



**Australian Government**

**Australian Public Service Commission**

# State of the Service Report 2005–06

State of the Service Series 2005–06

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ISBN 0 9775590 3 3



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Public Service Commission**

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The Honourable John Howard MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

In accordance with the provisions of section 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999* and clause 3.5(2) of the Public Service Commissioner's Directions, I present to you the component of my annual report reporting on the state of the Australian Public Service for the year 2005–06.

The Australian Public Service Commission will be separately publishing supporting documents, the *State of the Service 2005–06 At a Glance*, the *State of the Service Employee Survey Results 2005–06* and the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 2005–06*.

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit agreed in 2003 to extend the tabling deadline of the state of the service component of my annual report to one calendar month after the tabling date for agencies' annual reports.

Section 34C of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901* requires that you lay a copy of the Report before each House of Parliament within 15 sitting days after the day on which you receive the Report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lynelle Briggs'.

Lynelle Briggs  
30 November 2006



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# Preface



Section 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (the Act) provides that the Australian Public Service Commissioner must provide a report each year to the Prime Minister for presentation to the Parliament. The report must include a report on the state of the Australian Public Service during the year.

The State of the Service report draws on a range of information sources but its main data sources are two State of the Service surveys—one of agencies and the other of employees. The agency survey includes all APS agencies employing at least 20 staff under the Act. All 84 APS agencies, or semi-autonomous parts of agencies, which were invited to participate in the online agency survey in June 2006 completed the survey. These agencies are listed at Appendix 1.

To assist with analysis of the agency survey data, and for comparability with previous years' data, agencies have again been grouped according to size. Of the 84 responding agencies, 23 were classified as large (>1000 APS employees), 26 as medium (251–1000 APS employees) and 35 as small (20–250 APS employees). These size categories are generally consistent with those used by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO).<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 provides information on agencies' APS employee numbers.

The second State of the Service survey involved a stratified random sample of 6166 APS employees from APS agencies with at least 100 APS employees. A total of 3954 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 64%. The sample size and number of valid responses allows a range of cross-tabulations to be used with a degree of confidence. In addition, this year's report also draws on factor analysis to interpret employee survey data. Portfolio departments and other large agencies are provided with their own individual agency-specific results for internal management purposes.

While the size groupings for large and medium agencies are the same for the agency and employee surveys, it should be noted that for the purposes of the employee survey 'small' refers to agencies with between 100 and 250 APS employees. Appendix 2 provides information on the employee and agency survey methodologies.

The Commission engaged the services of ORIMA Research to assist with the design, delivery and statistical outputs of both surveys. When designing the first employee survey the Commission also engaged the services of the Australian Bureau of Statistics to advise on aspects of survey methodology; this advice continues to be used. Assistance in the development and pilot testing of the agency survey was provided by our agency contact officers in a number of agencies including the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Defence, Comcare, the Child Support Agency, and Qwestacon. Assistance with cognitive testing of the employee survey was provided by a range of individual APS employees from across a range of agencies. The Commission is very grateful for this input.

The report also draws on the results of the evaluations conducted by the Commission during 2005–06. The main evaluation was agencies' approaches to attracting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. As part of this evaluation a census survey of Indigenous employees was conducted—the results of this survey can be found in the *Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees*. Appendix 3 provides information on the methodology used for this evaluation, as well as an evaluation of agency remuneration strategies.

The report has also relied heavily on published reports from parliamentary committees and ANAO. Input has been sought from central agencies, particularly the Department of Finance and Administration, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and ANAO, and their assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Contributions were also appreciated from Comcare, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the National Archives of Australia, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Australian Government Information Management Office, and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Associated with the *State of the Service Report 2005–06* are two other publications—the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 2005–06* and the *State of the Service Employee Survey Results 2005–06*. A summary pamphlet, *State of the Service 2005–06 At a Glance*, has also been prepared. These publications are available on the Commission website at: <<http://www.apsc.gov.au>>

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<sup>1</sup> ANAO, *Staff Reductions in the Australian Public Service*, Performance Audit Report No. 49, June 1999, <<http://www.anao.gov.au>>