



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

non-SES Performance Framework





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Overview

The non-SES Performance Framework is policy guidance that outlines an overarching set of minimum requirements that apply across the APS for non-SES performance. It sets out the expectations and responsibilities for all employees, including supervisors, in delivering, supporting and sustaining effective performance across the APS. It reinforces our commitment as APS employees to the APS Employment Principles and APS Values, which guide a culture of integrity, accountability, respect and stewardship. The Framework consists of:

- consistent elements for performance management that must be adopted in each APS agency
- a maturity model to guide agency implementation, and
- reporting and evaluation requirements.

Building on insights gained from the SES Performance Leadership Framework, this Framework aims to provide a consistent approach to performance management across the APS, placing emphasis on the requirements for both delivery of outcomes and for behaviour. A consistent approach to non-SES performance management is a foundation to building a culture of high performance by creating a structured and transparent environment where employees and APS agencies can build critical capability. This will enable the APS to achieve strategic objectives for government more efficiently and position the APS to meet future challenges. Like the SES Performance Leadership Framework, a key feature of the Framework is that behaviour, or *how* outcomes are delivered, is considered core to effective performance. Placing a strong emphasis on how outcomes are delivered will support the development of well-rounded APS employees and is an enabler of a high-performance culture.

In addition, this Framework builds on the obligations set out in the *Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022* (Directions) that all employees participate constructively in the performance management process, thereby supporting a culture of continuous improvement, growth and development. Supervisors play a critical role in leading by example, providing clear guidance, honest and timely feedback and meaningful support to their teams. Where performance concerns arise, this Framework requires that underperformance policies and procedures to address concerns are applied in a timely manner.

The Framework has been developed with reference to existing legislation, policy and guidance regarding expected behaviour in the APS. The Framework is not intended to limit an agency's flexibility to continue innovating to achieve high performance. It is intended to provide a standard set of requirements that must form part of an agency's performance practices, and integrate with an agency's existing performance management approach.

The Framework does not make any changes to existing policies regarding remuneration. Where an agency's performance management framework is linked to remuneration, agencies should have regard to their Enterprise Agreement and the [Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2023](#). Further guidance can be obtained by contacting workplacerelements@apsc.gov.au.



Where elements within this Framework differ from provisions related to performance management in an agency's Enterprise Agreement (EA), the agency's EA prevails.

Navigating the Framework

Section	Outline
Elements of the Framework	The required elements for each agency's non-SES performance policies and procedures.
Implementation	Expectations for agency implementation and assessment of maturity.
Transparency and accountability	Expectations for how Agency Heads, SES, and supervisors will engage with the Framework, including reporting requirements.

List of appendices	Outline
Appendix A	Setting expectations for the DRIVE behaviours in practice
Appendix B	Actions illustrating the 4C practices – Speak up culture
Appendix C	Guide to upwards feedback
Appendix D	Extract from Commissioner's Directions

Elements of the Performance Framework

The following elements must be included in agency non-SES performance policies and procedures:

- expectations for outcomes and behaviours
- performance assessments
- reward and recognition
- development, and
- unsatisfactory performance.

Expectations for outcomes and behaviours

All agencies must ensure that:

- expectations are established for both outcomes and behaviours
- behavioural expectations reflect the standard set by the APS Values, and
- behavioural expectations for Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 employees also reflect the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours (DRIVE).



Setting expectations for both outcomes and behaviours is a core requirement for implementing the Framework. High-performing organisations align individual performance expectations with organisational outcomes by ensuring there is consistency between the Work Level Standards, duty statements, performance agreements and performance assessments.

The Australian public holds high expectations of the APS. They expect that APS agencies and their employees act with and undertake their duties with integrity and honesty. This is driven by the APS Values, the APS Employment Principles and compliance with the Code of Conduct. This means how we deliver is as important as what we deliver.

APS Values

Impartial: The APS is apolitical and provides the government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

Committed to service: The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the government.

Accountable: The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.

Respectful: The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.

Ethical: The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

Stewardship: The APS builds its capability and institutional knowledge, and supports the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what it does.

Speak up 4Cs

Setting expectations for behaviour makes it clear that solely achieving outcomes is not sufficient for effective performance. Expectations of behaviour will be determined between the non-SES employee and their supervisor and must encompass alignment of behaviours with the APS Values as a core function of their role and should consider the 4C practices of [speak up culture](#).



For Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 employees, further behavioural expectations must be determined in line with the [Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours \(DRIVE\)](#).

Non-SES employees must commit through their performance agreements to model respectful standards of behaviour and reflect on their own biases and behaviours. Agencies may also choose to include additional expectations of behaviour, depending on their operational context.



Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours (DRIVE)



Be Dynamic

- Have an inquiring mind and be willing to innovate and change
- Understand the system you operate in
- Practise new ways of deploying yourself in your system to achieve the best outcome
- Embrace risks and actively manage them
- Enjoy your work and have a positive attitude
- Don't walk past problems—be part of the solution

Be Respectful

- Treat people with decency and respect
- Embrace diversity and actively seek out views and perspectives that challenge your own
- Build an inclusive culture that enables people to make their best contribution

Have Integrity

- Be open, honest and accountable
- Take responsibility for what happens around you
- Have courage to call out unacceptable behaviour

Value others

- Be an active listener
- Value others' contributions, perspectives and wisdom
- Collaborate not compete to succeed as a team
- Understand people and their views and motivations in order to lead, influence and communicate well
- Build relationships

Empower people

- Trust, empower and grow others
- Interpret and provide context—don't do people's jobs for them
- Build capability and networks
- Expect people to deliver and find positive ways to hold them to account
- Accept people won't always get it right—and support them to bounce back

We encourage all APS leaders to consider how you can live up to these behaviours, where relevant to your role.



Performance Assessment

A non-SES employee's performance assessment includes:

- formal performance conversations
- informal performance conversations
- upwards feedback (Executive Level 1 who supervise staff and Executive Level 2 only), and
- an annual performance rating.

Formal and informal conversations

As part of a non-SES employee's performance assessment:

- formal conversations must occur three times per year at the following points throughout the performance management cycle:
 - commencement of the cycle
 - mid-cycle, and
 - end-of-cycle assessment
- supervisors should regularly consider and ask about the wellbeing of their team and take action to address any concerns, including appropriate supports or reasonable adjustments if required, and
- informal performance conversations should take place throughout the cycle with the view to providing meaningful and timely feedback to employees.

Providing regular, constructive and developmentally-focused feedback, particularly at the time of an event or milestone (e.g. immediately following the delivery of a major project), can increase engagement and employee capability, leading to high performance. Informal performance conversations should include what is working well, areas for development, and recognition of achievements and accomplishments. Performance concerns should be discussed at the earliest opportunity and include guidance on how performance could be improved.

While primarily aimed at recognising achievements, motivating ongoing positive outcomes and providing an early opportunity to address performance or behaviour concerns, regular informal discussions also ensure transparency and mitigates unexpected negative feedback being received during the formal performance assessment discussions.

Upwards feedback

Upwards feedback is only applicable for Executive Level 1 who supervise staff and Executive Level 2 employees under this Framework due to the role and responsibility expectations at these classification levels.

Prior to the end-of-cycle performance conversation, the supervisor must seek informal upwards feedback from direct reports of Executive Level 1 who supervise staff and Executive Level 2 employees. Upwards feedback plays a crucial role in building a culture of continuous



improvement. By providing supervisors with insights from their employees' direct reports, agencies can enhance team dynamics and improve overall delivery of outcomes. Upwards feedback should be designed to understand how the employee's behaviours are aligned with the APS Values and the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours.

Appendix B provides a practical guide for supervisors on how to use upwards feedback to:

- gain a better understanding of an employee's management/leadership capability, and
- have developmentally focused conversations based on the feedback provided.

The guide also provides support for agencies to address privacy concerns when undertaking upwards feedback.

Example questions

Considering the APS Values and the Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours, feedback from direct reports of Executive Level 1 who supervise staff and Executive Level 2 supervisors could be sought with questions such as:

- what do they do well?
- what could they do differently?
- how are they demonstrating curiosity and leading innovation and change (Dynamic)?
- how are they demonstrating cultural competence and contributing to culturally safe and diverse workplaces, programs and policies? (Respectful; Integrity; Empower)?
- how are they demonstrating courage and accountability (Integrity)?
- how are they encouraging a pro-integrity culture within their team and building psychological safety (Integrity; Empower)?
- how are they using their influence to build more positive relationships within their agency (Value)?
- how are they developing and building capability in others (Empower)?
- how do they work with others, to share and/or collaborate, in order to deliver better outcomes (Value)?

Annual performance rating

All non-SES employees will receive an annual performance rating of either:

- **On track:** Individual is consistently meeting and/or exceeding expectations against expectations of outcomes and behaviour.
- **Developing:**
 - individual is new to the role, level or APS and has not yet had the opportunity to consistently meet expectations of outcomes and behaviour; or
 - improvement is required in relation to expectations of outcomes and/or behaviour. The individual will be supported to achieve a rating of 'On Track' by the next annual review at the latest (for example, through a formal or informal development plan).



This rating should not be used where:

- Performance concerns have been raised throughout the performance cycle and no improvements have been made. In this instance 'Not on track' would be more appropriate.
- An employee is new, and no performance concerns have been raised, and they are at an expected level of performance for the period they have been in the role. In this instance, 'On track' would be more appropriate.
- **Not on track:** Individual is not meeting expectations and a formal underperformance process will be commenced if it has not commenced already.

A rating of 'Developing' cannot be given across two consecutive performance cycles for the same role. Where an individual was previously rated as 'Developing' and has not yet achieved a level of performance that warrants an 'On Track' assessment, they should be rated as 'Not on Track'.

Exceptional performance

Agencies may exercise discretion to implement an additional rating denoting exceptional performance. Agencies seeking to use an exceptional rating must develop guidance that articulates the pathway from on track performance to exceptional performance.

Where an agency develops an exceptional rating, it may only be given to a non-SES employee who demonstrates exceptional outcomes **and** behaviours, including at a minimum:

- delivers results that exceed expectations in complexity and timeliness autonomously, and anticipates problems and develops innovative solutions
- actively contributes to a positive team culture and facilitates collaboration across functions or divisions, and is regularly sought after for peer review and support
- demonstrates a high-level of integrity in their own conduct and work, and
- develops and maintains strong, trusted relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

In addition, employees with supervisory responsibilities must also:

- build a high-performing, inclusive team culture by actively developing others through mentoring and coaching, and
- address performance concerns and conduct difficult performance conversations competently in a supportive manner.

Recording ratings

Agencies must capture separate ratings for:

- outcomes
- behaviour, and
- an overall performance rating.



The assessment of behaviour comprises 50% of the overall rating. If behaviour is not on track, then overall performance is not on track and a strong result for outcomes cannot be used to lift the overall performance rating.

The annual rating will be based on the non-SES employee's performance across the entire performance cycle. However, if a non-SES employee's performance is unsatisfactory at any time throughout the performance cycle, the employee's supervisor must take steps to restore performance including commencing formal unsatisfactory performance procedures where appropriate.

Reward and recognition

As APS employees, we strive for excellence in all that we do. Rewarding and recognising employees effectively is vital for attracting and retaining talent, as well maintaining optimal employee engagement and productivity, all of which foster excellence. Incentivising behaviours that are valued by the agency assists in creating a culture where how outcomes are delivered is considered as important as achieving outcomes. Agencies are encouraged to consider how to incorporate non-monetary rewards into performance management.

Agencies should consider rewarding employees who achieve outcomes and demonstrate exemplary behaviours. Recognising that individual employees will have different preferences and perceptions of what might be considered a reward, consideration may be given to formal recognition, opportunities for reflection and professional development, mentoring arrangements, etc., noting that this needs to be coupled with the provision of time and capacity to avail themselves of such opportunities.

Agencies should also consider encouraging specific positive feedback both in informal conversations and publicly such as in meetings and internal communication channels. This form of recognition not only serves to acknowledge and express gratitude to the individual or team, but acts as a powerful symbol to reinforce the type of outcomes and behaviour that is valued. Acknowledgement should reference not just what was achieved, but also emphasise the behaviours that were exhibited in undertaking this work. Further, the type of acknowledgement should consider the preference of individual employees, e.g., 1 on 1 recognition may be preferred by some employees rather than public recognition.

Development

Maintaining a capable APS workforce is critical to ensuring the APS is able to effectively deliver on key accountabilities. To ensure the capability of the APS workforce, development opportunities must build individual, agency and APS capability. Preparation, planning, review time, and strategic recovery are critical enablers for sustaining high performance over the long term.

It is expected that supervisors actively support the growth of their employees. Each non-SES employee and their supervisor must have a conversation at the commencement of the performance cycle to identify the employee's development needs. Supervisors must ensure that employees are provided with both time and capacity to make the most of development opportunities.



Development needs will be influenced by, where available, inputs from the employee's last performance assessment (both what was achieved and how).

Development needs should be regularly reviewed and adjusted throughout the performance cycle.

Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 employees are required to actively identify, assess and support the development needs of their team members. In addition, they must engage with their own supervisors to ensure their own development needs are identified, considered and appropriately managed.

Unsatisfactory performance

In accordance with section 49(2) of the Directions, agencies must have clear policies and processes for dealing with unsatisfactory performance. If an employee's performance is considered unsatisfactory at any time throughout the performance cycle, the supervisor must ensure that the agency's unsatisfactory performance policy and procedures are applied in a timely manner.

Where an employee's performance is considered 'Not on Track', in accordance with section 50 of the Directions, the employee's supervisor must take steps to manage it appropriately, sensitively and promptly in accordance with the agency's unsatisfactory performance policy and procedures, with the aim of restoring performance.

Where performance concerns are raised, employees have an obligation under section 51 of the Directions to engage constructively in the unsatisfactory performance process by:

- cooperating with their supervisor, and any other relevant people including their Agency's HR area, to resolve performance concerns in a timely manner, and
- undertaking any necessary training, remedial or corrective measures as directed.

Implementation

Expectations for the APS

It is expected that APS agencies will, where possible, implement all elements of the Framework by the end of 2028 and formally report on their non-SES performance management maturity annually in the APS Agency Survey.

Where an agency's EA provisions relating to performance management differ from the Framework elements, the agency's EA will prevail.

To support implementation, the Commission will facilitate sharing Agency success stories and resources.



How to use the maturity model

A maturity model has been developed to support introduction of the Framework in agencies. This self-assessment tool is designed to:

- help agencies implement the Framework
- support agencies to understand their current performance process, policy, guidance and tools, and
- enable informed decisions on where additional focus may be required to uplift agency performance management capability to align with the Framework.

Agencies will commence at different levels of maturity, and some agency performance frameworks may already be consistent with the requirements of the Framework. However, some agencies may need time to implement particular elements. Agencies are encouraged to undertake regular self-assessment to measure progress.

Importantly, this resource does not replace an agency's responsibility to bring performance management into people's day to day practice and everyday lived experience in the APS. Informal cultures are more powerful than the written policies and procedures.

Definitions

Standard describes the essential building blocks that form the basis for agency performance management procedures.

Level 1 – Initial represents emerging maturity, where an agency may be establishing capability or yet to embed the standard in their performance processes.

Level 2 – Defined represents a maturity state where agencies are working toward consistency and incorporating improvement strategies as part of their performance processes.

Level 3 – Optimised represents a maturity state that incorporates all the required elements of the Framework. Agencies at an optimised maturity level should continue to focus on continuous improvement of their performance processes.



Maturity Model

Performance assessments

Standard	Level 1 – Initial	Level 2 – Defined	Level 3 – Optimised
Outcomes and behavioural expectations	Agency is yet to incorporate behavioural expectations into the agency's performance framework	Outcomes and behavioural expectations are both considered in the agency performance framework, but the agency is still working towards embedding behaviour as a core consideration	Specific outcomes and APS-wide behavioural expectations are: considered equally in the agency's performance framework and set out in employee's performance agreements
Formal and informal conversations	Performance conversations may occur on an ad-hoc or reactive basis	Performance conversations are formally documented but not yet taking place at least three times a year. Informal conversations are irregular or yet to be implemented	Performance conversations are formally documented at no fewer than three check-in points in a 12 month period (the conversations include establishing performance agreement, mid-cycle and end-of-cycle review). Informal conversations are undertaken regularly
Upwards feedback – Executive Level employees	Agency is yet to implement	Implemented but not consistently occurring every annual cycle for every executive level employee	Upwards feedback is sought as an input into the end-of-cycle performance assessment for all Executive Level employees
Annual Performance Rating*	Agency yet to implement common rating scale	Agency has adopted the common rating scale	Agency has adopted the common rating scale Employee behaviour is equally weighted with outcomes If behaviour is not on track then overall performance is not on track

**Agencies may be restricted in the implementation and therefore maturity level of this element dependent on the performance management provisions contained within an agency's EA.*



Development

Standard	Level 1 – Initial	Level 2 – Defined	Level 3 – Optimised
Development	Development opportunities are discussed at the commencement of the performance cycle	Development opportunities are linked to individual capability	Development opportunities are clearly linked to areas of capability development that build individual, agency and APS capability
Unsatisfactory performance	Agency has an unsatisfactory performance process but it is not yet aligned with the performance framework	Agency has an unsatisfactory performance process and it is aligned to the performance framework but the agency is yet to ensure the policies and processes are applied in a timely manner	Agency policies set clear guidance on managing unsatisfactory performance and that those policies and processes are applied in a timely manner

Transparency and accountability

Creating and maintaining a strong transparency culture is crucial to ensuring an effective and cohesive APS. The APS Employment Principles, as enshrined in the *Public Service Act 1999*, require effective performance from each employee. Section 49-51 of the Directions further describe how employees at every level uphold the employment principles and support a high-performance culture (Appendix D). In accordance with these legislative requirements, the Framework provides cascading accountabilities for Agency Heads and agencies, supervisors and employees.

Agency Head and agency accountability

Agency Heads are expected to take accountability for progress within their agency. Importantly, Agency Heads are expected to ensure ongoing engagement with contemporary approaches that support a high performance culture and build psychological safety, including the 4C practices of [speak up culture](#). Agency Heads set the tone for positive workplace culture and behaviour within the APS. Leaders must consider how their actions will appear to staff without access to all details.

A phased approach to reporting has been developed, to support accountability for introducing the Framework. In the first phase, agency data will be reported to the Secretaries Board to provide high-level oversight of performance maturity across the APS. As performance maturity increases over time, it is intended that Agencies will move to a self-regulating approach.



Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
The Agency Head reports to the APS Commissioner through the agency survey for annual reporting to Secretaries Board. Reporting includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a self-assessment of maturity• aggregate non-SES performance ratings.	The Agency Head reports to the APS Commissioner through the agency survey. Reporting includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a self-assessment of maturity• aggregate non-SES performance ratings.	The agency regularly self-assesses maturity using the Framework Maturity Model.

Accountability for supervisors

Supervisor investment in the development of their employees, primarily through direct and actionable feedback, is critical to achieving a psychologically safe, high-performance culture. End-of-cycle conversations and performance assessments should be a culmination of formal and informal feedback received throughout the year. The skillset required to support good performers achieve excellence is the same skillset required to support staff who are not on track to meet and/or restore performance, and supervisors must develop capability to ensure difficult conversations are not avoided and that they occur in an appropriate, timely, supportive and constructive manner.

Supervisors must invest in building their capability in:

- ensuring duty statements with roles and responsibilities are clear, understood and communicated
- effective goal-setting so that team members have clarity about the standards of performance and behaviour expected of them
- engaging in open dialogue to clarify expectations
- identifying areas for development, in collaboration with their staff
- identifying effective performance or underperformance
- supporting staff to achieve high performance
- effectively addressing underperformance and behavioural concerns
- effectively dealing with workplace conflict and change.



Appendices

Appendix A – Setting expectations for the DRIVE behaviours in practice

It is important for supervisors to be able to articulate what ‘good’ performance looks like.

Table courtesy of DFAT.

Be Dynamic	
Expected Behaviours Have an inquiring mind and be willing to innovate and change Understand the system you operate in Practise new ways of deploying yourself in your system to achieve the best outcome Embrace risks and actively manage them Enjoy your work and have a positive attitude Don't walk past problems—be part of the solution	Behaviours to Avoid Resistant to new ideas and/or change Risk averse Tendency to be negative when under pressure Avoiding conflict and removes oneself from problems
Be Respectful	
Expected Behaviours Treat people with decency and respect Embrace diversity and actively seek out views and perspectives that challenge your own Build an inclusive culture that enables people to make their best contribution	Behaviours to Avoid Under pressure, perceived as being rude, disrespectful and dismissive Avoiding diverse views so as to progress own agenda Leaving the culture to others to create or influence
Have Integrity	
Expected Behaviours Be open, honest and accountable Take responsibility for what happens around you Have courage to call out unacceptable behaviour	Behaviours to Avoid Lacking accountability when problems arise or deadlines are not met Looking to blame others and actively seek out a person to blame Overlooking bad behaviour
Value others	
Expected Behaviours Be an active listener Value others' contributions, perspectives and wisdom Collaborate not compete to succeed as a team Understand people and their views and motivations in order to lead, influence and communicate well Build relationships	Behaviours to Avoid Not listening to understand React rather than respond Speaking before thinking and having an adverse impact on others Avoiding collaboration Not taking time to understand others' views or motivations
Empower people	
Expected Behaviours Trust, empower and grow others Interpret and provide context—don't do people's jobs for them Build capability and networks Expect people to deliver and find positive ways to hold them to account Accept people won't always get it right—and support them to bounce back	Behaviours to Avoid Micro-managing to achieve the outcome Not delegating tasks to others Not taking time to build capability because the team is too busy or they move on to other areas Gossiping about shortcomings of others rather than supporting staff to be their best Holding a person accountable for legacy mistakes from the past Doing people's jobs for them



Appendix B – Actions illustrating the 4C practices – Speak up culture

Actions that illustrate the 4C practices in teams



When I listen with compassion, I might:

- go out of my way to include others
- check in on others' workloads, wellbeing or barriers to work
- respond respectfully and consider the impact of my words and actions on others
- acknowledge/thank others for sharing their views
- listen to what is or isn't being said
- talk constructively about emotions.



When I show curiosity, I might:

- take time to engage in ongoing learning and encourage others to do same
- discuss things that I learn with the team, seeking to learn from failure and mistakes
- invite participation and be open to trying something new
- enquire to understand more deeply a different perspective
- appropriately incorporate others' feedback on work
- ask for others to disagree with/challenge ideas or provide assistance.



When I speak with candour, I might:

- admit missteps and be comfortable being challenged
- provide honest and constructive feedback
- constructively express views/approaches that might be different to the group's view
- speak up in team discussions, including raising problems and tough issues
- ask others for help/support with work
- share feelings/emotions with others
- respond constructively and calmly to bad news.



When I act with courage, I might:

- communicate the outcomes of actions and changes
- recognise issues and take action before they become problems
- reflect on interpersonal or work-related risks
- take initiative in improving the work area
- seek clarification when more information is needed
- take actions that may have challenges associated with them (e.g. advocating for an approach, asking for more responsibility, making a difficult decision).



Appendix C – Guide to upwards feedback

Purpose and benefits of upwards feedback

Undertaking an upwards feedback process provides employees with the opportunity to provide feedback on their Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 supervisors. It also allows managers to gain a better understanding of how their Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 employees' behaviour and decisions are experienced by and impact their direct reports. Upwards feedback provides a more holistic view of overall performance and insight on matters managers might otherwise not be aware of.

Agencies can use upwards feedback processes to encourage a two-way feedback culture that promotes openness and trust, as well as providing managers with valuable insights that can be used to identify and meet future development needs.

How to conduct upwards feedback processes

Upwards feedback processes do not need to be overly complicated, nor do they require the use of specialised systems or software.

For example, one way to collect upwards feedback is for a supervisor to hold a conversation, either individually or as a group, with the direct reports of the employee. Holding a conversation provides the opportunity to ask follow-up questions where more information may be useful.

Another way to collect upwards feedback, is for managers to send out a short survey to direct reports of employees either via email or via an online, third party platform such as Qualtrics. Using a third party platform has the added advantage of allowing anonymity for employees who are providing feedback. An advantage of collecting upwards feedback anonymously is that it can encourage honesty without the fear of retaliation.

In larger agencies where Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 employees supervise a large number of direct reports, it may more feasible for supervisors to only collect upwards feedback from a sample of direct reports across all classifications, or to only seek feedback from Executive Level 1 employees for their Executive Level 2 supervisors for example.

Using upwards feedback to guide developmentally focused conversations

Data collected through upwards feedback should be used by managers to inform developmentally focused conversations with Executive Level 1 and Executive Level 2 employees. Developmentally focused conversations are a structured and collaborative approach to delivering feedback aimed at fostering employee growth and building capability.

Upwards feedback from direct reports will assist managers to focus on identifying specific behaviours, explaining their impact and offering actionable insights, nurturing a growth mindset that shifts the focus from past performance to future growth and development.

Mitigating privacy concerns

We acknowledge that for smaller agencies, ensuring the privacy of employees who provide upwards feedback can be challenging. To mitigate privacy concerns, agencies should:

- clearly communicate with employees how the feedback will be used, who will see it, and how anonymity will be maintained



- not share raw data with employees who the feedback is about, instead collate and report in aggregate to prevent identification of individuals
- provide training to managers in how to collect and respond to feedback constructively, promoting a safe feedback culture and
- where possible, collect feedback anonymously to protect the identity of the employees.



Appendix D – Extract from Commissioner’s Directions

Division 2 – Performance management culture

48 Purpose of this Division

This Division is made for the purposes of subsection 11A(2) of the Act.

49 Achieving effective performance – Agency Heads

Achieving effective performance

- (1) An Agency Head upholds APS Employment Principle 10A(1)(d) by ensuring the following:
 - (a) the Agency has performance management policies and processes that:
 - (i) support a high performance culture; and
 - (ii) proactively identify, foster and develop APS employees to fulfil their potential; and
 - (iii) provide for effective performance management; and
 - (iv) are fair, open and effective; and
 - (v) are clearly communicated to APS employees;
 - (b) the Agency builds the organisational capability necessary to achieve the outcomes of the Agency properly expected by the Government;
 - (c) each APS employee in the Agency is given:
 - (i) a clear statement of the performance and behaviour expected of the employee; and
 - (ii) opportunities to discuss performance;
 - (d) each APS employee in the Agency receives feedback from supervisors about their performance consistent with the Agency’s performance management policies and processes;
 - (e) the Agency requires supervisors to manage the performance of APS employees under their supervision effectively, including by engaging in career conversations;
 - (f) the Agency supports supervisors to manage the performance of APS employees under their supervision, including by providing appropriate training in performance management;
 - (g) the Agency’s performance management policies and processes are used to guide salary movement.

Dealing with unsatisfactory performance

- (2) An Agency Head upholds APS Employment Principle 10A(1)(d) by ensuring the following:
 - (a) the Agency’s performance management policies and processes dealing with unsatisfactory performance are available to supervisors and APS employees in the Agency, and include information that clearly sets out:
 - (i) the responsibilities of supervisors; and
 - (ii) the possible outcomes if an APS employee’s performance is considered unsatisfactory; and
 - (iii) that if an APS employee’s performance is considered to be unsatisfactory, the employee has a responsibility to engage constructively with their supervisor and other relevant persons (including the Agency’s human resources area) in resolving the performance issues and acting on performance feedback;



- (b) those policies and processes are applied in a timely manner if an APS employee's performance is considered unsatisfactory.

Note: Paragraph 10A(1)(d) of the Act provides that the APS is a career-based public service that requires effective performance from each employee.

50 Achieving effective performance—supervisors

A supervisor of an APS employee upholds APS Employment Principle 10A(1)(d) by doing the following:

- (a) promoting and fostering effective performance by the APS employee;
- (b) conducting, at least annually, career conversations that deal with the APS employee's performance, potential, aspirations, organisational fit and future opportunities;
- (c) ensuring that the APS employee has a performance agreement that is consistent with the Agency's corporate plan and the work level standards for the APS employee's classification;
- (d) ensuring that the APS employee is provided with clear, honest and timely feedback about the employee's performance;
- (e) managing and assessing the APS employee's performance in accordance with the Agency's performance management policies and processes;
- (f) working to improve the supervisor's capability in effectively managing the performance of APS employees, including through appropriate training;
- (g) promptly and actively managing unsatisfactory performance by the APS employee in accordance with the Agency's performance management policies and processes, including by:
 - (i) identifying the nature of the unsatisfactory performance at the earliest opportunity; and
 - (ii) maintaining appropriate records; and
 - (iii) engaging with the APS employee and other relevant persons (including the Agency's human resources area and the supervisor's manager) to discuss the unsatisfactory performance, and facilitate a collective understanding about the nature of the unsatisfactory performance.

Note: Paragraph 10A(1)(d) of the Act provides that the APS is a career-based public service that requires effective performance from each employee.

51 Achieving effective performance—APS employees

An APS employee upholds APS Employment Principle 10A(1)(d) by doing the following:

- (a) striving to perform to the best of their ability, at the work level standard for the APS employee's classification and consistent with the APS employee's performance agreement;
- (b) engaging constructively with their supervisor to clarify work expectations and what is required to perform effectively;
- (c) participating constructively in the Agency's performance management processes, including career conversations;
- (d) being open to receiving feedback and acting on feedback in a timely manner;
- (e) seeking opportunities to improve individual and team performance;
- (f) if informed that the APS employee's performance is unsatisfactory, engaging constructively by:



- (i) cooperating with their supervisor and other relevant persons (including the Agency's human resources area) to resolve the issues relating to the unsatisfactory performance in a timely manner; and
- (ii) undertaking any necessary training or remedial or corrective measures as directed.

Note: Paragraph 10A(1)(d) of the Act provides that the APS is a career-based public service that requires effective performance from each employee.