:
  - Recommendation 5b: Amend the *Public Service Act 1999* to reflect key principles for the APS — apolitical, stewardship, openness, integrity and adherence to merit.
  - Recommendation 10: APS to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - Recommendation 25: Strengthen the APS by recruiting, developing and promoting more people with diverse views and backgrounds.

Note Recommendation 2a and 2b are treated as one Thodey Recommendation and deemed underway, despite 2a marked as complete. Similarly, 39a, 39b and 39c are treated as one Thodey Recommendation and deemed underway, despite 39c marked as complete.

Note implementation of multiple pieces of Thodey guidance is subject to the passage of the Public Service Amendment Bill 2023, amending the *Public Service Act 1999*. This Bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 14 June 2023 and is currently before the Parliament.

## Guidance note

The status of each Thodey Review recommendation is based on progress achieved against its underlying implementation guidance. A recommendation is marked complete if all of its guidance is complete, continuing or closed. It is marked underway if at least one piece of guidance is still underway or under consideration. There are no recommendations where all underlying guidance is under consideration.

In some instances, the recommendation is broad while its implementation guidance is specific. If all guidance has been completed, the recommendation is marked complete even if other opportunities to improve exist to progress against the broader recommendation.

### For implementation guidance:

Complete means all associated work has been conducted and finalised.

Continuing means work has been conducted, but this work will need to continue to ensure the guidance remains in effect (for instance by being embedded in ongoing work processes).

Closed means the guidance has been assessed alongside current reform efforts and closed for further activity as it is deemed not necessary to achieve the broader recommendation.

Underway means some level of work has already been conducted or is ongoing, including in developmental phases, though more will need to be done before the goals of the guidance are in effect.

Under consideration means further discussions are necessary to determine whether or how to give effect to the guidance.



## Progress to date on Thodey recommendations

The Thodey Review provides detailed guidance on how each of the 40 recommendations might be pursued to effect change in the APS. The guiding points, which often reflect sub-recommendations and could be interpreted as a 'blueprint' for reform, are typically of interest to internal APS partners and external figures alike. For this reason, this section provides a status update (as of November 2023) on the 40 Thodey recommendations based on actions taken against each of the underpinning guidance notes. It is a non-exhaustive and point-in-time update of progress. In many instances, reform initiatives are underway that do not match the exact guidance notes of Thodey but nonetheless support the overarching recommendation for reform.

**Recommendation: 1** Implement APS transformation through strong leadership, clear targets, and appointment of a secretary-level transformation leader. **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to lead and be accountable for ambitious APS reform through an adaptive APS transformation program agreed with the Government.	Complete	APS Reform is a standing item at Secretaries Board, and Secretaries Board is responsible for: a) agreeing initiative-level ambition; b) establishing initiative-level accountabilities; c) establishing the authorising environment for reform; d) problem-solving delivery risks; e) helping shape and set the direction for APS reform; and f) overseeing the delivery of outcomes.
Secretaries Board to agree to a small number of APS-wide targets to guide the transformation and measure its progress.	Complete	Eight APS Reform whole-of-program outcomes were endorsed by the Secretaries Board in April 2023, and agreed by the Minister for the Public Service in May. Underpinning indicators of success and metrics are currently being developed in consultation with APS agencies, as part of a broader approach to outcomes tracking and reporting.
Government to appoint a secretary-level transformation leader to lead change, remove delivery roadblocks, and track progress. Transformation leader to: be a member of Secretaries Board and have the authority and influence to drive change have the authority to approve and prioritise funding for transformation initiatives, and report regularly on transformation progress to the Government and the public.	Complete	Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM was Secretary for Public Sector Reform from 22 June 2022 to 10 May 2023, before being appointed as the APS Commissioner on 11 May 2023. Dr de Brouwer is a member of Secretaries Board.  Dr de Brouwer is responsible for: a) advising the Minister and Secretaries Board to delay, suspend or accelerate initiatives, in consultation with secretary-level colleagues b) ensuring initiatives are delivered on-time and to the intended effect to achieve APS reform ambition and c) assurance and sign-off on appropriate planning and optimisation of the delivery agenda. The APS Reform Office will report regularly on transformation progress to the Secretaries Board and the Minister for the Public Service. The Minister will report annually on transformation progress to the public.
PM&C to establish a dedicated transformation office to support and drive APS transformation.	Complete	The APS Reform Office was established in 2020 as a dedicated transformation Office in PM&C. From December 2023, the division will sit within the Australian Public Service Commission.



**Recommendation: 2a** Undertake regular capability reviews to build organisational capacity and accountability

**Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to agree by end-2019 a framework for future-focused capability reviews of all departments and priority agencies.	Continuing	<p>A pilot framework and methodology for capability reviews has been developed by the APSC. It will continue to be refined ahead of a decision on the ongoing capability review program at the pilot's conclusion in 2025. The framework supports both APSC-led and self-initiated reviews.</p> <p>Subject to the passage of legislation, changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are underway that include an amendment requiring that capability reviews be conducted for each Department, Services Australia, the Australian Taxation Office and the Australian Public Service Commission at least every five years.</p>
Transformation leader and APS Commissioner to schedule reviews; all reviews to be completed by mid-2021.	Complete	<p>A pilot of future-focussed capability reviews of departments and large agencies commenced to identify urgent and emerging capability needs in areas including leadership, people, whole-of-government collaboration, culture and behaviours. In 2022-23, four reviews commenced with a further seven reviews due to be completed by the end of 2024-25.</p> <p>The pilot is scheduled to run until June 2025. The program for future reviews will be a matter for government consideration, noting the Bill before parliament would require a review of nominated agencies at least every five years.</p>
APS Commissioner to publish all reviews and agency responses.	Continuing	<p>When they are completed, capability review reports and the agency's action plan responding to the review report will be published on the APSC website.</p> <p>Subject to the passage of legislation, changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are underway that include an amendment requiring that capability review reports be published with an agency's action plan to respond to findings.</p>

**Recommendation: 2b** Promote continuous improvement through the PM&C Citizen Experience Survey, APS census, external advice and better performance reporting

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
PM&C to continue the Citizen Experience Survey for measuring trust, satisfaction and experience in Australian public services, and publish results.	Complete	The Trust in Australian public services survey (previously Citizen Experience Survey) annual reports for 2022 and 2023 have been published, with monthly statistics available on the APS Reform website.
APS Commissioner to publish APS Employee Census results for each	Continuing	From 2019, APS agencies participated in a voluntary public release of the APS Employee Census Results. In 2022, 94 of the 98 eligible agencies reported their results.



agency, with agency responses, from 2019-20.		Subject to the passage of legislation, changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are underway that include an amendment requiring that, unless exempt, agencies will publish the aggregate results from their annual APS Employee Census, along with an action plan responding to findings.
All agency heads to obtain regular external advice on performance and organisational health.	Complete	Agencies are supported in seeking regular external advice on their performance and organisational health, noting that each agency can pursue the most effective and efficient way of doing so.
APS to improve performance reporting as recommended in the 2018 Independent Review into the operation of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 and Rule</i> .	Underway	Work is underway to use the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)</i> to uplift performance reporting capability.

**Recommendation: 3** Drive APS transformation and build capability with innovative funding mechanisms **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Government to reinvest a part of the annual efficiency dividend, or other whole-of-government savings, in APS capability, digital transformation and public capital, including a defined amount for the transformation program.	Complete	In the October 2022-23 Budget, the Government approved \$25 million over the next 3 years to establish an APS Capability Reinvestment Fund. Round 1 of the Capability Reinvestment fund is underway with \$8.4 million allocated to 10 APS capability projects across 14 agencies.  In October 2022, the Government announced that the APS Reform agenda has been funded for \$72.9 million over 3 years.
Transformation leader and the Finance Secretary to agree priorities for transformation-related investments, based on government guidelines and with ministerial oversight.	Complete	The APS Capability Reinvestment Fund sets out clear funding priorities. The Fund supports projects to address the longer term cross-cutting capability needs of the APS. The Fund is administered by the APS Reform Office in consultation with the APSC and Finance, with outlay of expenditure agreed by the Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Finance.

**Recommendation: 4** Build the culture of the APS to support a trusted APS, united in serving all Australians **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to lead ambitious change of APS culture, guided by agreed change program with clear desired behaviours and mindsets.	Underway	The Secretaries Board established the APS Integrity Taskforce to ensure the APS is delivering a pro-integrity culture at all levels. The Taskforce took a bird's-eye view of the APS integrity landscape, identifying gaps and looking for opportunities to build on the important work already underway. The Taskforce delivered recommendations and associated actions under the pillars of culture, systems and accountability. Implementation of the report is underway.
APS 200 and APS leaders at all levels to role-model desired behaviours and communicate change to all staff.	Underway	The SES Performance Leadership Framework was finalised in June 2023 and provides an overarching set of requirements all APS agencies must adopt to strengthen behaviour and outcomes-



		based performance management. It was launched on 29 August 2023, with all APS agencies required to implement all elements of the Framework by 2025.
Secretaries Board and agency heads to ensure tools and ways of working, learning and development, performance assessment, promotions and recruitment reinforce desired cultural change.	Underway	Ongoing work to strengthen behaviour and outcomes-based performance management aims to deliver four main objectives: (1) APS agencies will implement the elements of the SES Performance Leadership Framework by 2025 (already launched); (2) SES employees will receive feedback on their behaviour as well as outcomes; (3) APS agencies will implement all elements of the non-SES Performance Framework (under development); and (4) managers will be well equipped to provide feedback on behaviours equally with outcomes when assessing an APS employees performance.

**Recommendation: 5** Promote a shared understanding of the APS and its role alongside the Executive and Parliament **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Finance, APSC and PM&C, working as appropriate with parliamentary departments, to develop induction and training material for APS employees, parliamentarians and their advisers that explains clearly the role of Australia’s democratic institutions, including the APS.	Underway	Finance has developed and delivered induction training to all new Parliamentarians and a new <i>Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984</i> (MoP(S) Act) Employee induction. These training sessions include information about the parliamentary ecosystem and its interactions with the APS.
Amend the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to: reflect key principles for the APS — apolitical, stewardship, openness, integrity and adherence to merit, and extend application of these principles and APS Values to other Commonwealth agencies not covered by the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> .	Underway	Subject to the passage of legislation, changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are underway to enshrine a new APS Value of stewardship and apply it to all APS employees. A new APS Value on ‘Stewardship’ would strengthen the APS’s core values, and instil a unifying sense of service across the APS.  Broad-based public consultation on ‘Stewardship’ as an APS Value was held between 24 March and 28 April 2023. Upon closing there were 1,502 responses received from the Australian community, and APS staff across the service.

**Recommendation: 6** Develop and embed an inspiring purpose and vision to unite the APS in serving the nation **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to oversee development of an APS purpose statement and set a five-year vision for the APS. Update the vision periodically.	Closed	Changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> were proposed to require that the APS put in place a purpose statement to give effect to the APS Values, and encourage transparency and accountability on the role and purpose of the APS. The purpose statement itself was not proposed to be legislated.  Given associated amendments to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are not proceeding, the Secretaries Board has decided not to prepare an APS Purpose Statement at this time.



Secretaries Board to ensure purpose and vision embedded across the APS.	Under consideration	Work is being considered to ensure all APS employees, both current and prospective, understand why the APS exists, what it seeks to achieve, and for whom. This includes through work on the APS Employee Value Proposition.
APSC and the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to remain in the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio, with the Minister responsible for the public service sworn to PM&C.	Complete	Portfolio responsibility for the Public Service Act 1999 and the APSC remains within the PM&C portfolio and the Minister for the Public Service has been sworn to administer the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Recommendation 7:** Reinforce APS institutional integrity to sustain the highest standards of ethics **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APS Commissioner to work with Secretaries Board and agencies with responsibility for integrity to build pro-integrity culture and practices in the APS.	Underway	<p>Improving the APS's integrity system remains a focus for the Government.</p> <p>The Attorney-General and Minister for Finance have agreed to amend the PGPA Rule to require Commonwealth entities to implement measures to prevent, detect and deal with corrupt conduct.</p> <p>The Attorney-General is working to strengthen the protections for whistle-blowers in the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013</i> and improve oversight by the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.</p> <p>The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) was established by the <i>National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022</i> and <i>National Anti-Corruption Commission (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2022</i>.</p> <p>On 17 November 2023, the APS Integrity Taskforce released the report 'Louder than Words: An APS Integrity Action Plan'. This included a report on activities on the Commonwealth's integrity systems, culture and governance, and where opportunities might exist to enhance the pro-integrity systems and cultures.</p> <p>In December 2020, Stephen Sedgwick released his report into <a href="#">consultations regarding APS pro-integrity culture</a> which made a series of recommendations aimed at bolstering institutional integrity. Implemented recommendations are outlined below.</p>
Amend the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to: provide own-motion powers for the APS Commissioner to initiate investigations and reviews, require agencies to provide integrity information to the APSC, and include requirements to ensure agency heads and SES avoid or manage potential conflicts of interest after leaving the APS.	Underway	<p>On 1 November 2023, the Minister for the Public Service announced the second phase of APS reform initiatives. These include:</p> <p>New own motion powers for the APS Commissioner to initiate reviews and investigations into Code of Conduct breaches by current and former agency heads, including Secretaries, and APS employees;</p>





		<p>New powers for the APS Commissioner to inquire into Code of Conduct breaches by former agency heads, including Secretaries, to match the existing powers to investigate current agency heads; and</p> <p>Building safeguards into the APS Commissioner’s appointment process to complement the expansion of their own motion and inquiry powers.</p>
APSC to embed integrity guidance in APS-wide induction, training and other core systems and processes.	Complete	<p>The Sedgwick Report recommendations included: new <i>APS Commissioner’s Directions 2022</i> (commenced February 2022) with additional requirements mandating integrity training for new APS entrants, and for Agency Heads to consult with the Commissioner on SES code matters and confidentiality agreements entered into regarding sexual harassment; and new and updated integrity guidance, including Handling Misconduct, an Integrity Metrics Resource, and Fact Sheets.</p> <p>The Commission has also developed an SES Integrity Masterclass series, and the APS Academy has hosted a Craft Conversation on the topic and developed a ‘Guide to integrity conversations’.</p>
APSC and Finance to ensure all agencies extend APS integrity requirements to service providers, long-term APS contractors and consultants.	Underway	<p>Recommendation 13 of the Government’s Integrity Taskforce Response, ‘Louder than Words’, relates to strengthening the integrity of supplier conduct and increasing visibility across the Commonwealth of supplier engagement and performance.</p> <p>The Department of Finance is developing a Commonwealth Supplier Code of Conduct, covering consultants, contractors and outsourced service providers, which would be enforceable as a material breach of contract.</p> <p>Finance is also working to deliver the Contractor Reporting, Invoicing and Integrity Solution, an integrity system that will enable data sharing across Commonwealth to monitor behaviour, enhance compliance and share material breaches for contractors and labour hire workers engaged under the People Panel. This system is expected to be implemented by June 2024.</p> <p>Finance is also working with the Attorney-General’s Department to explore options to increase the transparency and visibility of where Commonwealth contracts have been terminated for material breach.</p>

**Recommendation: 8** Harness external perspectives and capability by working openly and meaningfully with people, communities and organisations, under an accountable Charter of Partnerships **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to develop a Charter of Partnerships to promote an open	Complete	The Secretaries Board established a Partnership Priorities Sub-committee (PPC) that met for the first time in February 2023. The PPC oversaw the development of the Charter of Partnerships and



APS and guide external engagement and collaboration.		Engagement, which was released in November 2023. The Charter sets clear expectations – for government, the APS and the community – on how the APS will work with external partners.
All agencies to embed Charter expectations into individual and agency head performance management and corporate planning and reporting.	Underway	Across 2024, the APS Reform Office will lead activities to embed the Charter across the service to build the mindsets and behaviours to engage and partner meaningfully.
All agencies to draw on diverse and rich community and partner insights in advice to Government, including in Cabinet and budget processes.	Underway	<p>Assessments of partnership capabilities are built into the recently established capability reviews, and assessments are ongoing regarding agency maturity levels for engagement based on international standards.</p> <p>The Budget Process Operational Rules (BPORs) were updated in December 2022 to include a refreshed set of overarching objectives, including a focus on evaluating expenditure to inform and improve the development of new policy proposals. The Cabinet Handbook was also updated to support First Nations perspectives and engagement as part of the policy lifecycle.</p>
Government to commission a review of privacy, FOI and record-keeping arrangements to ensure that they are fit for the digital age, by: supporting greater transparency and disclosure, simpler administration and faster decisions, while protecting personal data and other information, and exempting material prepared to inform deliberative processes of government from release under FOI.	Underway	<p>In January 2020, David Tune completed a Functional and Efficiency Review into the National Archives of Australia, which made a series of recommendations aimed at enhancing the management, preservation and use of Commonwealth information in the digital age. In August 2021, the Government agreed to all 20 recommendations in full or in principle.</p> <p>This complements additional work being carried out by the Attorney General's Department and the National Archives of Australia on record-keeping and integrity.</p>

**Recommendation: 9** Use place-based approaches to address intergenerational and multi-dimensional disadvantage

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Government to develop a framework for place-based investment, based on: joint decision-making with communities and other levels of government on designing and implementing policies and services flexibility, including through funding arrangements, to cater for the different needs and opportunities in particular communities use of data to support decision-making and measure progress, and clear accountability for outcomes, including shared ministerial accountability where appropriate.	Underway	<p>The Government will provide \$199.8 million over 6 years from 2023–24 to address entrenched community disadvantage, including through place-based approaches, engaging with philanthropy and promoting social impact investment.</p> <p>As part of this package, the Government has provided \$7.8 million to put towards a whole-of-government framework to identify strategic objectives and key principles to guide how government works in partnership with communities and to support more impactful investment in initiatives that address disadvantage.</p>



Government to pilot approach in communities with entrenched disadvantage or complex needs and strong community leadership.	Underway	The Government will provide \$64 million over 6 years from 2023-24 for place-based partnerships to extend the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative. This initiative aims to enable community led change in partnership with 10 local communities and state and territory governments to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and their families, and to enhance place-based initiatives in 6 of these communities.
Agencies to appoint regionally-based SES as APS Community Partners to work with local communities and other jurisdictions, with delegated authority for investment decisions where appropriate.	Under consideration	Regionally-based SES currently deliver a range of Government programs, including by making appropriate investment decisions. Establishment of a more formal program of APS Community Partners has not progressed.
Secretaries Board to ensure APS makes place-based data available to help understand local needs and opportunities and measure progress.	Underway	<p>The Government will provide \$16.4 million over 4 years from 2023-24 to the Australian Bureau of Statistics to implement the Life Course Data initiative to capture data insights to inform long term policy responses aimed at interrupting cycles of intergenerational disadvantage.</p> <p>The Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development, Transport and Communications is developing a Regional Analysis Heatmap using place-based data.</p>

**Recommendation: 10** APS to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Government and APS to recognise the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples making decisions on matters affecting their lives and communities, and support their full participation in the social and economic life of Australia.	Underway	Action to support genuine partnerships with First Nations people is occurring to consider any changes required to transform mainstream government organisations. This will support the Government's commitment to Closing the Gap, by identifying the systems changes required to help transform mainstream government organisations (Priority Reform 3) and enable formal partnerships and shared decision making (Priority Reform 1).
National Indigenous Australians Agency and PM&C to lead the APS's application of the framework for place-based investment and the Charter of Partnership and Engagement in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including to: promote joint decision-making with communities on design and implementation of policies and services adopt flexible funding arrangements that cater for different opportunities and needs across communities, and delegate authority for investment decisions to regionally based APS employees.	Underway	<p>The Partnership Priorities Sub-committee will consider ways to strengthen partnerships with First Nations peoples and use place-based approaches as part of its forward work program.</p> <p>The NIAA is currently developing a Commonwealth Engagement and Partnership Framework to support best practice across all portfolios in establishing and strengthening partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>



APSC and relevant agencies to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, the Indigenous SES Network and Secretaries Board to improve recruitment and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the APS.	Underway	<p>The Minister for the Public Service has committed to boosting First Nations employment in the APS to 5 per cent.</p> <p>The Government has provided \$3.4 million over two years from 2023-24 to the APSC to boost First Nations employment in the APS through initiatives to increase the number of First Nations SES from 44 to 100 by 2024-25, support career development of First Nations Executive Level 2 officers and build the cultural capability of the APS.</p>
Secretaries Board to ensure cultural competency training remains a core part of APS professional development.	Underway	<p>To support cultural competency, the first round of the Capability Reinvestment Fund will fund work on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Uplifting APS-wide First Nations cultural capability.</li> <li>2. Promoting culturally and linguistically diverse capability in the APS.</li> </ol>
Parliament to consider establishing a Senate or Joint Committee on Indigenous Affairs to oversee Australian Government expenditure and policies relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Underway	<p>In 2022, the NIAA led a Commonwealth-wide review to identify First Nations expenditure. A report outlining key findings of the review and tangible opportunities was provided to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap in December 2022. Further opportunities for the collection, recording and reporting of First Nations expenditure are being explored.</p>

**Recommendation: 11** Strengthen APS partnerships with ministers by improving support and ensuring clear understanding of roles, needs and responsibilities **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board and agencies to improve APS support for ministers, including by: providing common platforms for ministers and offices to collaborate with public servants and readily access APS advice and insight establishing portfolio and service-wide mechanisms for Ministers to provide periodic and real-time feedback to the APS, and training APS employees on how to support ministers and their offices effectively, including on the role of ministerial advisers.	Continuing	Agencies continue to support the development and rollout of new tools to support ministers, including work by the Digital First and CabNet+ teams of PM&C to develop platforms that provide readily accessible information and advice to ministers and offices.
APSC to update guidance on roles and responsibilities defining interactions between ministers, their advisers and public servants, to support induction and training for all parties.	Complete	The APSC published "Working with Ministers" guidance in 2021. 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. It comprises development of guidance material for the APS on engaging effectively with Ministers and their advisers, and, through the APS Academy, development of a learning program targeted at SES officers.
Agency heads to support SES officers to work in ministerial offices and then return to the APS.	Continuing	The Secretaries Board and agency heads support senior public servants to work in a range of roles within ministerial offices. This support is part of broader APS mobility and talent development activities.



<p>Amend the <i>Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984</i> to establish a legislated code of conduct, with appropriate enforcement provisions, for advisers.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<p>On 7 October 2022, a Review of the MoP(S) Act was published to ensure the Act is fit for purpose to support a professional, high-performing, safe and respectful workplace for all Parliamentarians and their staff, and to prevent bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. The Review of the MoP(S) Act made 15 recommendations which the Government has agreed to in principle. Work is underway to implement related recommendations in the Set the Standard Report, including the establishment of a Code of Conduct through the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce.</p> <p>On 17 October 2023, amendments to the <i>Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984</i> commenced, implementing 11 of the Review's 15 recommendations. The remaining 4 recommendations will be implemented by the statutory Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) which commenced on 1 October 2023.</p>
<p>Government to set guidance for ministerial offices to have at least half of ministerial policy advisers with public service experience.</p>	<p>Closed</p>	<p>Many policy advisers have strong public service experience. The Government does not consider formal guidance about the number of public service-experienced advisers necessary to support the continuing effective work of Government.</p>

**Recommendation: 12** APS to work closely with the states and territories to jointly deliver improved services and outcomes for all Australians **Overall status: Complete**

*Note Thodey guidance is related to COAG, which has been replaced with National Cabinet and the First Secretaries group chaired by the Secretary of PM&C.*

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
<p>Government to propose COAG sets, progresses and publicly reports on a small number of national priorities with clear, shared metrics for success.</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>Work to strengthen National Cabinet is ongoing.</p>
<p>Government to propose COAG commissions PM&amp;C, with state and territory counterparts, to develop models for effective secretariat support to COAG, for COAG's consideration.</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>Work to strengthen National Cabinet is ongoing.</p>

**Recommendation: 13** Improve funding, structure, and management of digital functions across the APS **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
<p>Government to strengthen DTA as chief digital adviser, with: responsibility to advise on prioritisation of digital investment and monitor digital projects, capability and risks authority to enforce Commonwealth digital</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>A mandate change on 1 July 2021 gave the DTA greater responsibility for advice on strategic and policy leadership, ICT investment and digital service delivery. The Digital and ICT Investment Oversight Framework is now in operation with six-states: 1-Strategic Planning, 2-Prioritisation, 3-Contestability, 4-Delivery Assurance, 5-Sourcing, and 6-Operations.</p>



<p>policies (e.g., relating to digital capability, procurement and funding) across the APS, and appropriate resourcing and capability to discharge these functions.</p>		<p>The Government released an initial Data and Digital Government Strategy in May 2023 outlining its vision to deliver simple, secure, and connected public services for all people and business through world class data and digital capabilities. The final Data and Digital Government Strategy, supported by an implementation plan outlining initiatives that will achieve progress towards the Australian Government’s vision, is expected to be released by the end of 2023.</p>
<p>DTA to support Services Australia overhaul digital service delivery.</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>The DTA supported Services Australia in the myGov User Audit secretariat between September and December 2022, and a response is being developed jointly across the two agencies for consideration by Government.</p>
<p>Secretaries Board to establish a digital working group to support the DTA deliver on its strengthened mandate.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Secretaries Digital Committee first met on 24 September 2020. Its mandate was broadened to include data, and was renamed the Secretaries Digital and Data Committee (SDDC), with the SDDC first meeting on 19 October 2022. It provides strategic leadership to promote an APS-enterprise approach to the planning, coordination, investment, assurance, and delivery of trusted and secure digital and data capabilities across government.</p>
<p>In the long term, Government to consider transitioning Commonwealth digital functions into a stand-alone central department.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>At the release of the Thodey Review in 2019 the DTA was in the Social Services portfolio. Since the Thodey Review was finalised, the DTA joined the Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio on 15 April 2021 through to 23 May 2022. Since May 2022 DTA has been in the Finance portfolio.</p> <p>Responsibility for data and digital functions, including legislation, policy and implementation, currently sit across several portfolios. The Department of Finance has responsibility for data, the Department of Home Affairs has cyber policy (hardening government IT) and the Department of Industry, Science and Resources has Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence. The DTA is supporting integrated cross-portfolio approaches in part through the Data and Digital Government Strategy and an evaluation of the Digital Investment Oversight Framework to provide integrated prioritisation advice to government.</p>

**Recommendation: 14** Conduct ICT audit and develop whole-of-government ICT blueprint

**Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
<p>DTA and Finance to conduct a whole-of-government ICT audit to identify: current and forecast ICT expenditure and assets, systems scheduled for retirement or no longer supported by software vendors (and associated risks), future requirements, and any urgent ICT capital investment needs.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Digital Review delivered a baseline measurement of digital capability across the APS. The Digital Review catalogued, audited and assessed 20 agencies’ digital and ICT maturity and capability. These 20 agencies accounted for over 80% of government expenditure. A summary of the Digital Review was published in December 2021. Aspects of the Integrated Digital Investment Plan for dealing with technology debt and legacy</p>



		are underway, including the Department of Home Affairs efforts in mapping critical ICT and digital infrastructure needs.
Following the audit, Government to commission DTA, with Finance and the transformation leader, to develop a whole-of-government ICT blueprint that: ensures that the APS has fit-for-purpose ICT systems to support the business of Government identifies platforms to be core, common or bespoke outlines a plan for managing risks posed by legacy and unsupported systems, and settles an ICT investment pipeline.	Complete	<p>The Australian Government Architecture (AGA) is a collection of digital artefacts and guidance that are organised in such a way as to guide and inform its users on how to align to the digital directions of government.</p> <p>The AGA is used by Government to inform investment prioritisation and decision-making, and will identify opportunities for strategic investment in the capabilities required to meet whole-of-government strategic outcomes. It ensures guidance provided to Government and the assessment of investment proposals are aligned with the agreed strategic direction and policies of the Government. Agencies also use the architecture to inform forward investment planning and architectural design. The architecture provides clear strategic direction for whole-of-government digital transformation to inform their investment planning. Agencies will also benefit from clear visibility of what other digital capabilities exist, or are planned, across government to enable identification of opportunities for cross-agency and whole-of-government collaboration and reuse.</p>
Secretaries Board to support preparation of audit and blueprint and submit them to Government.	Complete	The Secretaries Digital and Data Committee and its predecessor were briefed on the AGA on 9 December 2021 and 19 April 2022. The ongoing development of the AGA will be supported by the SDDC alongside consideration by Government.

**Recommendation: 15** Build data and digital expertise across the service by applying the professions model and creating centres of excellence **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
PM&C and heads of DTA and ABS, with APS Commissioner, to establish a digital and data profession for the APS	Complete	The APS Digital Professional Stream and the APS Data Professional Stream were established in 2020 and 2021 to lift the digital and data capability of the APS workforce.
Profession to prioritise development and retention of core in-house capabilities, including: creating new learning and development opportunities to lift APS-wide generalist skills and understanding of digital and data attracting specialists in visualisation, advanced analytics, automation, gamification, cyber security and artificial intelligence, and focusing APS engagement with digital product and service providers on value for money and outcomes.	Continuing	<p>The APS Academy, in partnership with the Data and Digital professions are piloting a number of new initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing APS Academy Campuses</li> <li>• New entry level programs</li> <li>• Data and digital literacy training</li> </ul> <p>As a result of the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit, the APSC has established the APS Digital Traineeship Program. APSC is also continuing the development of digital and data capability through graduate and cadetship programs.</p>
Secretaries Board to advise Government on new and	Complete	The APS pursues excellence in data and digital capability through its data and digital professions as well as making



<p>strengthened dedicated centres of excellence in data and digital techniques. Centres of excellence to have a mandate to pilot and drive service wide initiatives.</p>		<p>improved use of existing centres of excellence relating to digital challenges, data analytics, automation, and artificial or augmented intelligence.</p>
--	--	---

**Recommendation: 16** Deliver simple and seamless government services, **Overall status: Underway** integrated with states, territories and other providers

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
<p>Government to commission Secretaries Board, working with Services Australia and the DTA, to develop a 2030 roadmap for services delivery, guided by core principles: people at the centre of service delivery a single access point to all government services, and seamless experience for all users of digital, physical or telephone services.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<p>The Government is currently considering the findings of the 2023 myGov user audit, which includes recommendations on simple and seamless service delivery. The myGov User Audit was published in January 2023 and recommends a 5-year plan with states and territories, and a 5-year roadmap for myGov, to be updated annually. The DTA and Services Australia are working together to develop a joint response to these recommendations.</p> <p>This will be enabled by the forthcoming Data and Digital Government Strategy implementation plan, which is expected to identify tangible ways the Government plans to uplift data and digital capability in the APS to help in the delivery of simple, secure and connected public services.</p> <p>As announced on 30 November, the Government is investing \$145.5 million to support the Digital ID system and to implement independent regulation and oversight of the system. Digital ID helps Australians verify their identity in a safe and secure way, to access federal, state and territory government and other services online – removing the need for individuals and businesses to visit a shopfront with their identity documents, saving time and money. Further work includes the designing of policy and legislative foundations to transition to an economy-wide Digital ID ecosystem with an independent regulator.</p>
<p>Secretaries Board to support preparation of roadmap and submit it to Government by end-2020.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<p>On 9 December 2020, the Secretaries Board agreed to further work on developing a better services reform priority. In 2021, the APS Reform Office undertook targeted consultations with experienced APS leaders, along with additional research activities, to identify areas critical to improving and integrating service delivery, guided by an APS Better Services Leadership Group.</p> <p>In October 2021, at a Secretary-level deep dive on a better services reform priority, senior APS leaders agreed to scope potential new projects to centre services around people and businesses, enhance service experience and design through a more capable APS, invest more strategically in better services, and deliver better services by using data more effectively.</p> <p>Under APS Reform, related work is being progressed to put people and business at the centre of policy and services.</p>





**Recommendation: 17** Adopt common enabling tools and services to support efficiency, mobility, and collaboration

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Agency heads to provide common enabling tools for APS employees and use common or interoperable enabling services.	Underway	The DTA is developing a refreshed platform to allow agencies to better navigate and apply the Australian Government Architecture to digital investments (available in public beta) and help develop scalable, secure and resilient digital capabilities.
Transformation leader and Finance to lead introduction of common enabling tools and services, with investment priorities approved by Secretaries Board in accordance with government-agreed criteria.	Underway	Finance has developed common enabling tools and technologies including the Parliamentary Document Management System, a bespoke platform to improve parliamentary workflow between agencies and ministerial offices, and GovTEAMS, a shared collaboration solution for Commonwealth government agencies.

**Recommendation: 18** Share and protect data for better services and policies, and make data open by default

**Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Legislate a data sharing and release framework to enable data-sharing across the APS and with trusted partners (including states and territories), with strong privacy and security protections.	Complete	The <i>Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022</i> commenced on 1 April 2022, establishing a new, best practice scheme for sharing Australian Government data, consistent with the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> .
Government to prioritise investment in the Office of the National Data Commissioner and Data Integration Partnership for Australia to support effective and contemporary data governance and infrastructure and build data analytics capability.	Continuing	The Government has funded a whole-of-government platform for eligible users to request access to Australian Government data, manage data sharing agreements and apply for accreditation under the <i>Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022</i> .  The Office of the National Data Commissioner is currently working with more than 20 APS agencies to help them discover their data by developing data inventories using a standard methodology. The ONDC has a team of data experts, metadata standards and guidance material to assist APS agencies develop data inventories.
DTA to prioritise APS data integration and protection architecture in developing the whole-of-government ICT blueprint (recommendation 14).	Complete	<i>See recommendation 14 for delivery update.</i>
Agencies to make all non-sensitive data open by default consistent with the Australian Government Public Data Statement 2015.	Complete	The Data and Digital Government Strategy includes a commitment that all APS agencies will make non-sensitive data open by default and have formal controls for sharing of more sensitive data under agreements to ensure privacy, security and ethical use.



**Recommendation: 19** Develop a whole-of-service workforce strategy to build and sustain the way the APS attracts, develops and utilises its people, to ensure that it can perform its function **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APSC to develop a whole-of-service workforce strategy for Secretaries Board endorsement and implementation by all agencies.	Complete	The APS Workforce Strategy 2025 established the first whole-of-government approach to strategic workforce management. Its implementation is supported by the establishment of the APS Workforce Planning for Centre of Excellence and Workforce Planning website.
APSC to monitor progress and update the strategy regularly.	Continuing	Progress of the Strategy is monitored through tools such as the APS Agency Survey, and initiatives reported in the annual State of the Service report.
Government to abolish the Average Staffing Level rule after the APS has demonstrated its workforce planning capability through the strategy.	Complete	The Government removed the Average Staffing Level cap in 2022, although Average Staffing Levels remain a tool for internal budgeting purposes.

**Recommendation: 20** Establish an APS professions model and a learning and development strategy to deepen capability and expertise **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APSC to support APS to develop its capability through a professions model for core delivery, regulatory and policy roles, enabling functions and specialist areas.	Complete	The APS Academy was established in July 2021 to foster an APS-wide culture of learning that builds core public sector capabilities and drives high performance. The APSC has established Digital, Data and HR Professions.
APSC to develop a whole-of-service learning and development strategy and undertake quality assurance to ensure programs deliver value and meets objectives.	Complete	The Learning and Development Strategy has been developed by the APSC and was published in July 2021. Implementation is underway, including embedding the Learning Quality Framework, which is a model for assessing, building and distributing learning initiatives; and design of the next Learning and Development survey, which will measure the effectiveness of learning across the system.
Secretaries Board to endorse and drive implementation of the professions model and APS learning and development strategy.	Complete	The Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee has been formed to drive continuous improvement in workforce and organisational capability.



**Recommendation: 21** Improve mobility, support professional development, and forge strong linkages with other jurisdictions and sectors **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to set targets to double interagency mobility rates by 2025.	Closed	The APS Workforce Strategy and the mobility strategy provide a strong basis for assessing and responding to areas where improved mobility is needed. This can be accomplished without setting a broad target.
APSC to agree with Secretaries Board a framework for mobility, including coordinating and resourcing initiatives to support movement: across the APS, including between Canberra and regional offices, between internationally and domestically focused parts of the APS, and between the APS and state and territory public services, comparable overseas services, and the private and not-for-profit sectors.	Complete	<p>The Framework for Commonwealth and state and territory public sector mobility was agreed in July 2020. APS staff have mobilised temporarily in 2021-22 to NSW, VIC, WA and ACT to support COVID-19 responses.</p> <p>The APS Surge Reserve was established to mobilise staff to priority areas of work including natural disaster and COVID-19 response efforts.</p> <p>The APS Mobility Framework was released in April 2021 to help APS employees, managers, executives and HR practitioners use mobility as a strategic workforce tool.</p>
APSC to consider introducing a requirement that experience in two or more portfolios or sectors is a pre-requisite for appointment to the SES.	Closed	The APS does not consider a mandatory requirement that experience in two or more portfolios or sectors is necessary to support mobility and professional development. The mobility framework and application of the merit principle encourage broad experience including in different portfolios or sectors as a highly desirable attribute for appointment to the SES. This consideration aligns with findings of the Hierarchy and Classifications Review.

**Recommendation: 22** Standardise and systematise performance management to drive a culture of high achievement **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to agree a framework for consistent and high-quality performance management and development across the APS.	Complete	An SES Performance Leadership Framework was launched in August 2023 and APS agencies are required to fully implement the Framework by 2025. A non-SES Performance Framework will be developed and published by the end of 2025. These frameworks will build consistency across the APS, and provide assistance to managers to meet the formal requirement that behaviours must be considered equally with outcomes.
APS Commissioner to drive a robust and consistent approach to SES performance management and development.	Continuing	The APS Commissioner will support a robust and consistent approach to SES performance management through the newly launched SES Performance Leadership Framework.
Transformation leader and Finance to ensure new common HR enabling system and tools supports the performance management framework.	Underway	The DTA is testing the market for ERP solutions and establishing an 'ERP Products and Solutions' category on DTA's Software Marketplace. Entities will then be able to select an ERP solution that meets their needs, including supporting the performance management framework.



**Recommendation: 23** Identify and nurture current leaders and staff with potential to become future APS leaders

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APSC to oversee an independent process to assess the capability of all SES, starting with SES Band 3s and progressively including Band 2s and Band 1s.	Continuing	<p>The Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council manage the Senior Executive Service talent processes. The role of the talent councils is to build a strong and diverse leadership pipeline in the APS on behalf of the Secretaries Board.</p> <p>Benchmarked capability assessments for all APS SES Band 3s were completed in 2021. New Band 3s are now offered the opportunity to participate after 12-18 months at level (122 completed to date).</p> <p>Benchmarking is also occurring at the SES Band 2 and SES Band 1 levels. This assessment has been embedded as an annual process overseen by the Deputy Secretaries Talent Council.</p>
Secretaries Board to agree new approach to identify and develop high-performing and high-potential EL employees.	Underway	<p>APS Leadership Edge is a cohort-based social learning program which will enable Executive Level 2s' to develop their leadership and management skills through a range of courses and activities. An APS Talent Management Guide is available to support agencies to identify and develop high-potential Executive Level employees. This guide aligns with leading talent management practice and was recently updated in close consultation with agencies.</p>
APSC to provide annual advice to Secretaries Board on capability and development of current and future APS leaders.	Continuing	<p>The Secretaries Talent Council partners with Secretaries to complete an annual succession scan to understand the strength and diversity of the APS leadership pipeline. This informs advice to Secretaries Board.</p>

**Recommendation: 24** Overhaul recruitment and induction to reflect best practice, use APS's employee value proposition and target mid-career and senior talent outside the APS

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to agree a distinct APS brand and employee value proposition to underpin service-wide recruitment.	Underway	<p>The Future of Work Sub-committee is developing an Employee Value Proposition and is considering recruitment best practice.</p>
APS Commissioner to provide guidelines on best-practice recruitment.	Underway	<p>Advice on recruitment best practice is under development.</p>
Secretaries Board to instigate annual APS-wide recruitment rounds targeted at mid-career and senior professionals from other sectors, coordinated by APSC.	Under consideration	<p>Work is under consideration to explore the strengthening of lateral hire models, including for SES employment. The current SES100 initiative, which is committed to boosting representation of First Nations people at SES levels across the APS, is an example of work to attract talent from other sectors.</p>



APSC to progressively coordinate aspects of APS-wide recruitment, commencing with centralised pre-qualification checks for graduates.	Underway	The Secretaries Board Future of Work Sub-committee has been established to drive organisational and workforce reform priorities and is examining opportunities to strengthen recruitment outcomes, including for entry-level programs.
Attorney-General's Department, working with relevant agencies, to streamline and standardise security clearance processes.	Continuing	AGSVA's new vetting system (myClearance) went live on 28 November 2022 and provides a single integrated system for users which will manage applications, assessments, decisions and maintenance of security clearances with increased self-service options.
APSC to deliver whole-of-service induction on essential knowledge required for public servants, with participation required to pass probation.	Underway	The APS Academy has commenced redevelopment of the APS induction suite and mandatory modules. The APS Companion was released in March 2023, with re-design of induction modules currently underway. The impact on probation relies on broader legislative change and could be under consideration.

**Recommendation: 25** Strengthen the APS by recruiting, developing and promoting more people with diverse views and backgrounds

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to set a 2030 diversity goal: the APS to reflect and understand the people and communities it serves.	Underway	The Government has committed to the development of an APS strategy to improve the cultural and linguistic diversity of the APS and strengthen employment outcomes for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees. The APSC is developing a strategy to strengthen inclusion and diversity in the APS, including measures to address barriers to representation and progression of CALD employees. In addition, work is currently underway on developing a strong Employee Value Proposition to support flexible and remote work across the APS.
Secretaries Board to set ambitious diversity and inclusion targets, with milestones and reporting schedule, in an APS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.	Underway	The APS CALD strategy will complement other diversity and inclusion strategies endorsed by the Secretaries Board which include ambitious employment targets including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024</li> <li>• APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020-2025</li> <li>• APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2026</li> </ul> Reporting is conducted biannually through the APS Employment data release and annually through the State of the Service Report. Each workforce strategy includes reporting and evaluation timelines and commitments.
APS 200 to be collectively and individually responsible for helping achieve targets, supported by relevant training and other initiatives.	Underway	Senior leaders have clear accountabilities for driving delivery of APS workforce strategies and this will be further enhanced through expectations for modelling and improving personal cultural capability set out in the new SES performance framework that has been launched.
Secretaries Board to instigate regular merit-based special-measures recruitment rounds and mid-career development for diverse groups, coordinated by the APSC — starting	Underway	The Government has committed to boosting First Nations employment in the APS, including a commitment to increase the number of First Nations SES from 44 to 100 by 2024-25. \$3.4 million was committed to this work in the May 2023 Budget.



with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with a disability.		
--	--	--

**Recommendation: 26** Embed a culture of evaluation and learning from experience to underpin evidence-based policy and delivery **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Finance to develop, for Secretaries Board agreement, an APS-wide approach to build evaluation capability and ensure systematic evaluation of programs and policies.	Continuing	Embedding a culture of evaluation requires sustained leadership, institutional changes, and capability building. The Government allocated \$10 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$2.1 million per year ongoing) to establish a central evaluation function within Treasury to provide leadership and improve evaluation capability across Government, including support to agencies and leading a small number of flagship evaluations each year. The Australian Centre of Evaluation was established in July 2023. This work builds on and complements the existing Commonwealth Evaluation Policy, Toolkit and Community of Practice.
Finance to establish a central enabling evaluation function to support APS evaluation practices and expertise.	Complete	The Australian Centre of Evaluation was established in July 2023.
Agencies to establish in-house evaluation functions and annual plans, and publish evaluations, unless exempt by the Cabinet.	Underway	Several agencies have established in-house evaluation functions in the past 3 years, and most Departments now have one. The Australian Centre of Evaluation will work with Departments to expand this capability more widely.
Government to amend Cabinet and budget requirements to establish a systematic approach for formal evaluations.	Complete	The BPORs were updated in December 2022 to include a refreshed set of overarching objectives, including a focus on evaluating expenditure to inform and improve the development of new policy proposals.  The Cabinet Handbook was also updated to support First Nations perspectives and engagement/consultation as part of the policy lifecycle.

**Recommendation: 27** Embed high-quality research and analysis and a culture of innovation and experimentation to underpin evidence-based policy and delivery **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Agencies to publish research plans and completed research by default. Report on research underway and capability in annual reports.	Underway	The Survey of Trust in Australian public services was expanded to include publishing agency-level data in an annual report and providing monthly datasets online. Further scoping is underway to explore a data sharing scheme for survey data with researchers, including establishing legal basis for sharing and secure data lab hosting arrangements. Broader application of this principle of publication and reporting is under consideration.



Secretaries and other relevant agency heads to work together to boost joint research and analysis capability and output: develop proposals, for Government consideration, to establish or strengthen research units (either in-house or outside departments) jointly undertake in-house and commission external research, and build digital tools to help share and jointly undertake research.	Continuing	<p>Subject to the passage of legislation, changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are underway that include an amendment giving Secretaries' Board the power to mandate a long-term insights report in relation to one or more matters of public policy.</p> <p>The APS Reform Office is establishing a process for regular, evidence-based and public-engagement driven Long-term Insights Briefings. The first Insights Briefing was released in October 2023 on 'how might artificial intelligence affect the trustworthiness of public service delivery'.</p> <p>Long-term Insights Briefings aim to strengthen policy development and planning in the APS by bringing together, and helping the APS to deeply understand, the evidence, context, trends and implications of the issue over a long term horizon.</p>
Secretaries Board to establish protocols to support timely research publication.	Closed	The APS continues to encourage, support and drive research and its publication as appropriate. The Secretaries Board does not consider formal protocols necessary to support ongoing publication of research.
Secretaries Board to trial a public service innovation incubator to drive innovative approaches to policy-making.	Closed	The APS continues to focus on innovation in policy-making which is central to and integrated into many initiatives and is supported through cross-APS networks, rather than a stand-alone initiative.
PM&C and APSC to formalise regular collaboration between the APS and academia on research in better public administration.	Underway	PM&C and the APSC continue to support opportunities to improve collaboration between the APS and academia, for instance the convening of a workshop in July 2023 to discuss barriers to cooperation.

**Recommendation: 28** APS to provide robust advice to the Government that integrates and balances the social, economic and security pressures facing Australians **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
PM&C to coordinate regular whole-of-government scenario planning exercises to identify social, economic and security pressures and possible approaches and actions.	Underway	Strategic foresight will address the need for an integrated cross-cutting policy approach to foresight, to enable the APS to meet and provide advice on a range of cross-cutting future challenges, including technological, societal and geopolitical shifts that will impact Australia and our society. The model needs to be adaptable and transferrable to a wide range of issues. Strategic foresight capability is a major input to the delivery of the Long-Term Insights Briefings.
PM&C to establish a cross-disciplinary Integrated Strategy Office to provide integrated advice on complex policy issues	Complete	The Government allocated \$10.9 million over two years for an in-house consulting service within PM&C that can deliver high quality strategic consulting services to the APS. The service (now known as Australian Government Consulting) has already commenced operation and is funded to deliver 15 projects over the next two years. It will produce Guidance on Engaging External Consultants.



Secretaries Board to establish a Committee on Integrated Strategy to support Cabinet consideration of cross-portfolio issues.	Closed	The APS continues to support Cabinet consideration of cross-portfolio issues through well-established Cabinet processes, including the Priority and Delivery Committee of Cabinet which focuses on oversight and delivery of key Government policies and programs. Establishment of a bespoke Secretaries Board Committee for this purpose is not required to continue this support.
---	--------	--

**Recommendation: 29** Establish dynamic portfolio clusters to deliver government outcomes

**Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
PM&C and Secretaries Board to support the Government to set clear priorities.	Continuing	PM&C and Secretaries Board continue to support the delivery of Government priorities.
Secretaries Board to mobilise the APS to deliver priorities, including through portfolio clusters, with outcomes and accountability agreed with the Government.	Complete	The Secretaries Board makes use of its Sub-committees to deliver Government priorities, including those which have cross-portfolio considerations. These Sub-committees are supported by clear Terms of Reference and accountabilities.  The most recently established Sub-committee is the Partnership Priorities sub-committee, which is focused on place-based approaches to particular economic and social issues as reflected in its forward work program.
PM&C delivery unit to support the Government set quantifiable targets for priorities and help and measure progress to achieving them.	Complete	The APS provides data-driven support to assist the Government set and achieve targets, including through the Priority and Delivery Committee of Cabinet.

**Recommendation: 30** Ensure that Machinery of Government changes are well planned and evaluated, enabling a dynamic and flexible APS that responds swiftly to government priorities

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Government to adopt principles to inform the Prime Minister's deliberations on MoG changes	Underway	PM&C hosted a Machinery of Government (MoG) change roundtable with academic, private sector and government officials to discuss the impact of MoGs and possible solutions.
PM&C to publish evaluations of MoG changes, within 12 months to two years, to inform continuous improvement and ensure changes achieve objectives.	Underway	<i>As above.</i>  <i>Note there are currently a range of avenues to evaluate MoG changes, including Ministerial feedback, Secretary feedback and corporate planning/annual report documents.</i>





**Recommendation: 31** Review form, function and number of government bodies to make sure they remain fit for purpose

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Finance to amend the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy to include explicit guidance on the appropriate level of independence best suited to deliver different types of government functions.	Underway	<p>Assessment against the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy is required as per the Budget Process Operational Rules when seeking policy authority for a new Commonwealth entity or company or statutory office holder. Finance supports entities during assessment by reviewing and signing off that the requirements of the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy have been met so that the appropriate number and form of new government bodies is controlled.</p> <p>Finance launched the Entity Start-Up Guide in August 2020. The guide provides support to those tasked with setting up a new Commonwealth entity efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>A review of the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy digital guidance, hosted on the Finance website, is currently underway.</p>
Secretaries Board to instigate a targeted stocktake of existing Commonwealth government bodies and in-house departmental functions against the Policy.	Underway	The Australian Government Organisations Register (AGOR) provides information on the function, composition, origins and other details of approximately 1,300 Australian Government entities and bodies. A current review of the AGOR reporting categories is being scoped, with the intention to align the categories with the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy – this will go to emphasising the connections between AGOR and the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy.
Secretaries to undertake the stocktake within their portfolios and provide advice to ministers on potential changes where the principles are not met.	Underway	<i>As above.</i>

**Recommendation: 32** Streamline management and adopt best practice ways of working to reduce hierarchy, improve decision-making, and bring the right APS expertise and resources **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APSC and transformation leader to update 2014 APSC guidance on optimal management structures, and co-design guidance on best-practice ways of working for teams and agencies to do different types of work.	Complete	<p>Guidance on Optimal Management Structures has been updated and published in response to findings of the APS Hierarchy and Classification Review and consultation with staff, agencies and unions.</p> <p>Subject to the passage of legislation, changes to the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> are underway to enable decision-making to be undertaken at the lowest appropriate classification.</p>
APSC to review SES and non-SES classification levels and structures	Complete	The APSC published the Hierarchy and Classification Review in 2022. The APS will act on many of the Review's findings, but



(including Work Level Standards) against best practice and future needs.		will not make changes to classifications at this stage. Instead, the APS will take steps to achieve the Review's intent, including the implementation of more modern structures and ways of working.
Secretaries Board to consider consolidating management and operational levels across the APS on advice from the APSC review of classifications.	Complete	Consolidation of classification levels was considered by Secretaries Board in the context of the Hierarchy and Classification Review in 2022. The APS will not make changes to classifications at this stage.
Secretaries Board to set a timetable for all agencies to self-assess against best-practice management structures and ways of working, and implement plans to improve in response. Measure progress in capability reviews.	Complete	The current Capability Review framework includes consideration of management structures and ways of working.

**Recommendation: 33** Move toward common core conditions and pay scales **Overall status: Underway** over time to reduce complexity, improve efficiency and enable the APS to be a united high-performing organisation

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Government to review and set common core conditions for APS-level and EL employees for agencies to pursue during bargaining.	Complete	The APSC published a comprehensive policy to facilitate service-wide bargaining for common core terms and conditions in March 2023. This work supports the Government's commitment to act as a model employer, including through genuine bargaining to improve pay and conditions.
Government to commission APSC to develop an implementation plan for introducing service-wide minimum and maximum pay points for APS-level and EL employees.	Complete	Service-wide bargaining outcomes will result in the implementation of a base salary structure that introduces service-wide minimum and maximum pay points for APS and EL employees from 14 March 2024.
Remuneration Tribunal to determine pay ranges and common standard conditions for each SES band.	Under consideration	This has not been progressed to date.
Remuneration Tribunal to review remuneration of Secretaries in light of their shared and strengthened responsibilities as Board members.	Complete	The Remuneration Tribunal undertook a review of the remuneration arrangements for Departmental Secretaries in 2022.



**Recommendation: 34** Ensure APS capital is fully funded, sustainable and fit for purpose, and capable of delivering policy and services as intended by the Government **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Government to create a provision for future major capital acquisitions and replacements in the budget estimates, informed by a prioritised plan of whole-of-government capital expenditure.	Underway	The DTA supports the SDDC on long-term ICT investment frameworks and prioritisation, including the development of the annual Integrated Digital investment Plan which offers insights on APS investment expectations on a 10-year timeline.
Government to sustainably fund departmental capital budgets, informed by a Finance-led audit of agency minor capital requirements.	Continuing	The Department of Finance supports a rigorous Budget process that ensures sustainable funding for capital requirements. This process is supported by the active assurance and strategic role of the DTA.

**Recommendation: 35** Deliver value for money and better outcomes through a new strategic, service-wide approach to using external providers **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Finance to develop, for Secretaries Board endorsement and Government agreement, a framework for APS use of external providers. Framework to focus on better decision-making, value for money and outcomes.	Underway	<p>The Department of Finance established a whole-of-government panel arrangement for the procurement of non-ICT consultants, labour hire and contractors. An Audit of Employment was completed by the Department of Finance and the APSC to establish a baseline of how much external workforce was used in 2021-22, and for what types of work.</p> <p>The Audit informs the APSC’s work to establish and embed a Strategic Commissioning Framework which was released in October 2023. The Framework consists of flexible, principle-based guidance to assist Commonwealth agencies to make well-informed decisions about when roles should be filled by APS employees, and when the external workforce may be an appropriate option. It will provide support for agencies to follow best practice for the identified resourcing approach, such as ensuring value for money, when the external workforce is engaged.</p> <p>The Department of Finance is currently working to establish a whole-of-service approach to outcomes-based contracting. This will increase APS skills in writing statements of requirements for the circumstances when it is appropriate to use external consultants.</p> <p>The newly established Australian Government Consulting function is preparing Guidance on Engaging External Consultants.</p>



Finance Centre of Procurement Excellence to drive innovation and better outcomes in APS procurement, including aggregating and applying procurement information to deliver efficiencies.	Underway	The Centre of Procurement Excellence within Finance is working with entities to understand and develop capability needs, including through the Commonwealth Procurement Capability Self-Assessment Survey. It promotes value for money and innovation in procurement through the Commonwealth Procurement Awards for Excellence.
--	----------	--

**Recommendation: 36** Provide robust and responsive advice to support governments deliver priorities through improved budget prioritisation

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Finance to support regular APS reviews of government expenditure, including use of performance information to ensure robust advice to government on effectiveness of spending during budget processes.	Underway	<p>Finance, in consultation with PM&amp;C and the Treasury, undertook a review and work is currently underway to embed regular and consistent reviews of government programs in the Budget process.</p> <p>For large digital investments, the DTA plays a formal role to ensure Government is provided with advice on the alignment of digital and ICT spending proposals with the Government's digital policies and standards. It also plays a key assurance and reporting role to track delivery of investments.</p>
Finance to support agencies consider and use mechanisms to fund cross-portfolio priorities, move funding to respond to shifts in needs or demands, and foster innovation and agile project delivery.	Continuing	<p>Finance continues to support use of funding mechanisms that address cross-portfolio agencies. These mechanisms are enabled by the current Budget process.</p> <p>In addition, new funding mechanisms have been established to support cross-portfolio innovation and transformation projects, such as the establishment of the Capability Reinvestment Fund.</p>
Finance to enhance support to agencies to manage investments that leverage the budget balance sheet, including regularly stocktaking and reporting on these investments and risks.	Underway	<p>Earlier this year, Finance released an updated Commonwealth Investment Framework in response to the growing value of investments on the Commonwealth balance sheet that support policy objectives. The framework supports Government to realise the benefit of proposals that utilise financing and create opportunities for partnership with the private sector, where it is the most appropriate mechanism to achieve the desired policy objectives. The framework also includes an expanded set of capability-building toolkit items, providing officials with additional how-to guidance to assist in using the framework.</p> <p>Specialist investment vehicles (SIVs) make investments in projects, businesses and joint ventures to directly address Australian Government policy objectives. The Government is providing \$10.4 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to the Department of Finance to enhance accountability and effectiveness in the Australian Government's use of specialist investment vehicles, by establishing a comprehensive oversight and governance function of the specialist investment vehicle portfolio.</p>
Government to commission a review of the content and application of the	Under consideration	This has not been progressed to date.



<p><i>Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998</i>, including the: role of the charter in improving fiscal policy outcomes appropriateness of the principles that underpin the charter, and role of the Intergenerational Report as a key source of national data to inform government deliberations.</p>		
---	--	--

**Recommendation: 37** Strengthen the primacy, role and performance of Secretaries Board within the public service

**Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Secretaries Board to lead and govern the APS, ensuring its effective and efficient operation as an integrated organisation.	Continuing	The Secretaries Board is now supported by four Sub-committees driving whole-of-service priorities. These Sub-committees are playing an increasingly proactive role in the service and include the Future of Work Sub-committee; Partnership and Priorities Sub-committee; Digital and Data Sub-committee; and the COO Committee. As of October 2022, each Secretaries Board meeting is followed by a written communique summarising the outcomes of the meeting, published on the PM&C website.
Government to consider any additional legislative or ministerial authority required for the Board to function most effectively.	Complete	Initial consideration determined that further legislative or ministerial authority was not necessary for the effective function of the Secretaries Board. Further consideration may occur following the implementation of other changes to Secretary roles ( <i>see Recommendation 38</i> ).
Secretaries Board to prepare a single national outlook for inclusion in incoming government briefs.	Continuing	Ahead of the 2022 election, Secretaries Board worked collaboratively on a national outlook for the incoming government brief, which cut across a number of key national topics.

**Recommendation: 38** Clarify and reinforce APS leadership roles and responsibilities

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
Amend the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to designate the PM&C Secretary as Head of Service with the following responsibilities: principal adviser to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, overarching responsibility for ensuring that the APS is best placed to serve current and future governments final say as Chair on Secretaries Board decisions, and with the APS Commissioner, joint responsibility for advising the Prime Minister on secretary appointments.	Underway	<p>On 1 November 2023, the Minister for the Public Service announced the second phase of APS reform, including requirements for the PM&amp;C Secretary and the APS Commissioner to conduct merit-based appointments processes for Secretary roles to build rigour into the advice provided to the Prime Minister on candidates.</p> <p>This will include improving transparency and consistency in how agency head appointments, performance and suspension for executive, statutory and non-statutory agencies are conducted – including having merit-based appointment processes and creating a power to suspend agency heads, including without pay – and applying sanctions following</p>



		breaches of the Code of Conduct by agency heads for executive, statutory and non-statutory agencies.
Amend the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to designate the APS Commissioner as Head of People with responsibilities to: advise the Prime Minister on secretary appointments (in agreement with the PM&C Secretary) advise the Prime Minister on terminations of secretary appointments (in consultation with the PM&C Secretary) be Deputy Chair and acting Chair of Secretaries Board deepen APS expertise and uphold its institutional integrity, and develop the SES cohort, with power to appoint, move and terminate SES following consultation with the PM&C Secretary and agency heads.	Underway	As part of the second phase of APS reform, the Minister for the Public Service has announced:  New own motion powers for the APS Commissioner to initiate reviews and investigations into Code of Conduct breaches by current and former agency heads, including Secretaries, and APS employees;  New powers for the APS Commissioner to inquire into Code of Conduct breaches by former agency heads, including Secretaries, to match the existing powers to investigate current agency heads; and  Building safeguards into the APS Commissioner's appointment process to complement the expansion of their own motion and inquiry powers.
Amend the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to designate responsibilities of portfolio Secretaries to: provide policy leadership within portfolios, and represent the interests of portfolio agencies at Secretaries Board.	Under consideration	The current legislated designations of portfolio Secretaries works well in practice, with any changes to be considered alongside the above reforms.
APS Commissioner to establish an Advisory Board.	Complete	The APS Learning Board has been established, including senior representatives from APS agencies, private sector organisations and academic institutions, to provide advice to the APS Commissioner on APS capability priorities and help drive implementation of APS-wide capability development.

**Recommendation: 39a** Ensure confidence in the appointment of all agency heads **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
PM&C Secretary and APS Commissioner to agree and publish a policy on processes to support advice to the Prime Minister on appointments of secretaries and the APS Commissioner.	Underway	<i>Refer Recommendation 38 above for related reforms.</i>
APS Commissioner to amend the Merit and Transparency Guidelines for statutory appointments to include stricter criteria on exemptions and require a clear ranking of preferred candidates.	Under consideration	This has not been progressed to date.
Consider amending Senate Order 15 to require ministers to advise Parliament whether advice on a	Under consideration	Consideration of this guidance remains under the remit of the Senate.



statutory appointment followed the Merit and Transparency Guidelines, whether the selection panel's advice was followed, and, if not, to provide reasons.		
Prime Ministers, as a matter of practice, to consult the Leader of the Opposition on the proposed appointment of APS Commissioners.	Complete	This recommendation has been incorporated as a consideration in current practices related to the appointment of a Commissioner to the APS.

**Recommendation: 39b** Ensure that performance management of secretaries is robust and comprehensive **Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
PM&C Secretary and APS Commissioner to undertake robust and comprehensive performance management of secretaries.	Underway	On 1 November 2023, the Minister for the Public Service announced that a Secretary's Performance Framework will be published alongside processes to put in place better handling of sustained underperformance of Secretaries, including appropriate consequences.
PM&C Secretary and APS Commissioner to publish the framework for managing the performance of secretaries under the Public Service Act 1999.	Underway	<i>As above.</i>
APS Commissioner to develop an induction program for new secretaries.	Underway	A new induction program for Secretaries is being implemented.

**Recommendation: 39c** Ensure that robust processes govern the termination of secretaries' appointments **Overall status: Complete**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APS Commissioner to support effective minister-secretary working relationships.	Continuing	The PM&C Secretary and the APS Commissioner support effective Minister-Secretary working relationships.  <i>Refer Recommendation 38 above for related reforms.</i>
Where issues in these relationships arise, APS Commissioner: will work with minister and secretary to resolve issue or find other solution (e.g. offering secretary a comparable position), and may, if the minister and secretary agree and no other solution available, recommend the Prime Minister agree to providing the secretary a resignation benefit on a no fault-basis.	Continuing	This guidance reflects current practice and the existing legislative framework.  <i>Refer Recommendation 38 above for related reforms.</i>
To ensure robust processes govern termination of secretary appointments: amend the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> to	Complete	<i>Refer Recommendation 38 and 39b above for related reforms.</i>



require termination only on specific legislated grounds, consistent with underlying principle that secretaries be entitled to serve the term specified in their instrument of appointment, or APS Commissioner and PM&C Secretary to agree and publish a policy setting out steps to be undertaken prior to advising to the Prime Minister on a proposed termination.		
---	--	--

**Recommendation: 40** Reform and energise the APSC as a high-performing and accountable central enabling agency

**Overall status: Underway**

Thodey guidance	Status	Delivery on Thodey
APSC to initiate and implement a comprehensive organisational transformation to position it as a high-performing central enabling agency.	Underway	A capability review of the APSC was completed and published online in July 2023. The Review and accompanying action plan will support the enhancement of the APSC as a high-performing central enabling agency.
PM&C, Finance and APSC to develop and seek Government support and funding for a sustainable resourcing model for the APSC.	Complete	Secretaries Board agreed to support a sustainable funding model for the APSC, including agreement to reducing agency annual appropriations to increase the APSC's appropriation. Further discussions are underway on potential funding model reforms to enhance the APSC's central and enabling role in providing consistent capability uplift.