



# Terms of Reference

## Capability and Workforce Committee

### *Formerly Future of Work Sub-committee*

#### Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated existing workforce trends in the Australian Public Service (APS) and caused agencies across the service to re-evaluate many aspects of work. Against this background, the risks to the APS workforce were elevated with agencies reporting rising vacancies, critical skill gaps, changing workforce expectations, rising salary pressures (APS and contractors) and a fiercely competitive labour market.

The role of the Capability and Workforce Committee is to be a catalyst in driving organisational and workforce reform priorities for the APS, so it can address these pressures and emerging workforce demands, including the rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence and the importance of psychologically safe environments. Priority actions of the Committee directly support the Government's APS Reform agenda, including positioning the APS as a model employer (priority 3) and ensuring the APS has the capability it needs to do its job well (priority 4).

The Committee's work builds on existing efforts to develop APS capability including the APS Workforce Strategy, and the work program delivered by the Chief Operating Officers (COO) Committee, the APS professional streams, APS Learning Board and other bodies.

#### Work streams

The Committee will provide advice to Secretaries Board on opportunities to strengthen APS workforce and organisational capability through two key work streams:

1. Attraction, Employment and Retention
2. Capability

A list of priority actions under each work stream is provided at [Attachment A](#). The Committee's work should take into account findings and recommendations from other APS reviews and initiatives, including the [APS Integrity Taskforce report](#), the [Government's interim response to the safe and responsible AI in Australia discussion paper](#), and work being delivered through the APS Professions and the COO Committee.

#### Roles

The Committee acts on behalf of the Secretaries Board, in collaboration with APS reform partners, to drive priority actions that will ensure the APS is a model employer and has the capability it needs to do its job well. It sets the strategic direction, progresses priority actions, including strategic oversight of pilots, makes decisions on

---

programs that are ready for rollout across the APS and ensures the work program is aligned with the Secretaries Board (including other sub-committees) and the APS Reform Plan.

The Committee will work with other bodies, as required, and draw on the expertise of the Capability and Workforce Committee Taskforce, APS Reform Office, APS Academy and other key agencies to:

- explore data-driven approaches to understanding workforce pressures across the enterprise
- address and drive change on priority actions to create the best value proposition for the APS in the employment market
- address and drive change on priority actions that reinforce the APS reform agenda
- develop organisational and workforce capability of the APS in key areas, including policy, managerial and cultural capability, build strategic knowledge and support diverse cohorts
- provide advice to the Secretaries Board for new or expanded initiatives that will ensure that the APS is a model employer and able to meet existing and emerging workforce demands, and
- provide strategic oversight of pilots or trials as agreed by the Committee and/or Secretaries Board.

### **Sponsors**

Members of the Committee will become sponsors of priority actions where there is alignment with agency policy responsibilities. Where priority actions do not neatly align with policy responsibilities, the Co-Chairs may ask other members to assume sponsorship responsibility. Sponsors will:

- work with the Capability and Workforce Committee Taskforce, and other bodies as required, to drive work on opportunities, risks and recommendations for consideration by the Committee
- determine when to refer issues to other bodies for action and advice, including Secretaries Board and other Secretaries Board sub-committees
- maintain oversight of priority actions and provide appropriate updates to the Committee as required
- provide recommendations to the Committee on when the priority action is complete and should be removed from the Committee's work plan.

It is expected that all members of the Committee will have sponsorship responsibilities. Co-Chairs may decide to co-opt agency heads who are not members of the Committee, but have relevant expertise or portfolio linkages to projects, to oversee those projects.

### **Taskforce and partner agencies**

The Committee and sponsors of priority actions will be supported by a Capability and Workforce Committee Taskforce established within the Australian Public Service Commission, which includes permanent Commission staff and secondees from member agencies and across the APS. Sponsors are expected to contribute resources to be embedded in the Taskforce to support delivery of priorities and ensure alignment and engagement with the work within their agency.

The Taskforce will undertake work as directed by the Committee, including policy development, data and economic analysis, research and secretariat support. It will collaborate with staff from across the Commission, including the APS Reform Office, and partner agencies.

### **Priority action reporting**

The Taskforce and/or teams from partner agencies will report regularly on active priority action items. The Committee will not receive regular progress updates on priority actions that are pending comeback. Sponsors reserve the right to bring back a priority action to the Committee when strategic discussions and decisions, including the decision to close, are required.

---

## **Other APS governance boards and committees**

In addition to consulting with other Secretaries Board sub-committees, the Committee and/or sponsors may engage other bodies to contribute to future of work priorities, including:

- COO Committee: to provide advice on operationalisation and implementation of priorities and to drive pilots;
- APS Learning Board: to design and implement APS wide learning and development opportunities; and
- Heads of Professions: to design and implement APS wide learning and development priorities to lift APS capability in critical areas.

The Committee may also decide to establish project steering committees to maintain oversight, drive progress, and determine when to engage the Committee for further action and advice.

A Capability and Workforce Committee Governance diagram is provided at [Attachment A](#).

## **Membership**

### **Co-Chairs:**

- Ms Katherine Jones PSM, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department
- Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM, Australian Public Service Commissioner

### **Members:**

- Mr Jim Betts, Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
- Ms Jody Broun, Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Ms Jacqui Curtis, Head of HR Profession, Chief Operating Officer, Australian Taxation Office
- Mr Chris Fechner, Head of Digital Profession, Chief Executive Officer, Digital Transformation Agency
- Mr Adam Fennessy PSM, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Mr Ray Griggs AO CSC, Secretary, Department of Social Services
- Dr David Gruen AO, Head of Data Profession, Australian Statistician, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Ms Natalie James, Secretary, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Ms Stephanie Foster PSM, Secretary, Department of Home Affairs
- Mr David Hazlehurst, Chief Executive Officer, Services Australia
- Ms Jenny Wilkinson PSM, Secretary, Department of Finance

Changes to membership are agreed by the Co-Chairs in consultation with members.

A quorum will be more than 50 per cent of members, including at least one of the Co-Chairs.

### **Observers:**

Co-Chairs may invite observers to attend and participate in Committee meetings, such as Chairs of the COO Committee or other sub-committees, APS Learning Board or other members of the APS Executive directly responsible for policy or project delivery.

---

## Responsibilities of members

Committee members are representatives and stewards of the APS as a whole, as well as their individual agencies. Membership is position-based. In order to support the effectiveness of the Committee and align with revised Secretaries Board arrangements, proxies are discouraged from attending on behalf of members, but may attend at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.

## Decision making authority

The Committee is authorised by the Secretaries Board to progress and make decisions regarding the responsibilities outlined in these Terms of Reference. Substantive recommendations will be presented to Secretaries Board for decision, as required.

## Meetings

No more than three months will pass between meetings. Meetings will be scheduled around Secretaries Board meetings.

## Reporting

To ensure alignment with the APS Reform agenda and provide sufficient visibility of progress, the Committee will report to the Secretaries Board at six-monthly intervals.

Meeting outcomes may also be reported verbally to the Secretaries Board, APS Learning Board and Heads of Professions, through the Co-Chairs, and to the COO Committee.

A communique outlining the key discussion points and decisions of the Committee will be published to the [Australian Public Service Commission website](#), following each meeting, consistent with Secretaries Board governance and reporting arrangements.

## Secretariat

The Capability and Workforce Committee Taskforce will provide secretariat support to the Committee.

Agendas and papers will be provided approximately five business days ahead of each meeting, or as agreed by the Co-Chairs. Draft minutes and actions will be circulated approximately five business days after each meeting, or as agreed by the Co-Chairs. Draft minutes will be put forward for endorsement by members at the subsequent meeting.

## Review

Terms of reference agreed by Sub-committee	12 April 2022
Revised Terms of reference agreed by Sub-committee	18 October 2022
Revised Terms of reference agreed by Sub-committee	13 July 2023
Revised Terms of reference agreed by Secretaries Board	11 October 2023
Revised Terms of reference agreed by Sub-committee	3 May 2024
Revised Terms of reference agreed by Secretaries Board	10 July 2024

The Terms of Reference may be reviewed at the discretion of the Co-Chairs in consultation with members.

## Document Control

Version	Date of Endorsement	Endorsed by	Key changes
0.2	12 April 2022	Sub-committee	Nil
0.3	18 October 2022	Sub-committee	Update to Sub-committee role, membership and governance Revised scope to include new work stream (Capability)
0.4	13 July 2023 11 Oct 2023	Sub-committee Secretaries Board	Update to Sub-committee membership, quorum and reporting requirements Update to governance diagram (Attachment A) Update to priority action decision framework (Attachment B)
0.5	3 May 2024 10 July 2024	Sub-committee Secretaries Board	Substantive review and update of the Terms of Reference Changing the name of the Committee and taskforce Update to Committee membership Refresh of priority actions, including addition of the psychological safety project (Attachment A)

# SECRETARIES BOARD CAPABILITY AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Co-chairs: Secretary Katherine Jones and APS Commissioner Gordon de Brouwer.

**AIM:** to be a catalyst in driving organisational and workforce reform priorities for the APS, that meet the Government’s expectations that the APS is a model employer (APS Reform Plan priority 3) and has the capability to do its job well (APS Reform Plan priority 4).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	COMMITTEE WORK STREAMS		SUPPORT & RESOURCING	
	ATTRACTION, RETENTION, EMPLOYMENT	CAPABILITY		
<p><b>CAPABILITY AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set strategic direction and oversight of committee priorities including pilots to ensure the APS is a model employer and has capability it needs to do its job well.</li> <li>Progress priorities, refer to other bodies for advice, and make decisions on behalf of Secretaries Board on committee priorities that are ready for rollout across the service.</li> <li>Make recommendations to the Secretaries Board as appropriate and ensure alignment with the Board, its sub-committees and the APS Reform Agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APS employee value proposition</li> <li>APS Location Framework</li> <li>APS Reskilling</li> <li>Attract and retain in-demand workers &amp; other specialists                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist career pathways</li> <li>Attract and retain in-demand works</li> </ul> </li> <li>Career pathways</li> <li>Improving the employment experience for diversity cohorts                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The APS CALD Employment Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>Improving the employment experience for people with disability</li> </ul> </li> <li>Innovative Hiring practices</li> <li>Principles of Flexible Work in the APS</li> <li>Psychological safety in the APS</li> <li>Reduce reliance on contractors and consultants                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit of Employment</li> <li>Australian Government Consulting</li> <li>Strategic Commissioning Framework</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APS adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies</li> <li>APS Leadership Edge – EL2 leadership &amp; management capability development program</li> <li>Behaviour and outcomes based performance management</li> <li>Capability Review Program</li> <li>International (Asia Pacific) strategic knowledge                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APS Indo-Pacific Executive Development Program</li> <li>Pacific Engagement: Building long-term relationships through cultural capability</li> </ul> </li> <li>Pilot: data and digital APS Academy Campuses</li> <li>Work arising from the Hierarchy &amp; Classification Review</li> <li>Understanding, leveraging and uplifting capability across the APS</li> <li>Uplift specialist capability, expand &amp; mature professions</li> </ul>	<p><b>SPONSORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the Taskforce, and other bodies as required, to drive work on priority action opportunities and risks.</li> <li>Determine when to refer issues to other bodies for action and advice, including Secretaries Board and other Secretaries Board sub-committees.</li> <li>Maintain oversight of priority actions including when work being progressed by other bodies.</li> <li>Provide recommendations to the Committee, including to close and remove priority actions from the work plan.</li> </ul>	STEWARDS
<p><b>COO COMMITTEE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operationalise, provide implementation advice and drive pilots on reform priorities of Secretaries Board and its Sub-committees, including Capability and Workforce.</li> </ul>			<p><b>CAPABILITY AND WORKFORCE TASKFORCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide data and economic analysis, research, policy development and secretariat support to the Committee.</li> </ul>	ENABLERS
<p><b>APS LEARNING BOARD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implement APS wide learning and development priorities.</li> </ul>			<p><b>PARTNER AGENCIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice, as appropriate, aligned to portfolio responsibilities.</li> <li>Ensure alignment with APS reform agenda and other Government priorities.</li> </ul>	ADVISERS
<p><b>HEADS OF PROFESSIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implement APS wide learning and development priorities to lift APS capability in critical areas.</li> </ul>				

**SECRETARIES BOARD**  
All Secretaries

**APS REFORM PARTNERS**  
Secretaries of PM&C and Finance and  
APS Commissioner

**CAPABILITY AND  
WORKFORCE COMMITTEE**  
Secretary Katherine Jones and APS  
Commissioner Gordon de Brouwer

**CAPABILITY AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE**

Set strategic direction and scope of priority actions, and oversee progress.

Make decisions on behalf of Secretaries Board and ensure alignment with the Board and APS Reform Agenda (i.e. priorities 3 & 4).

**PRIORITY ACTION SPONSORS**

Work with the Taskforce, and other bodies as required, to drive work on priority action opportunities, risks and recommendations.

Determine when to refer issues to other bodies for action and advice and maintain oversight of priority actions when being progressed by other bodies.

Work with the Taskforce to finalise priority action papers for consideration by the Committee.

Provide recommendations to the Committee to close priority actions and remove from the work plan.

**COO COMMITTEE**

Engaged by Committee or sponsor to provide operationalisation and implementation advice and drive reform priority pilots

**APS LEARNING BOARD**

Design and implement L&D priorities  
Engaged by Committee or sponsor to drive reform priority pilots referred by the Committee

**HEADS OF PROFESSIONS**

Design and implement L&D priorities in critical areas (HR, digital, data)  
Engaged by Committee or sponsor to drive reform priority pilots referred by the Committee