The longstanding commitment of the Australian Public Service (APS) to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Australian community is an explicit recognition that diverse workforces drive innovation, creativity, problem-solving capabilities and individual and organisational productivity. A diverse workforce positions the APS to better serve and support the government and the Australian people.

This chapter examines employment patterns for key diversity groups in the APS, in particular Indigenous Australians, people with disability, women, and people from a non-English speaking background. It also outlines the views of employees and reports on the strategies being adopted by the APS to build and retain a more diverse workforce.

The APS Diversity Council

The APS Diversity Council was established in early 2012 by the Secretaries Board, to reinforce and reinvigorate the APS commitment to workforce diversity. The Diversity Council has a particular focus on improving employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians and people with disability in the APS, in response to unfavourable employment outcomes for these groups.

This year the Diversity Council undertook a review of agencies’ technical processes related to the employment of Indigenous Australians and people with disability and explored ways to build agency culture to better support workforce diversity and inclusion. In doing so, the Diversity Council liaised with agencies on cultural awareness and reasonable adjustments, endorsed a new mechanism to better collect retention data for employees from diversity groups and developed a system to share expertise and create opportunities for cross-agency collaboration around diversity issues. The Diversity Council also secured the continuation of specialised whole-of-APS recruitment pathways for Indigenous Australians and supported a new recruitment pathway for people with disability.

Additionally, the Diversity Council paid particular attention to workforce diversity implications in an environment of budget constraints and slowing recruitment. They issued

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Diversity includes differences in gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, religious beliefs and family responsibilities. In the workplace, it also encompasses differences between individuals in educational level, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background and personality.
advice on the use of the APS Redeployment Policy, emphasising the importance of a strategic human capital approach in an environment of tightened fiscal policy and budget constraints. Agencies were encouraged to consider the implications of workforce restructures on corporate knowledge, core workforce skills, diversity and succession planning.

Disclosure

The low rate of employee disclosure in relation to diversity status continues to be an issue for the APS. Of the data provided by agencies to the APS Employment Database (APSED) at the end of June 2013, Indigenous status was not available for 23.3% (38,979) of all employees and disability status was not available for 30% (50,135). This leaves a large gap in the available APS workforce diversity data.

The provision of some diversity status information by APS employees to their agency is voluntary. Consequently, as with any large voluntary data collection, APSED tends to under-represent the number of Indigenous Australians and people with disability. To improve the collection of diversity data from employees, amendments to the Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Directions from 1 July 2013 require agencies to ask all employees for diversity information while providing a ‘choose not to give this information’ option. It is expected that these amendments will improve the quality of diversity data.

In the 2013 APS employee census (employee census), 2,630 respondents identified as Indigenous, representing 2.6% of those who responded to the question, compared with 2.3% reported in agencies’ human resource (HR) systems. The majority of Indigenous census respondents (80%) reported they had disclosed this information to their agency, while 7% chose not to inform their agency, 3% reported they had never been asked for this information, 4% said no for another reason and 6% were unsure whether they had disclosed the information.

Of the 6,869 employee census respondents who identified as having some form of disability (6.8% of those who responded to this question, compared with 3.3% in agencies’ HR systems), 53% reported they had disclosed this information to their agency, 15% chose not to inform their agency and 13% indicated they had never been asked for the information.

The higher numbers of APS employees identifying as either Indigenous or with disability in the employee census suggests that the information collected through agency HR systems continues to underestimate actual representation. The changes to data collection will ensure the information in agency HR systems is more complete, but for some employees disclosing this information will remain an individual and personal decision.

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2 Each year APS agencies provide workforce data, including diversity data, to APSED. Once an employee’s data is provided to APSED, it is stored permanently unless the employee subsequently chooses to remove it. If the employee moves to another agency that has not provided this information to APSED, the previous data is retained in APSED.
Trends in representation

Section 18 of the Public Service Act 1999 (Public Service Act) requires agency heads to establish workplace diversity programs, to assist in giving effect to the APS Employment Principles. In 2012–13, 75% of APS agencies had such a program in place in at least part of their agency, a slight reduction on last year’s result of 77%. As of 1 July 2013, changes to the Public Service Act require agency heads to publish the details of their agency’s workplace diversity program on their agency’s website. At the time of completing the agency survey, 43% of APS agencies had a workplace diversity program available on their website.

Based on APSED data, Figure 5.1 shows that in 2012–13 the proportion of women employees increased slightly, the proportion of Indigenous employees and employees from a non-English speaking background stayed the same, while the proportion of employees with disability declined.

Figure 5.1 Representation of diversity groups among ongoing employees, 1999 to 2013

Indigenous employment

In July 2012, a new iteration of the APS Indigenous Employment Strategy was launched, with the support and endorsement of the Diversity Council and Secretaries Board. The new strategy, which the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) led on behalf of the APS, supports agencies to increase Indigenous representation through a range of targeted activities. It included the Pathways to Employment programs for Indigenous graduates, cadets
and trainees, provided a whole-of-APS approach to entry-level recruitment, and complemented agencies’ own Indigenous recruitment activities.

In 2012–13, the Commission worked in partnership with more than 40 agencies to provide employment pathways for 117 Indigenous Australians through the APS Indigenous Pathways Program. The program promoted the APS as an employer of choice to Indigenous job seekers and provided entry-level opportunities for Indigenous trainees (64), cadets (24) and graduates (29).

The APS Indigenous Employment Strategy also strengthened the role of the Commission’s Indigenous Liaison Officers to include pre and post-recruitment support and advice for Indigenous candidates, regular interaction with agency HR areas and the creation of partnerships with Indigenous employee networks across Australia, including in regional areas.

The Commission also focused on coordinating Indigenous engagement and employment by providing a strategic view on the intersection between Indigenous policies, programs, administration and Indigenous culture. In particular, the Commission sought opportunities to partner with agencies to develop an ongoing and sustainable approach to Indigenous employment in the APS, by engaging directly with senior leaders, agency heads and Secretaries and assisting them to build their internal capabilities on Indigenous employment.

In 2009, under the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments, the Australian Government committed to increase Indigenous employment in the Commonwealth public sector—including the APS—to 2.7% by 2015, to reflect the projected national Indigenous working age population share. This commitment forms part of the broader ‘Closing the Gap’ agenda, aimed at halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018.

At 30 June 2013, 2.3% of the total APS workforce identified as Indigenous on their agencies’ HR systems, the same as at 30 June 2012. Over the long term, representation of Indigenous employees in the APS has declined from 2.8% in 2002.

In absolute terms, the number of employees identifying as Indigenous increased by eight, from 3,838 in June 2012 to 3,846 in June 2013. This is due to an increase in ongoing Indigenous employees, with the number of non-ongoing Indigenous employees declining by 38 from 519 in June 2012 to 481 in June 2013. Table 5.1 shows the changes in Indigenous representation from 2009 to 2013 for ongoing and non-ongoing employees.

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Table 5.1 Representation of Indigenous ongoing and non-ongoing employees, 2009 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment type</th>
<th>June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous employees (ongoing and non-ongoing) (%)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous employees (ongoing) (%)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: APSED

Indigenous Australians in the broader community have a much younger age profile than the Australian population, with the median age of Indigenous Australians 21 years, compared with 38 years for non-Indigenous Australians. While this age difference is less pronounced in the APS workforce, Indigenous employees in the APS are still, on average, younger than non-Indigenous employees (39 years compared with 43 years).

The APS Indigenous workforce is predominantly female, with Indigenous women comprising more than two-thirds (67.1%) of ongoing Indigenous employees. This representation is higher than the representation of women in the broader APS workforce, with women comprising 59.1% of ongoing non-Indigenous employees. This is consistent with workforce data from 2011–12, when 67.1% of Indigenous and 58.8% of non-Indigenous APS employees were women.

Jawun Indigenous partnerships

Jawun is a not-for-profit organisation managing secondments from corporate and government partners to Indigenous organisations, where APS employees share their knowledge and expertise. The Jawun Program is managed by the Commission on behalf of the APS.

For APS agencies and secondees, the secondments have resulted in:
- positive outcomes for the Indigenous communities
- increased cultural awareness and personal and professional development for the secondee
- increased cultural awareness and broader awareness of Indigenous matters within the agency.

During 2012–13, 38 APS employees from 17 agencies undertook secondments in Indigenous organisations under the Jawun Program.

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Engagements and job attraction

The number of ongoing Indigenous employee engagements remained relatively stable this year, with 380 Indigenous employees engaged (consistent with 382 engagements in 2011–12). However, Figure 5.2 shows that as a proportion of all engagements, Indigenous employee engagements increased from 3.4% in 2011–12 to 5.0% 2012–13.

Figure 5.2 Engagements and separations—Indigenous employees, 2004 to 2013

The majority of Indigenous employee engagements (87.1%) over this year were at entry levels (trainees, graduates and APS 1, 2, 3 and 4 classifications), which may reflect the focus on entry-level recruitment through the Pathways to Employment programs introduced in the past year. Two per cent of engagements at APS 5 to 6 levels were Indigenous and 0.7% at Executive Level (EL).

In the employee census, employees are asked what factors attracted them to their current job. Sixty per cent of Indigenous employees indicated that the opportunity to provide service to diversity groups was important, and 65% indicated that service to the general public was important. There is a marked difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees on these aspects of APS employment. Twenty-four per cent of non-Indigenous employees indicated that service to diversity groups was an important attraction to their current job and 52% indicated service to the general public.

These results may reflect the concentration of Indigenous employees in agencies responsible for delivering services predominantly to, or working with, Indigenous communities. Table 5.2 shows that the five agencies with the largest proportion of Indigenous employees all have significant Indigenous responsibilities.
Table 5.2 Agencies with the largest proportion of Indigenous employees, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Indigenous employees (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Hostels Ltd</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres Strait Regional Authority</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: APSED

The employment experience

Figure 5.3 shows that, consistent with last year’s results, Indigenous employees were slightly more engaged than non-Indigenous employees, suggesting the employment experience for Indigenous Australians is similar to that of other APS employees. The employee census also shows that the highest proportion of APS Indigenous employees were employed in service delivery roles (33% compared with 18% of non-Indigenous employees). Given the importance of service to diversity groups and service to the public as attraction features of APS employment for Indigenous employees, employment in service delivery likely has a positive impact on Indigenous employee engagement.

Figure 5.3 Employee engagement—Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees, 2012 and 2013

Source: Employee census

5 Of agencies with more than 100 employees.
The high representation of Indigenous employees in service delivery roles is due, in part, to the large proportion of Indigenous employees based outside of the Australian Capital Territory (70.7% compared with 59.5% of non-Indigenous employees).

Indigenous employees are also more likely to be employed at lower classification levels, with around 58.0% at APS 4 or below. Just 1.8% of APS 5 to 6 employees, 1.0% of EL and 0.7% of the Senior Executive Service (SES) identify as Indigenous. The reasons for this lower classification profile are complex and likely a mix of historic factors, agencies’ reliance on entry-level recruitment, Indigenous employees’ tendency for shorter APS careers (discussed in more detail in the next section), disclosure rates, location and job type.

Many agencies have recognised the importance of Indigenous cultural awareness training to improve the understanding of traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultures and the lived experience of Indigenous Australians today. The majority of agencies (62%) have indicated that they had or were developing Indigenous cultural awareness training. The training that was provided was through face-to-face activities (39% as part-day and 29% as one or more days of training) or e-learning platforms (32% of agencies).

Almost 74% of APS agencies encouraged employees to participate in cultural events as a measure to improve the retention of Indigenous employees. Cultural events included Reconciliation Week and National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.

**Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)—building Indigenous cultural awareness**

DIAC developed its Indigenous cultural awareness e-learning program to build employee understanding and awareness of contemporary and traditional Indigenous cultures. The program was developed in-house after extensive consultation with Indigenous employees and relevant external parties. It combines text, audio, interactive elements, video and story-telling. The program incorporates Aboriginal waterholes artwork to represent the learning journey and focuses on celebrating Indigenous cultures.

DIAC recognised that providing cultural awareness training through an e-learning platform would be more cost and resource-effective than face-to-face training and enable the department to make the training mandatory for all employees—including SES—regardless of location. At 30 June 2013, almost 70% of DIAC’s workforce had completed the training.

In a collaborative effort to build Indigenous cultural awareness across the APS, DIAC has committed to share its e-learning program with other agencies. DIAC currently has a memorandum of understanding with two APS agencies for use of the program and negotiations with other agencies (including a range of small agencies) are underway.
Intention to leave and separations

As with the APS overall, separations of Indigenous employees slowed in 2012–13. Encouragingly, unlike previous years, the number of such separations this year did not outweigh the number of Indigenous employee engagements. Last year, the overall separation rate for Indigenous employees was nearly double that of the APS rate. During 2012–13, there were 332 separations of ongoing Indigenous employees, representing an overall separation rate of 9.9% compared with 6.3% for the APS overall. As a proportion of all ongoing APS separations, Indigenous employee separations dropped to 3.5%, down from 4.2% in 2011–12. Resignation continues to be the most common separation type for Indigenous employees, representing 64.5% of Indigenous employee separations (compared with 46.3% for the broader APS). This was followed by retrenchments, with 17.5% of Indigenous employees separating in this way compared with 27.9% for the APS overall.

To maintain diversity during periods of workforce restructure, the Diversity Council recommended that agencies establish processes to monitor retrenchments to ensure particular groups are not disproportionately represented, and provide redeployment options and tailored support. Where previously Indigenous employees were disproportionately represented in retrenchments, this year they represented 2.2% of all retrenchments, which more closely reflects Indigenous representation in the APS.

While the overall gap between Indigenous employee separations and APS separations has narrowed, Indigenous employees continue to separate earlier in their careers than do non-Indigenous employees. During 2012–13, 20.5% of Indigenous employees who separated from the APS did so less than one year after engagement, almost four times the rate of non-Indigenous employees (5.9%). It is concerning that this rate increased from 16.5% last year. In light of this, the Commission’s Indigenous Liaison Officers are giving increased priority to providing support to new Indigenous employees and establishing partnerships with employee networks, including in regional areas, to ensure new recruits have the support and peer networks they need.

Despite the difference in separation rates, Indigenous employees are no more likely than non-Indigenous employees to indicate an immediate or short-term intention to leave their agency. The marked difference in intention to leave and actual separation rates for Indigenous employees suggests further research is needed.

In early 2013, the Commission, endorsed by the Diversity Council, rolled out APS-wide entry and exit surveys to collect valuable attraction and retention information from new APS employees and those leaving the service. The surveys are available to all agencies through the Commission. While the surveys collect data from all employees who choose to participate, they also help the APS to better understand the underlying factors influencing some critical employment trends for Indigenous employees and employees with disability. The information collected will help the APS to develop targeted approaches to attracting and retaining employees in a number of workforce segments, including diversity groups. To date, 49 agencies have requested information on including these surveys in their entry and exit processes and 196 completed surveys have been received. The completed entry surveys span 16 agencies and completed exit surveys have been received from 17 agencies.
Employees with disability

People with disability are underrepresented in the Australian workforce, despite 15% of the working age population reporting disability.\(^6\) Research on the employment experience of people with disability highlights the many barriers they face in seeking, obtaining and retaining employment. In most cases this is due to lack of opportunity, rather than lack of ability.\(^7\)

The Australian Government National Disability Strategy aims to improve the workforce participation of people with disability across Australia. To ensure the APS approach to disability employment is consistent with the National Disability Strategy, the As One—APS Disability Employment Strategy 2012–14 (As One) was launched by the Commission in 2012. A number of As One initiatives have been successfully implemented, including a pilot recruitment pathway for people with disability, establishment of an APS Disability Employment Working Group and the launch of the My Career, My APS online career tool for people with disability.

Given that the APS workforce continues to age and disability prevalence increases with age, the development and promotion of better disability employment outcomes will continue to be a priority for the APS. The ongoing implementation of As One represents a targeted set of actions to address this priority.

The proportion of people with disability in the APS in 2012–13 was 2.9% of all ongoing employees. This was unchanged from last year. In absolute terms, the number of ongoing employees with disability fell from 4,570 in 2011–12 to 4,450 in 2012–13, continuing a trend of steady decline since the mid-1990s.

The results of the employee census indicated that 6.8% of respondents identified as having some form of disability, a similar result to the 6.9% of respondents who reported the same in 2012.

Employees with disability are, on average, older than employees without disability (the median age was 48 years of age compared with 43 years). Similarly, employees with disability have a higher median length of service compared with employees reporting no disability, with a median length of service of 14 years compared with nine years.

Engagements and job attraction

The decline in representation of employees with disability over the long term is due to a combination of low engagements and high separations. On average, over the past 20 years, separations of employees with disability outweighed engagements by more than double. This indicates that an approach encompassing both recruitment and retention is required to reverse this trend. Figure 5.4 shows employees with disability represented 2.1% of engagements in 2012–13, an increase from 1.4% in 2011–12.


The employee census shows the factors that attracted employees with disability to their current job were broadly comparable to the broader APS. The most commonly cited attraction factor for employees with disability was type of work (71% indicated this factor was important in attracting them to their current position compared with 77% without disability). Employees with disability placed less importance on career progression than other employees (41% compared with 49%). Despite this, employees with disability were less satisfied with opportunities for career progression in their agency, compared with employees without disability (26% compared with 36%).

**RecruitAbility—Department of Defence**

On 3 June 2013, the Department of Defence (Defence) joined 14 other agencies to pilot RecruitAbility, and was the first agency to advertise positions under the scheme. Defence advertised 189 vacancies in the initial three months of the pilot and 129 applicants chose to participate in the scheme. In 2014, the Defence Graduate Office will include RecruitAbility to assist in the selection of the Department’s graduates.

**RecruitAbility—Comcare**

Comcare, a medium sized APS agency, committed early to piloting the RecruitAbility scheme, aiming to increase its attraction and employment of people with a disability. Comcare has advertised all job vacancies under the scheme since the start of the pilot in June 2013, with roles varying from APS 3 to EL 2 classifications. Comcare’s 2014 graduate positions were also advertised under RecruitAbility and attracted nine applicants with a disability, a significant increase from the previous year.
The employment experience

The employment experience of people with disability in the APS varies to that of employees without disability. Figure 5.5 shows that engagement levels for employees with disability continue to be lower than employees without disability, although, all four components of engagement improved from 2012 to 2013 for employees with disability.

Figure 5.5 Employee engagement—employees with disability, 2012 and 2013

Source: Employee census

Employees with disability were nearly twice as likely to report they felt they had been bullied or harassed in the past 12 months than employees without disability (29% compared with 15% in 2013). These findings are consistent with last year’s results (31% compared with 16%). Previous work undertaken by the Commission has demonstrated there is a relationship between the perceived experience of bullying or harassment and employee engagement scores, which may provide some insight into the comparatively low engagement levels of people with disability.

Employees with disability who felt they had been bullied or harassed in the past 12 months were slightly more likely to indicate they had reported the behaviour (47% compared with 43%). Similar to the wider APS, most employees who identified as having a disability indicated they did not think any action would be taken in response to their complaint (55% compared with 52%). However, the majority of employees who did not report the bullying or harassment took some other informal action, such as seeking support from a colleague. This suggests there is a role for peer support systems within agency strategies in managing perceived incidences of bullying and harassment. Perceptions of bullying and harassment in the APS are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
In expressing other perceptions of the workplace, employees with disability were:

- slightly less likely to agree they had a good immediate supervisor (73% compared with 79%)
- less satisfied with their opportunities for career progression in their agency (26% compared with 36%)
- less satisfied with their opportunity to use their skills (62% compared with 72%)
- less satisfied with their current work-life balance (61% compared with 71%).

Reasonable adjustment enables many people with disability to participate in employment on an equal basis with their colleagues and compete on a level playing field for positions and promotions. Employee census data shows that almost two-thirds (65%) of employees with disability reported requiring some form of reasonable adjustment in the workplace, with the most common type of adjustment being office furniture (50%) and arrangements relating to work hours (41%).

In 2012, the Diversity Council conducted research into agencies’ reasonable adjustment policies and practices. The research found that while most reasonable adjustments are, in reality, inexpensive and easy to implement, there is a persistent misconception that they are costly and burdensome. Research from the United States shows that about half of all adjustments cost little or nothing and around 90% of accommodations cost less than US$500.8 While there is no directly comparable APS data on costs of reasonable adjustment, feedback provided to the Diversity Council by agencies is consistent with the United States’ finding.

The Diversity Council endorsed these best practice principles related to reasonable adjustments:

- any equipment or adaptive technology provided to an employee as a reasonable adjustment should remain with the employee if they move between agencies
- within agencies a centralised funding model for reasonable adjustments should be considered
- a senior decision maker on reasonable adjustments should be appointed to ensure consistency and fairness
- use of the JobAccess Employment Assistance Fund should be promoted and encouraged by agencies.

**Intention to leave and separations**

In 2012–13, 5.1% of separations of ongoing APS employees were employees with disability. The overall separation rate for employees with disability was 10.8%, compared with 6.3% for the broader APS. Almost 40% of separations of employees with disability were by retrenchment (6.6% of all retrenchments), followed by age retirement (26.6%). This is consistent with last year’s results.

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There were minor variations in intention to leave between employees with disability and those without disability. Results from the employee census demonstrate that employees with disability were more likely to report they intended to leave their agency in the next 12 months or as soon as possible (23% compared with 19%). However, employees with disability were less likely to cite a desire for a career change (21% compared with 32%) as a reason to leave their agency and were more than twice as likely to report bullying, harassment or discrimination (24% compared with 11%) as a factor influencing their intention to leave.

Employees from a non-English speaking background

The proportion of ongoing APS employees who identified as being from a non-English speaking background remained stable this year at 5.4%. Consistent with findings for other diversity groups, results from the employee census indicate that the representation of people from a non-English speaking background is likely to be higher at around 15%.

The largest group of employees from a non-English speaking background were born in southern and central Asia (20.6%), followed by south-east Asia (20.0%) and north-east Asia (16.5%). More information on employees from Asia is in Chapter 8. The most common region of birth for employees from a non-English speaking background outside of Asia was southern and eastern Europe at 12.7%.

Engagements and job attraction

People from a non-English speaking background constituted 4.6% of all engagements to the APS in 2012–13. This represents a sharp decline in absolute numbers from 572 engagements in 2011–12, to 350 engagements in 2012–13.

The employee census demonstrates the factors that attracted employees from a non-English speaking background to their current position were similar to factors attracting other employees, with the most important being type of work (74% of employees from a non-English speaking background compared with 77% of other APS employees). However, employees from a non-English speaking background were more likely than other employees to rate the opportunity to provide service to diversity groups as an important factor (38% compared with 23%). This is consistent with results for other diversity groups.

The employment experience

Results from the employee census indicate that the employment experience of people from a non-English speaking background is similar to other employees. Employees from a non-English speaking background show no significant differences in employee engagement compared with other APS employees. Additionally, they are as equally satisfied with workplace health and wellbeing and their work-life balance as other APS employees.

9 People from non-English speaking background are defined as those who were born overseas and arrived in Australia after five years of age and whose first language was not English.
Employees from a non-English speaking background are much more likely to have graduate qualifications than other employees—at June 2013, 82.1% had a degree-level qualification, compared with the APS average of 59.5%. Employees from a non-English speaking background have a relatively high classification profile. Almost 40% are at the APS 5 to 6 classifications which could partly be a result of the high proportion of degree-level qualifications of this group.

**Intention to leave and separations**

In 2012–13, people from a non-English speaking background constituted 4.0% of all separations from the APS (Figure 5.6). In the past, engagements have consistently exceeded separations for this group.

![Figure 5.6 Engagements and separations—employees from a non-English speaking background, 2004 to 2013](image)

Source: APSED

Employees reported similar career intentions in the employee census regardless of their country of origin, with 16% of employees from a non-English speaking background and 19% of other APS employees intending to leave their current agency as soon as possible or within the next 12 months. This is a shift from last year’s results which saw 18% and 22% respectively citing they wanted to leave their agency as soon as possible or within the next 12 months. The most frequently reported reasons given by employees from a non-English speaking background intending to leave their agency were:

- lack of future career opportunities in the agency (54%)
- senior leadership of poor quality (30%)
- desire to try a different type of work or seek a career change (29%)
- lack of recognition for doing a good job (23%).
Women

The APS is one of Australia’s largest employers, employing more than 160,000 people around the country. Overall, most of the APS workforce is female (57.9%). However, this representation declines as the move to senior positions increases, with women comprising 39.5% of SES at June 2013. Despite this, the representation of women in APS leadership positions is in stark and positive contrast to the 16.4% of women on Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) 200 boards (as at September 2013).10 This representation of women in senior roles across the APS and ASX 200 boards is, however, the highest it has ever been and demonstrates notable progress in the proportion of women in senior leadership positions.

At June 2013, 57.5% of the ongoing APS workforce were women (up from 57.3% in 2012). This reflects the women in the labour force generally (58.7%)11 and is a higher representation of women than in the overall Australian population (50.6%).12

Large agencies with the highest representation of women were the Department of Human Services (71.7%) and Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) (70.0%). Large agencies with the lowest representation of women were the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) (27.4%) and Defence (40.6%).

Large agencies with the highest proportion of female SES were the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) (57.7%), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (57.2%) and DoHA (54.4%). Large agencies with the lowest proportion were BOM (21.0%), Department of the Treasury (24.5%) and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (25.7%).

Medium agencies with the highest representation of women at the SES level were the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (75.0%), Australian War Memorial (75.0%) and Comcare (66.7%). Medium agencies with the lowest representation of female SES were Defence Housing Australia (0.0%), the Clean Energy Regulator (25.0%) and Australian Financial Security Authority (25.0%). Trends for employment by sex are included in Appendix 1.

Women in APS leadership

In 2013, for the first time, agencies were asked to report on the representation of women in their leadership group. Rather than reporting by classification level, such as SES 2 or SES 3, agencies reported by level of hierarchy:

- agency head
- direct report to agency head (AH -1)
- direct report to those who direct report to the agency head (AH -2).


This reporting format was put in place to reflect the reporting recommendations made by the Male Champions of Change to ASX 200 companies. The Male Champions of Change is a group of Australian Chief Executive Officers and chairpersons brought together by the Human Rights Commissioner to elevate the issue of women’s representation in leadership to the national agenda. The group was formed in April 2010 and its members include the Chief of Army, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, and Australian Public Service Commissioner.

This data is included by agency in Appendix 7 and shows female agency heads were more likely than their male counterparts to have direct reports that were also women. That is, of the 26 female agency heads, 49% of their direct reports were women. The proportion of women reporting directly to male agency heads was 38%.

Of the 101 agencies with an independent agency head, 26 (25.7%) were women. Considering agency size, medium agencies were more likely to have a female agency head (30%) than small (28%) or large agencies (14%). Table 5.3 shows that the representation of women in agency leadership groups generally represents their overall representation in the SES. The AH -2 group (direct reports to those who direct report to the agency head) is well placed in small and medium agencies, with women making up more than 50% of these cohorts.

Table 5.3 Women in leadership roles by agency size, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency size</th>
<th>Agency head (% female)</th>
<th>AH -1 (% female)</th>
<th>AH -2 (% female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Agency survey

Table 5.4 shows that agencies with smaller operational and policy functions are more likely to have a female agency head than other agency functional groups. Again, the representation of women in the leadership groups for each functional cluster generally represents the SES. Specialist agencies had the lowest representation of women across the three leadership categories, while larger operational agencies (with the exception of agency head) had the highest. It is encouraging to note that almost 60% of the AH -2 in larger operational agencies are female.
Table 5.4 Women in leadership roles by agency function, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency function</th>
<th>Agency head (% female)</th>
<th>AH-1 (% female)</th>
<th>AH-2 (% female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller operational</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger operational</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Agency survey

Engagements and job attraction

For 2012–13, women constituted 57% of all engagements in the APS (up from 54.6% in 2012). Comparable to last year, the factors most important in attracting women to their current position were the type of work, followed by job security and/or stability and employment conditions. Apart from employment conditions (which were more important for female employees than males), men indicated similar attraction factors as women. However, women were more likely than their male counterparts to indicate service to diversity groups (29% compared with 19%) and career development (61% compared with 53%) as important factors in attracting them to their current positions.

In the employee census, men and women showed minor differences in their perceptions of what was attractive about their current job. Overall, women were more likely to indicate they have a clear understanding of how their group’s role contributes to their agency’s strategic directions (81% compared with 76%). They were also more likely to agree they were fairly remunerated (72% compared with 63%) and that their job involves a task that has an obvious beginning and end (68% compared with 61%).

The employment experience

The employee census showed that men and women had similar levels of employee engagement, although women had slightly higher levels of engagement on three of the four engagement components (job, supervisor and agency). From last year, employee engagement levels of women showed a slight increase on all components. Employee engagement levels are shown in Figure 5.7.
In 2012–13, there was little change in the proportion of women across classification levels. The greatest change from last year occurred at the trainee and graduate classifications, which increased from 47.0% to 61.2% and from 49.0% to 54.1% respectively. While the proportion of women within EL and SES levels has grown continually, in recent years it has levelled to a slow increase. Figure 5.8 shows the proportion of men and women at selected classifications at June 2013.
Women outnumber men at all classification levels up to and including APS 6 and men outnumber women from EL up to and including SES. While there has been steady progress in the representation of women at senior leadership levels over the past 20 years, women continue to be under represented in senior roles compared with men. At June 2013, the proportion of women in the SES was 39.5%, up slightly from 39.2% in 2012.

The representation of women within the SES increased at SES 1 and SES 3 levels. There was a greater increase at SES 3 level (30.2% up from 28.8% last year). In 2012–13, there was a minor decline in women at SES 2 (37.0% down from 37.5% last year).

At June 2013, the large agencies with the highest representation of women at higher classifications were DoHA (63.6% of EL and 54.4% of SES), FaHCSIA (62.2% of EL and 57.7% of SES), Attorney-General’s Department (62% of EL and 50% of SES) and DEEWR (56.4% of EL and 57.2% of SES).

Intention to leave and separations

Of all separations from the APS, women accounted for 53.9% in 2012–13, a decrease from 56.2% in 2011–12. In 2010 and again in 2012 women as a proportion of separations exceeded the proportion of females engaged in the APS (Figure 5.9).

Differences in intentions to leave for men and women were minor. Findings from the employee census show that slightly more men than women intended to leave their agency immediately or within the next year (21% compared with 18%). When indicating intention to leave, women were more likely to report they intended to stay in the public sector and less likely to report an intended move to the private sector.
For employees who intend to leave, the most common reason for men and women was lack of career opportunities in their agencies (52% of women and 49% of men). Women were less likely than men to report remuneration as a reason for leaving (9% compared with 16%). Additional reasons women gave for wanting to leave their agency included:

- desire to try different type of work or seeking a career change (32%)
- senior leadership is of poor quality (29%)
- interests do not match the responsibilities of the job (23%)
- lack of recognition for doing a good job (21%).

Satisfaction with work-life balance differs little between women and men (69% compared with 71%) and access to flexible working arrangements (70% compared with 72%). Satisfaction with and use of flexible work is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

Key findings

The APS Diversity Council was established in 2012 by the Secretaries Board to reinforce and reinvigorate the APS commitment to workforce diversity. This year, the Diversity Council undertook a review of agencies’ technical processes related to the employment of Indigenous Australians and people with disability and explored ways to build agency culture to better support workplace diversity and inclusion. The low rate of employee disclosure in relation to diversity status continues to be an issue for the APS. To improve the collection of diversity data from employees, amendments to the Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Directions from 1 July 2013 require agencies to ask all employees for diversity information while providing a ‘choose not to give this information’ option. These amendments are expected to improve the quality of diversity data across the APS.

In 2013, the proportion of women in the APS workforce increased slightly, the proportion of Indigenous employees and employees from a non-English speaking background stayed the same, while the proportion of employees with disability declined. A new iteration of the APS Indigenous Employment Strategy was launched in 2012, including Pathways to Employment programs, which provide a whole-of-APS approach to entry-level recruitment and are designed to complement agencies’ own Indigenous recruitment activities.

The As One—APS Disability Employment Strategy was launched in 2012. A number of initiatives from this strategy were implemented in the past year, including a pilot recruitment pathway for people with disability, establishment of an APS Disability Working Group and the launch of the My Career, My APS online career tool for people with disability. Given that the APS workforce continues to age and disability prevalence increases with age, the development and promotion of better disability employment outcomes will continue to be a priority for the APS.

The majority of the APS workforce is female although this representation decreases as classification level increases. As at June 2013, women comprised 39.5% of the SES. This is in stark and positive contrast to the 16.4% of women on ASX 200 boards (as at September 2013).
The representation of women in senior roles across the APS and the ASX 200 boards is the highest it has ever been and demonstrates notable progress in the proportion of women in senior leadership positions. There is, however, variability across agencies and further work is required to ensure the issue of women’s representation in leadership remains an ongoing focus for the APS.