



Australian Government  
Australian Public Service Commission

# APS Location Framework



© Commonwealth of Australia 2024



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and where otherwise noted, all material presented in the *APS Location Framework* by the Australian Public Service Commission is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0). To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

### **Enquiries**

For enquiries concerning reproduction and rights in Commission products and services, please contact: [externalcomms@apsc.gov.au](mailto:externalcomms@apsc.gov.au)

# Contents

- Purpose ..... 2**
- Audience..... 3**
- Approach..... 3**
- Outcomes ..... 3**
- Things to get right..... 4**
- APS Location Principles ..... 5**
- A model for good practice ..... 6**
  - 1. Understand your environment..... 7
  - 2. Decide agency posture..... 9
  - 3. Connect business areas and resources..... 12
  - 4. Support managers and staff..... 14
- Good practice terminology..... 17**
- Supporting resources ..... 17**

# Purpose

A workforce with the right skills and capabilities is crucial for agencies in the Australian Public Service – it enables us to perform well and meet the expectations of communities and Government.

Australia has a diverse and talented workforce, but there can be a mismatch between where people with particular skills and capabilities reside and where agency offices are located. While some people are willing to move to take up APS roles, many have deep ties to community where they currently live. Connection to Country can be a key consideration for First Nations peoples when it comes to their employment.

Employing staff in a broader range of locations can help agencies fill critical skill gaps, support connection to Country and community, strengthen diversity and support stakeholder relationships. This can also be a powerful retention tool for agencies in a position to maintain the employment relationship when staff relocate.

Many agencies are already using this approach to great effect, employing a capable and diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves. This involves understanding current and future skill needs, knowing where those skills reside, and setting the agency up to take advantage of those opportunities. In doing this, it is important to strike a balance of the advantages of a dispersed workforce and locating staff in ways that support connection, networking and in-person collaboration where possible. This is easier when agencies are proactive about deciding where their workforce will be located into the future and what support is needed to do that well.

In many instances, the Commonwealth property footprint can be leveraged to support this approach. Tools such as the [Property Marketplace](#), run by the Department of Finance, enable agencies to identify existing office space that meets their needs and consider sharing space with other agencies, where appropriate. This minimises surplus office space in line with the requirements of the [Commonwealth Property Management Framework](#).

## Spotlight on ICT and Digital roles

**ICT & Digital roles are expected to experience strong growth to 2033, with competition for talent expected to remain high.<sup>1</sup>**

In December 2023, 60.4% of APS ICT & Digital roles were based in the ACT.<sup>2</sup> However, in Australia most of the people with these skills are available in NSW and VIC.<sup>3</sup> APS agencies are already adjusting where their ICT and Digital roles are based, to get the skills they need. Data shows there has been an increase in the number of APS ICT & Digital roles advertised outside of the ACT.<sup>2,4</sup> This indicates agencies are being more strategic and flexible with their hiring decisions as they acknowledge that roles are not always location dependent.

**7.4%** decrease in ICT and Digital roles advertised *within* the ACT. The 2022-23 financial year saw greater inclusion of states and territories other than the ACT in vacancies advertised on APS Jobs<sup>4</sup>

**67%** of APS agencies report ICT & Digital critical skill gaps<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [Employment Projections | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)

<sup>2</sup> [APS Employment Database, December 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> ABS Labour Force Sept 2023 Release, EQ08 May 2023

<sup>4</sup> APS Jobs 2023 Note

<sup>5</sup> 2023 Agency Survey

# Audience

The APS Location Framework should be used by corporate teams, to support agency head and executive decisions on workforce location. It requires a coordinated approach within the agency across workforce planning, human resources, property, finance, security, ICT and work health and safety teams. Agencies should engage broadly with different areas of the organisation as they work through the framework. Consultation with employees and relevant unions on workplace matters that significantly affect or materially impact them is also sound management practice. Agencies should consult with staff in accordance with their enterprise agreements.

# Approach

The APS Location Framework equips agencies to use workforce location as a tool to attract and retain people who have the skills the APS needs, now and into the future. It connects agency heads and their corporate teams to tools that can support their decisions on appropriate workforce locations within Australia and shows what it looks like to manage a dispersed workforce well. Decisions on work locations and the skills required will be specific to each agency, building on existing practices that are well embedded in many agencies.

The framework takes a principles-based approach. It provides a model for good practice that supports agencies to:

- articulate a deliberate agency posture on workforce location, based on analysis of the operating and influencing environment
- review practices and processes to deliver on the agency posture while ensuring staff are supported appropriately regardless of work location
- engage with good practice resources to support managers and staff.

Much like the workforce planning cycle, this model is cyclic: as the internal and external environments change, adjustments may be required. Many agencies will already be operating in this way as part of their workforce planning process, feeding into the corporate planning cycle and the agency's property management plan.

This approach complements the common clause on flexible working arrangements in APS enterprise agreements, which allows employees to request to work remotely or from other locations. Setting the agency's posture on workforce location is about planning and preferences – it does not prohibit consideration of other location options on a case-by-case basis. Employees are entitled to request flexible work arrangements that might fall outside the agency's location preferences. The agency posture on workforce location is a backdrop for those conversations and can help guide discussions about reasonable adjustments and supports.

# Outcomes

To confirm the framework is supporting agencies to build and manage their workforce, the APSC will monitor use of the framework and patterns in workforce location, drawing on data from the APS Agency Survey and the APS Employee Database.

# Things to get right

Where and how we work is ever-evolving. Technological and social shifts can be a catalyst for rapid change. This regularly presents new challenges, emerging trends and signals for the future. The APS needs to enable workforces with the right practices and processes to efficiently adapt to and embrace change. This helps us secure the skills agencies need now and into the future.

There are key things that agencies need to get right regardless of workforce location and changes in operating context over time:

- A workforce with the right skills
- Inclusive and diverse workplaces
- Connected and cohesive teams
- Effective work practices
- Employer obligations such as WHS including psychosocial safety
- Security, privacy and integrity settings
- Efficient use of resources

Some of these are more difficult under particular location settings and some locations may not be appropriate for some roles and circumstances. To succeed in getting things right, agencies are being challenged to balance a range of factors and pressures specific to their business needs. These factors may include functional requirements of particular roles or teams that influence where they need to be located. Agencies should also consider the benefits that office or face to face connections can provide to staff, teams and the agency.

Embracing workforce dispersion where appropriate paves the way for the many benefits of workforce diversity and can assist in attracting and retaining the staff needed to deliver for the Australian community. This framework articulates approaches many agencies are already using, sharing them across the APS to support good practice.

Figure 1



# APS Location Principles

Secretaries have agreed five principles to guide agencies' decision-making on workforce location.

## **Principle 1: Attract skills by accessing national talent**

The APS should be equipped to attract and retain relevant skills where they occur in the labour market, rather than managing workforce location solely on existing office footprint.

## **Principle 2: Consider proximity to stakeholders and partners**

Consideration should be given to any requirement for a function to be in a particular physical location to deliver services or outcomes.

## **Principle 3: Leverage existing property footprint, foster collaboration and APS culture**

The APS will prioritise collaboration and a joined up approach to property and sharing space, to enable a talent-driven workforce planning approach and positive workplace experience. This supports APS culture and provides efficient and effective use of space to support the changing way we are working. This includes support for common information technology systems between agencies where possible.

## **Principle 4: Support flexible work wherever reasonable**

Consistent with the APS Flexible Work Principles and the common clause on flexible work arrangements the APS will support flexible work as a core part of the way we do business. Flexibility applies to all roles, with different types of flexibility suitable for different roles. Systems and processes that support flexible work will help teams to work from different locations, where appropriate.

## **Principle 5: Ensure workplaces strengthen diversity and inclusion**

The APS should ensure workplaces support participation for all diversity groups. Workplaces support increased diversity and inclusion by, where possible, addressing specific location, cultural sensitivities, caring responsibilities, accessibility requirements and other workplace requirements.

# A model for good practice

The framework’s model for good practice guides users through four phases, suggesting actions and providing examples of good practice.

Corporate and enabling teams are encouraged to use the model starting at Phase 1. As shifts in the operating environment occur, phases may need to be revisited.



The following icons will indicate the suggested cohorts to action each phase.



**Agency level**



**Corporate Teams**



**Managers**



**Individuals**

The model draws on practices that are already embedded in many APS agencies, sharing knowledge of good practice across the service.

**Resources**  
Resource 1 provides links to supporting resources for each phase.



# 1. Understand your environment



## Good practice

- The agency can articulate the current state of workforce dispersion, including the operating requirements, the experience of staff and corporate and enabling functions
- The agency is aware of the critical skills it needs and where in Australia those skills reside
- The agency has a clear sense of options for future work locations and pros and cons of each

This phase prompts agencies to:

- complete an environmental scan to better understand current location arrangements, experiences and opportunities

Many agencies already incorporate environmental scanning in workforce and business planning processes. This section draws on those established practices.

## Resources

Resource 2 provides example questions for understanding the operating environment.

This includes points for reflection in relation to:

- strategies and plans
- workforce planning
- recruitment
- employee value proposition
- property
- finance
- agencies sharing office space
- ICT and cyber security
- protective security
- work health and safety
- culture
- employee experience
- development

## Environmental scanning

This framework is intended to complement and inform workforce planning. To make well-grounded workforce location decisions, it is essential to understand the environment in which those decisions are being made. Being aware of external influences allows agencies to manage short term impacts and plan for longer term shifts.

Environmental scanning and analysis provides insight into the factors that influence the geographical location of the agency's workforce. Scanning the operating and influencing environments provides a holistic point-in-time view of the agency's operating model aligned with the steps 1–3 in the [Workforce Planning Cycle](#).

Knowing what is working and not working currently is an important input. Consider the experiences of the agency, corporate teams and staff in relation to the 'things to get right' at Figure 1.

## Resources

The [APS Centre of Excellence for Workforce Planning](#) connects members of its Community of Practice to tools and resources to help environmental scanning and APS labour force insights to support planning for the agency's workforce.

The [Workforce Planning Guide](#) provides examples of analysis tools and how they can be used in an APS workforce context. Agency workforce planning teams may have their own preferred analysis tool or processes for conducting environmental scans.

The [APS Academy](#) runs the Start Up Program to support workforce planning capability.

## Labour market research

Labour market data provides valuable insights for decision-making on recruitment and location. Awareness of the labour market and potential trend impacts (such as job demand, skills shortages and employment patterns) helps with tailoring strategies to attract and retain the workforce that is needed. Consider proximity to educational institutions, which can create natural skill pipelines in particular locations.

## Future-focused

*'Strategic foresight is a structured and systematic way of using ideas about the future to anticipate possible opportunities and challenges and better prepare for change.'* (OECD, 2024<sup>6</sup>)

Integrating strategic foresight into environmental scanning and strategic planning provides opportunity to anticipate changes in the internal and external environment, and asks agencies to balance current needs with the pull of the future. Many agencies will capture this information through well-developed strategic workforce plans.

**Table 1: Example questions for detailing the current state**

| Steps        | Defining the current state  |
|--------------|---|
| <b>What</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the current challenges?</li><li>• What are the opportunities that could be explored?</li><li>• What timeframes are important?</li><li>• What is working/not working regarding workforce location decisions for the agency, corporate teams and individuals?</li></ul>  |
| <b>Where</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where are staff and agency offices currently located?</li><li>• Where are the critical capabilities the agency needs located?</li></ul>   |
| <b>When</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When are workforce location decisions made?</li></ul>   |
| <b>Who</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is accountable for workforce location decisions?</li></ul>  |
| <b>How</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does workforce location relate to agency business objectives?</li><li>• How are key initiatives impacted or enabled by workforce location?</li><li>• How does the agency track workforce location data (is this sufficient)?</li><li>• How does the agency make workforce location decisions (is there a standard process)?</li><li>• How does the agency manage individual requests for flexibility?</li><li>• How does current staff workforce location align with planning (e.g. workforce, property)?</li></ul> |

Once there is an understanding of the current state, the future state can be explored.

<sup>6</sup> [What is Foresight? - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(oecd.org\)](#)

## 2. Decide agency posture



### Good Practice

- The agency has a clear position on workforce location — this is the agency’s location posture
- The agency can articulate the desired future state in relation to workforce dispersion
- The agency is aware of the trade-offs and implications of the chosen posture and actively manages and mitigates them
- The agency’s agreed posture is considered when making individual decisions (e.g. recruitment, relocation, flexible work arrangements)

This phase asks agencies to:

- articulate a deliberate agency posture on workforce location

**Agency posture** refers to the parameters the agency places on workforce location — what’s preferred and what will be accepted in certain circumstances. This covers office locations, whether teams will be located together, willingness to share office space with other agencies (hosting or being hosted), consideration of the agency’s ways of working, and how flexible working arrangements can be supported. Each agency should agree or refresh its posture on workforce location, bearing in mind the associated benefits, corporate planning and budget restraints, noting there may be exceptions to the posture based on individual requests.

### Agency posture should be:

- aligned to the agency’s strategic direction and employee value proposition
- a foundation for all workforce location decisions
- considerate of the agency’s barriers and opportunities for a dispersed workforce
- agreed by the agency head and senior executives or their delegate(s)
- informed by workforce planning
- an input into property and security planning
- communicated and used agency-wide

### Agency posture should not be:

- guided by personal preferences
- used to replace mandatory or legislative requirements, such as enterprise agreement conditions

Senior leadership engagement plays a crucial role in defining the agreed posture on workforce location. Ensuring all leaders have input, understand and support the posture is crucial for success.

### In defining the agency posture, consider the following:

- Does the agency have a clear picture of the current state?
- Does it differ from a desired future state?
- What are the benefits of the desired future state? Who benefits?
- Is there a case for change? What are the consequences of not changing?
- What needs to change (including behaviours) and how will staff be supported through change?

Some of the factors in Figure 1 will be weighted more heavily than others based on the circumstances. This can vary over time.

**Table 2: Prompts to help inform and articulate the agency's posture**

| Prompts  | Suggested questions to help inform and articulate the agency's posture   |
|--|--|
| <b>Workforce factors</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What skills does the agency need?</li> <li>• Where in Australia do these skills reside? Where are the supply pipelines?</li> <li>• How can location help strengthen and harness workforce diversity?</li> <li>• Is the agency well positioned to retain staff by supporting relocation requests?</li> <li>• What locations are required to deliver our business?</li> <li>• Is location a factor in stakeholder and partner relationships?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Factors to focus on</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which factors does the agency need to prioritise and focus on right now?<br/><i>Multiple may apply – rank and update as needed</i></li> <li>• Functional requirements</li> <li>• Skill gaps and opportunities</li> <li>• Property costs and commitments</li> <li>• Employee expectations</li> <li>• Proximity to stakeholders and partners</li> <li>• Government priorities and strategies</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Geographic location/s</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are our staff based?</li> <li>• Where are our SES based?</li> <li>• Where are our roles based? (relates to usual work location)</li> <li>• Where does the agency have offices?</li> <li>• Does the agency share office space with other agencies?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Office arrangements</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our accommodation preferences? <i>Multiple may apply</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff are usually attached to an office</li> <li>○ Remote work is supported</li> <li>○ A desk is provided for each employee / desks are shared</li> <li>○ Extra desk costs are funded centrally / by line areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>Managing implications of location decisions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What extra support is needed for staff in particular scenarios?</li> <li>• Dispersed/hybrid teams may need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adjustments to work practices (e.g. virtual stand-ups, Kanban tools, virtual-first approach to meetings)</li> <li>○ Training for managers and staff</li> <li>○ Collaboration tools (e.g. video conferencing, instant messaging, virtual whiteboard tools)</li> <li>○ Advice on security, WHS, privacy when working from home</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Remote staff/teams may also need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support to build networks and relationships</li> <li>○ Approaches to maintain physical and mental health</li> <li>○ Ways to understand in-person norms / on-site culture</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

**Prompts****Suggested questions to help inform and articulate the agency's posture**

- Deliberate approaches to capability development
  - Contingency plans for ICT issues
  - Travel budget
  - Staff/teams sharing office space with another agency may also need:
    - Clarity on site leadership and pastoral care arrangements
    - Tailored security advice
-

### 3. Connect business areas and resources



#### Good practice

- The agency's corporate teams collaborate on workforce location
- The agency has aligned policies that support agency posture
- The agency understands the level of corporate support needed by staff in different locations, including those working outside the agency posture
- The agency actively manages the change from current state to future state

This phase encourages agencies to:

- adapt practices and processes to deliver on the agency posture while ensuring staff are supported appropriately regardless of work location

#### Actions and process

Comparing the current and desired future state provides insights into what actions are needed to support the agency posture and work towards the desired future state. Coordinating corporate teams to develop and define the actions, strengthens relationships, helps to mitigate risks and supports the agency posture.

#### Resources

Resource 3 provides a gap analysis template that can be adapted by agencies.

Resource 4 provides support for agencies who are considering property solutions outside of their current office location.

Once the actions have been defined, corporate teams should be able to review connection points for making decisions on workforce location and agree on a general process for initiating recruitment decisions and actioning new location requests. These processes may also vary depending on the size of the agency, extent of current workforce dispersion and how the agency chooses to balance the factors described at Figure 1.

#### Corporate team considerations

Corporate teams are encouraged to review their processes and policies to ensure:

- compatibility with the agreed agency posture, and other corporate team processes
- forward plans consider the desired future state and link to relevant workforce plans
- there are clear steps for decision making
- they are inclusive of all staff, regardless of work location arrangement
- alignment with broader APS strategies and requirements, including the Protective Security Policy Framework
- they understand any additional support needed by staff in particular circumstances.

The following example highlights potential corporate implications of posture decisions, and extra support that may be required for staff working outside agency preferences.

**Example agency posture:** Preference for staff to be attached to an office, not remote

Implications of posture:

- Limits where roles will be advertised
- If the agency needs to secure skills/capabilities in a new location, extra property costs may arise
- Where agencies share office space, security arrangements must be considered.

Considerations:

- When remote working arrangements are approved, the agency may wish to allocate a travel budget to bring people together periodically and/or adjust team work practices so connecting virtually becomes the norm.

## 4. Support managers and staff



### Good practice

- Managers are capable and confident to lead hybrid and dispersed teams
- Staff wellbeing and psychological safety is supported through policies, support programs and manager capability aligned to the employee life-cycle
- Work environments are inclusive and culturally safe for staff in all locations
- Roles and responsibilities are clear for staff who work as part of a dispersed or hybrid team
- Virtual communication and collaboration tools are well-integrated and used effectively

This phase:

- explores opportunities to build manager capability
- highlights mutual responsibility and accountability for all staff.

Good management is not necessarily location dependent. However, different practices, capabilities and tools can be needed in a dispersed team. Managers are encouraged to be open to building on current skills and ways of working, to ensure that all members are able to engage in a proactive and collaborative manner, regardless of location arrangements. Getting this right supports workforce cohesion, connection and culture and fosters psychological safety. The importance of the following management practices is amplified in a dispersed team:

- having awareness of unconscious bias and being inclusive of all team members
- being mindful of cultural sensitivities and accommodating different cultural preferences
- being clear on accountability
- setting clear expectations on deliverables and methods of delivery
- acceptance of new ways of working to maintain connection, instilling an understanding of contribution and purpose, managing performance, and providing a psychologically safe working environment
- being stewards of the APS - understanding the future impacts of the decisions we make now about usual work location.

As managers shift their ways of working, they should make sure their own performance and self-care needs are addressed, and discussed with their supervisor as required.

### Resources

Resource 1 provides links to resources on leading and working in dispersed teams.

### Challenges and Opportunities

The shift to a more dispersed workforce has occurred rapidly over recent years. To ensure that employer obligations, operational and workforce requirements are in harmony, it is essential to understand where and how this shift may effect agency culture and individual behaviour. Many agencies are already using workforce data, including APS census results, to identify where operational challenges exist and provide opportunity to understand not only the needs of individual staff, but also areas for greater attention across the employee life-cycle.

Some of these challenges are outlined in Table 3.



**Table 3: Challenges and opportunities with a dispersed workforce**

| Focus area            | Challenge  | Opportunity   | Outcomes   |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>New starters</b>   | Experiences for staff new to an agency may be vastly different depending on work location arrangement.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be intentional with time and planning for the experience of new starters beyond initial on boarding</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate risk</li> <li>• Promote engagement</li> <li>• Increase retention</li> </ul>  |
| <b>APS identity</b>   | Social learning theory <sup>7</sup> suggests that people observe behaviour either directly through social interactions or indirectly by observing behaviours. For staff working in locations outside of their agency office setting, observing expected behaviours in various workplace settings and establishing connection to the workplace can be more difficult.                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide staff with induction material and highlight importance by providing dedicated time for completion, and follow up discussion with manager</li> <li>• Creating opportunity for staff to find connection, purpose and a sense of belonging – to the APS, agency and the team in their work location</li> <li>• Seek opportunities for connection with peers outside of the direct team</li> <li>• Consider 'buddy' or mentor systems to learn from those with greater experience in the agency and the APS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish relationships</li> <li>• Build connection with the agency and the APS</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Accountability</b> | Regardless of manager visibility, all staff are accountable for ensuring their own behaviours and actions reflect expectations in the APS Code of Conduct and APS Values. This also relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• privacy and security</li> <li>• reporting WHS incidents</li> <li>• notifying absences and changes to work location outside agreed arrangements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set expectations for behaviour, accountability and responsibility early</li> <li>• Regularly review and remind staff of their personal responsibility to uphold APS expectations</li> <li>• Clearly communicate accountability requirements and seek acknowledgement from individual staff</li> <li>• Hold staff accountable through feedback and action</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote APS stewardship</li> <li>• Increase alignment to APS Code of Conduct and APS Values</li> <li>• Ensuring visibility for emergency situations</li> <li>• Manage the ongoing suitability of personnel to hold a security clearance and access security classified information</li> </ul> |

<sup>7</sup> Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory In Psychology ([simplypsychology.org](http://simplypsychology.org))

| Focus area       | Challenge   | Opportunity  | Outcomes   |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Integrity</b> | <p>A pro-integrity culture requires psychological safety where employees are able to provide frank and fearless advice, express concerns, ask questions, or to seek help without fear of negative consequences.</p> <p>A psychologically safe work environment requires conscious effort by all for staff to feel comfortable to 'speak up' – which can be less comfortable in a virtual environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the factors required for staff members to feel included and comfortable raising concerns or asking for help from different workplace settings, including cultural factors/communication styles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For online interactions, actions such as turning off background filters so the environment is visible, and wearing a headset so that staff are not on speaker, can help staff to feel less vulnerable</li> <li>○ Set clear and realistic expectations. Asking for advice or assistance can be difficult when working remotely and staff feel more confident and valued when they know what they are doing and why.</li> <li>○ Create trust and assume best intentions. Help the team set home/work boundaries. Enforce and model them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate risk</li> <li>• Contribute to a pro-integrity culture, innovation and transparency in the agency and APS</li> <li>• Lay a foundation for honest communication and trust</li> <li>• Staff empowered to safely speak up</li> </ul> |
| <b>Diversity</b> | <p>Individuals and cohorts can have different expectations and needs in a dispersed environment.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessibility</li> <li>• cultural considerations</li> <li>• generational differences</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider communication needs and preferences</li> <li>• Awareness of individual needs including technology, values and approaches to reasonable adjustments</li> <li>• Consider ways staff aspirations can be supported in relation to culture, community and Country</li> <li>• Review the employee life-cycle for moments that matter and consider how agency policies and processes align, considering differing work settings</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive and supportive workplaces</li> <li>• Enhanced attraction and retention</li> </ul>   |

# Good practice terminology

A general guide to good practice terminology on work location is outlined below.

Agencies should be conscious of the way language can affect staff particularly when it implies some locations are normal and others are not. For instance, referring to staff as ‘outposted’ if they don’t work in Canberra can create or perpetuate divides in workplace culture.

**Table 4: Examples of good practice terminology**

| When talking about:  | Good practice is:   |
|--|---|
| Geographic work location                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brisbane &lt;or other city&gt; staff</li> <li>• WA-based &lt;or other state-based&gt; staff</li> </ul> |
| Staff who work away from an office at all times                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote staff</li> </ul>  |
| Teams or staff that work partly from home                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid work arrangement</li> </ul>   |
| A team that has staff in several locations                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team is geographically dispersed</li> <li>• Team works virtually</li> </ul>                            |
| An office space or building shared by two or more APS agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies are co-located / share office space</li> </ul>  |

Agencies will have their own terminology that is meaningful and preferred in their context, but are encouraged to consider the impact language may have on inclusion and engagement. Agreed language should be considered alongside an agency’s posture.

In adopting agreed language it can be useful to distinguish between an employee’s usual work location (which can be an office, home or another location) and any temporary changes agreed through a flexible work agreement.

- Usual work location is typically specified in a letter of offer when an employee is engaged. It can be varied on a permanent basis with agreement from the agency head or their delegate in-line with the agency’s enterprise agreement and section 25 of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). An employee’s usual work location can be different from the usual work location of the rest of their team, without necessarily being a flexible work arrangement.
- A flexible work arrangement can also vary work location but typically on a temporary basis in line with the agency’s enterprise agreement and [Fair Work Act 2009](#).

## Supporting resources

The following resources are available on the APSC website to support agencies, managers and teams working in line with this approach.

- Resource 1      Supporting resources table
- Resource 2      Questions for understanding the operating environment
- Resource 3      Gap analysis template
- Resource 4      Property resources

Visit <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-location-framework>