



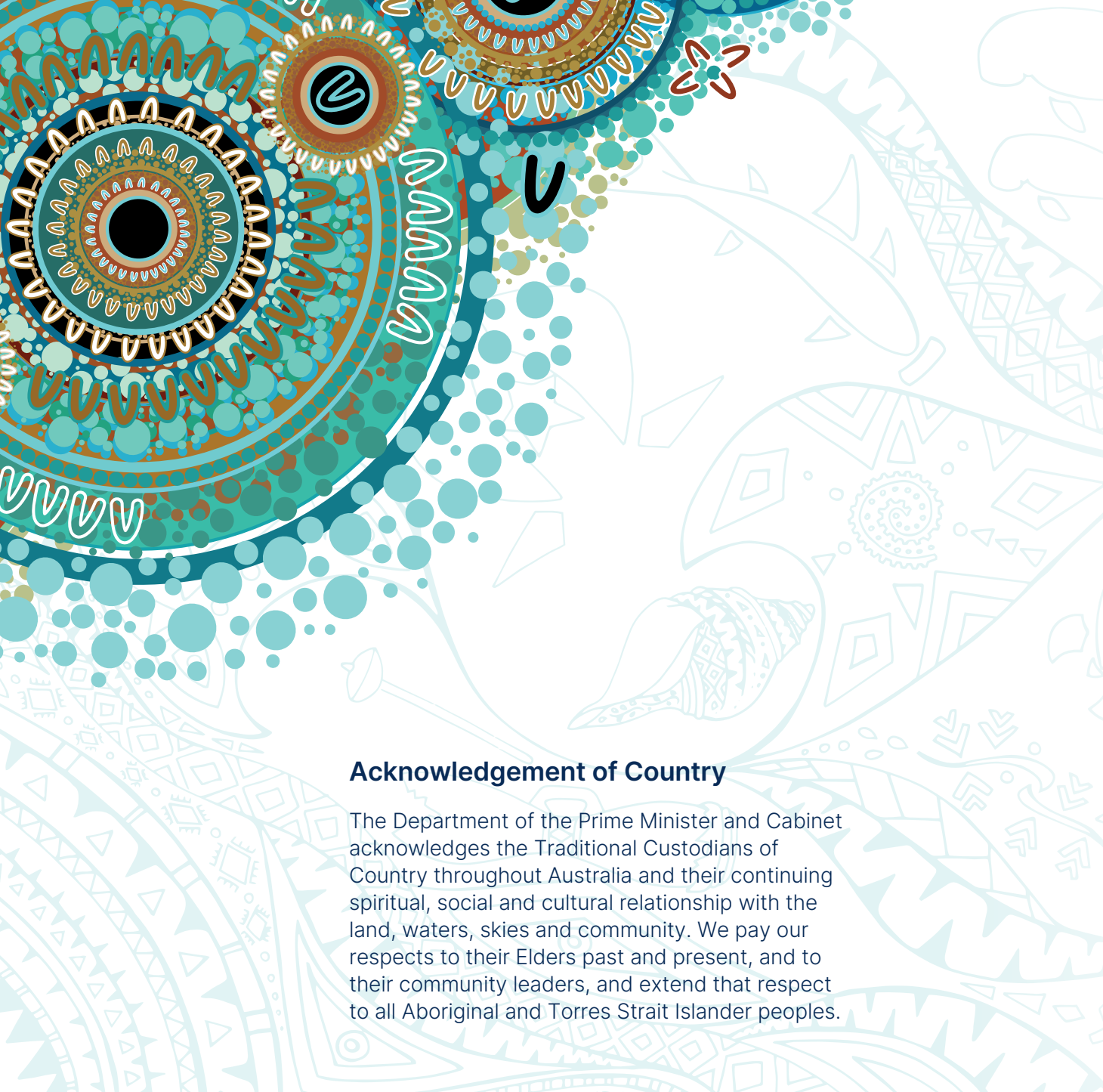
Australian Government

Department of the
Prime Minister and Cabinet

Capability Review Action Plan

March 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing spiritual, social and cultural relationship with the land, waters, skies and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to their community leaders, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Contents

Secretary's foreword	4
Insights	5
Our vision	5
Capability focus areas	6
Focus area 1: Empowering our workforce	7
Focus area 2: Delivering through collaboration	8
Focus area 3: Strengthening how we operate	9
Measuring success	10

Secretary's foreword



The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) is at the centre of the Australian Public Service (APS). We support the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and portfolio ministers by leading and convening stakeholders across the APS to address our biggest national challenges.

Occupying this position is a privilege. We must constantly lift our standards, continuously learn and adapt, and strengthen our capabilities to meet the challenges ahead.

PM&C's recent capability review has given us an opportunity to reflect and sharpen our focus on how we undertake our work.

The capability review recognises our strengths: our specialist expertise, our trusted relationships, and our committed workforce. It challenges us to aim higher: to strengthen our leadership and governance, sharpen our strategic focus, and improve how we collaborate across the APS.

In short, the capability review tells us we must continue leading with purpose. To that end, I am pleased to present the PM&C Capability Review Action Plan.

This plan will guide how we strengthen capability. We will focus on empowering a capable and confident workforce, fostering genuine collaboration and strengthening how we operate. Consolidating these foundations will help us lead from the centre with clarity, courage and impact.

I would like to thank the independent senior reviewers – Helen Silver AO, David Tune AO PSM, David Mackay and Celia Street PSM – for their considered insights and collaborative approach throughout the review. I also want to acknowledge the Australian Public Service Commission, and its commitment to building a resilient, innovative and people-focused public service.

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr Steven Kennedy'.

Dr Steven Kennedy PSM
Secretary of the Department
of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Insights

The PM&C capability review provided valuable insights into our strengths, including:

- our committed workforce
- our highly trusted and professional relationships with the Prime Minister's and portfolio ministers' offices
- the effectiveness of our specialist functions.

The report recognised the work already underway to build capability across a range of critical areas, while encouraging us to:

- sharpen our leadership and governance
- set and sequence strategy and priorities
- improve our internal and external collaboration.

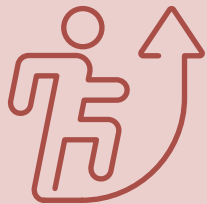
Our vision

PM&C leads from the centre of the public service, supporting the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and portfolio ministers to:

- improve the lives of all Australians
- advance Australia's interests
- keep our country safe and prosperous into the future.

Capability focus areas

This action plan outlines how we'll improve our capability.



Focus area 1: **Empowering our workforce**

Enabling a highly capable, future ready workforce with a unified purpose, clear priorities and a coherent value proposition – equipped, trusted and empowered to take considered risks, make decisions and deliver for government.



Focus area 2: **Delivering through collaboration**

Working cohesively as a department and in partnership with stakeholders to align priorities and deliver coordinated outcomes.



Focus area 3: **Strengthening how we operate**

Making our systems more coherent and efficient to enable high-quality delivery.



Focus area 1:

Empowering our workforce

Enabling a highly capable, future ready workforce with a unified purpose, clear priorities and a coherent value proposition – equipped, trusted and empowered to take considered risks, make decisions, and deliver for government.

Desired future state

PM&C has a highly capable, adaptive and future-ready workforce that is confident in its purpose and equipped with the knowledge and skills to lead from the centre. We support the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, portfolio ministers and senior officials to make well-informed decisions based on evidence and objective analysis.

Our people have access to meaningful development pathways, within a culture that values integrity, autonomy, learning and wellbeing. We invest in staff development, giving them the skills they need to work effectively in a central agency – strategic policy, partnership brokering, delivery management, and APS stewardship. We trust our people and foster an environment where they can thrive.

For their part, our leaders model high standards, delegate confidently, nurture talent, and build teams with diverse perspectives and experience while managing workload and risk. Staff have clarity about their purpose, understand how their work delivers on government and departmental priorities, and feel empowered to exercise judgement.

Mobility within the department enables us to rally to meet emerging priorities, ensuring people and resources can be called on where they are needed most. We encourage and reward collaboration and evidence-based approaches, supported by systems that help our people easily draw on our organisational knowledge.

Priority actions

- Refresh our **strategic direction** and embed our **ways of working** to help staff understand when and how to strategically engage on government priorities.
- Clearly and regularly **articulate government and departmental priorities** and help staff understand how they can best contribute to meeting them.
- Clarify **delegation of authority and risk tolerance** so our people can confidently manage risk.
- Develop our **workforce strategies** to guide strategic planning and future workforce decisions, including fostering a diverse workforce.
- Refresh our **learning and development strategy** to strengthen knowledge, expand access to high-quality training and support professional development.
- Develop a **knowledge management framework** to set out how to capture, store and share information and maintain strong corporate knowledge.



Focus area 2:

Delivering through collaboration

Working cohesively as a department and in partnership with stakeholders to align priorities and deliver coordinated outcomes.

Desired future state

PM&C is the Australian Government's leading convener – bringing clarity, coherence and shared purpose to Australia's most complex challenges. We work in partnership with stakeholders from Australian Government departments, to ministers' offices, states and territories, and more to align priorities, achieve cohesive outcomes and give high-quality, contestable advice to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

Internal and external collaboration is intentional, and we have consistent processes that guide how we collaborate within and beyond the department. Through sharing evidence, and working transparently and respectfully with our partners, we enable whole-of-government decision making and delivery. We use our central vantage point to identify barriers, negotiate solutions, and influence APS-wide performance. Because of this, we are a mature, dependable partner for our colleagues across the public service.

Priority actions

- Develop and communicate a well-defined **central agency value proposition** that reflects our unified purpose, the varied ways we deliver for government, and our role in upholding a culture of excellence across the APS.
- Show leadership on **government priorities** by delivering high quality advice that draws on perspectives from across government and the community.
- Develop an enterprise **stakeholder engagement framework** to support collaboration with external stakeholders.
- Review and strengthen our **strategic collaboration** to better identify coordinated, whole-of-government priorities.
- Strengthen **communication pathways and information flows** to ensure staff at all levels have the context and knowledge to confidently make decisions.
- Strengthen **Cabinet operations** to embed better coordination, timeliness of advice and delivery of government priorities.



Focus area 3:

Strengthening how we operate

Making our systems more coherent and efficient to enable high-quality delivery.

Desired future state

PM&C strives for continuous improvement. This is reflected in our operating system – our processes, data, technology, governance and performance frameworks – which is modern, coherent and user-centred.

To meet new challenges, we embrace innovative ways of working to deliver government priorities, while maintaining the highest standard of integrity and security.

We work with stakeholders to quickly map out priorities and identify risks and resourcing needs. Our decision-making is timely and consistent, and always underpinned by transparent and reliable governance and data.

Core processes – tasking, clearances, briefings, Cabinet coordination and workflow management – are streamlined, digitised and consistently applied. Staff experience less rework and unnecessary complexity, allowing more time for strategic tasks. We rely on evidence throughout the policy cycle, leading to clearer advice and better outcomes for government.

Priority actions

- Design a **corporate operating model** that clearly articulates our enabling service offer.
- Use **forward-looking technology** including artificial intelligence to harness efficiencies.
- Develop a **data strategy** and appoint a **Chief Data Officer** to uplift our data maturity.
- Embed an enduring **security culture** to protect our people, information and assets.
- Improve **risk management and reporting** to enable us to understand our risk appetite and better respond to emerging risks and opportunities.
- Finalise our **integrity framework** to embed our integrity processes.
- Foster a **financially literate culture** through targeted training, modern financial systems and streamlined processes.
- Streamline **operational workflows** to reduce unnecessary complexity and improve efficiency.

Measuring success

How we will embed transformation

- ✓ Develop an implementation plan.
- ✓ Embed relevant activities in business planning.
- ✓ Clearly articulate our direction and capability priorities in our corporate plan.

How we will monitor our progress

- ✓ Use our independent annual stakeholder survey to gain insights on our performance.
- ✓ Use our internal audit program to gain independent insights on our performance.
- ✓ Regularly monitor and report on implementation to the PM&C governance committees.
- ✓ Track our APS Employee Census results.
- ✓ Run staff surveys on progress.
- ✓ Report on action plan outcomes in our annual report.

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