Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

State of the Service Report 2018–19

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State of the Service Report

2018–19

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This document must be attributed as the State of the Service Report 2018–19.

Australian Government
Australian Public Service Commission

The Honourable Greg Hunt MP
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

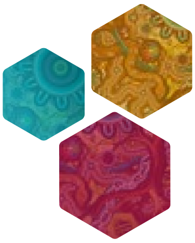
Dear Minister

In accordance with Section 44(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth), I present you with my report on the state of the Australian Public Service for 2018–19.

Section 44(3) of the *Public Service Act 1999* requires that this report is laid before each House of Parliament by 30 November 2019.

Yours sincerely

Peter Woolcott AO
Australian Public Service Commissioner
18 November 2019



Preface

Section 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth) stipulates that the Australian Public Service Commissioner shall issue a report each year to the agency's Minister for presentation to the Australian Parliament. The report must include a report on the state of the Australian Public Service (APS) during the year.

The *State of the Service Report 2018–19* identifies the year-to-year trends in workforce participation and capability across the APS.

This is the 22nd annual report on the state of the APS presented to Parliament. The report has been significantly enhanced since it was first tabled in 1998.

This year, the State of the Service Report has been organised around two key themes—culture and capability.

The report contains an overview of the current state of play in the APS and the future opportunities and challenges for the APS workforce. The remaining seven chapters are grouped under the two themes outlined above.

The appendixes to the *State of the Service Report 2018–19* comprise:

- APS workforce information sources
- APS agencies
- APS workforce trends
- supporting statistics to the report
- unscheduled absence data.

APS at a

GLANCE

Employee headcount

at 30 June 2019

147,237 ↓

-2.1%

from June 2018

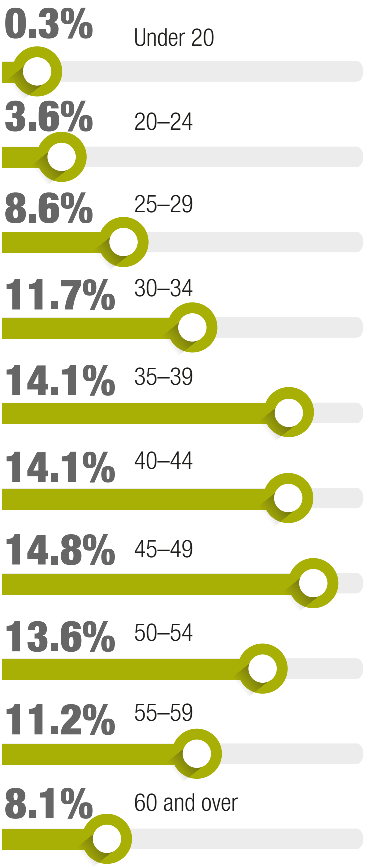
separations 2018–19	12,100
engagements 2018–19	8,564

Ongoing and non-ongoing employees

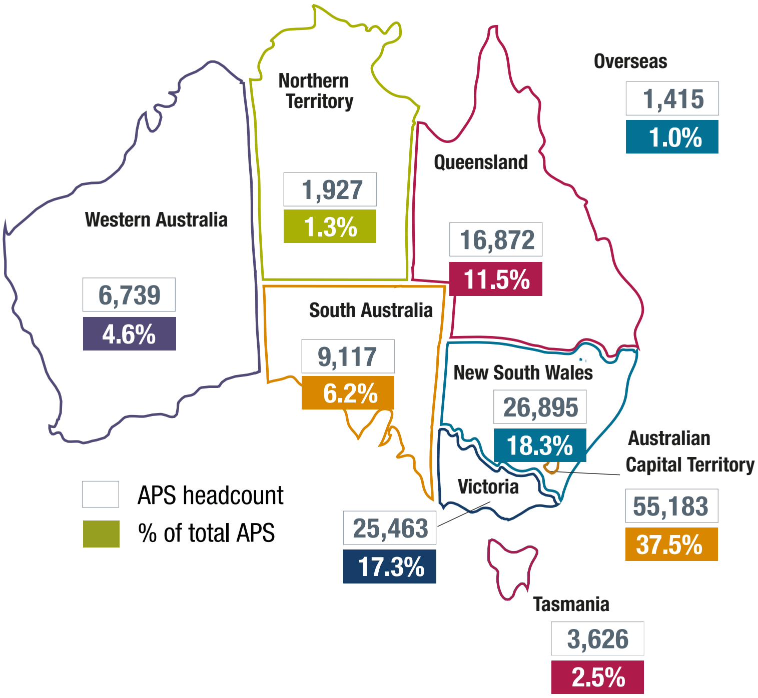
at 30 June

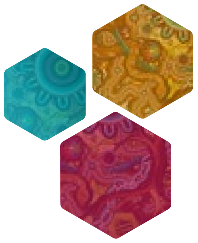
2018	
Ongoing	136,158
Non-going	14,237
2019	
Ongoing	132,192
Non-going	15,045

Proportion of employees by age



Number and proportion of employees by location


Northern Territory
1,927
1.3%
Overseas
1,415
1.0%
Queensland
16,872
11.5%
Western Australia
6,739
4.6%
South Australia
9,117
6.2%
New South Wales
26,895
18.3%
Australian Capital Territory
55,183
37.5%
Victoria
25,463
17.3%
Tasmania
3,626
2.5%
☐ APS headcount
🟩 % of total APS



Gender by classification 2019

Trainee
f: 54.1%
m: 45.7%

Grad
f: 48.1%
m: 51.7%

APS 1
f: 68.7%
m: 31.3%

APS 2
f: 60.2%
m: 39.7%

APS 3
f: 65.5%
m: 34.3%

APS 4
f: 68.9%
m: 31.1%

APS 5
f: 61.6%
m: 38.4%

APS 6
f: 58.4%
m: 41.6%

EL 1
f: 52.7%
m: 47.2%

EL 2
f: 47.7%
m: 52.3%

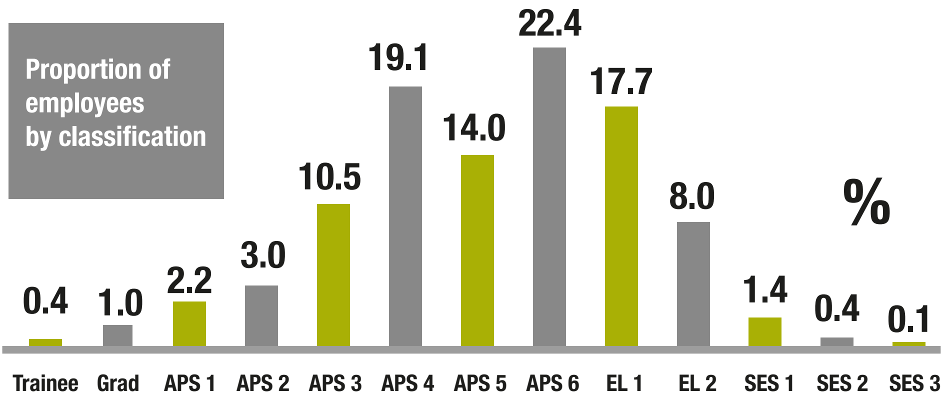
SES 1
f: 48.4%
m: 51.6%

SES 2
f: 39.5%
m: 60.5%

SES 3
f: 43.7%
m: 56.3%

Note: While data for Gender X employees was collected, proportions are too small to be presented

Proportion of employees by classification



Diversity

59.6%
Women

3.5%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

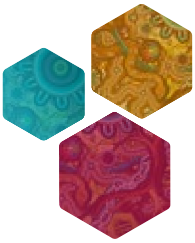
3.7%
Employees with an ongoing disability

22.3%
Employees born overseas

16.2%
Employees born in a non-English speaking country

4.8%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and/or Intersex (LGBTI+)

Source: APSED and 2019 APS employee census



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Commissioner's OVERVIEW

Service to the Government, the Parliament and the people of Australia, is the reason the Australian Public Service (APS) exists.

As at 30 June 2019, the serving responsibilities of 147,237 APS employees were spread across 18 departments and 80 agencies and authorities located across Australia (APS Employment Database, APSED). Each day, public servants deliver services and programs, provide policy advice, regulate legislation, and manage resources that touch upon every aspect of the lives of the people of Australia.

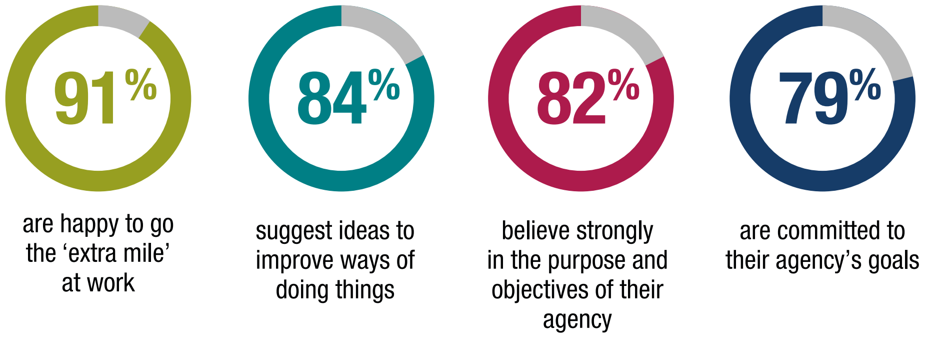
While there is significant diversity in roles, responsibilities and functions, all APS employees are united in a single institution under the same APS Values, Code of Conduct and Employment Principles. Accountability to the Australian community, and commitment to service that delivers the best results for the Australian people and the government of the day, are embodied in the APS Values.

The APS has a rich history shaped by many thousands of talented and committed individuals who wanted to make a difference for their country. This dedication to service lives on in today's APS, which is full of high-calibre employees with a commitment to good government and the wellbeing of all Australians. This is borne out by the 2019 APS employee census, which indicates that APS employees are more engaged than ever in the work they undertake (Figure A).

Alongside many other public and private institutions across the world, the APS is being challenged by rapid developments on various fronts, driven by advances in technology along with societal change and geopolitical volatility. Public trust in established institutions appears to be in short supply; at the same time, citizen expectations have never been higher. The Government has also expressed its high expectations of the APS, particularly in relation to the role of the APS in delivering outcomes to the Australian community.

In this environment, the APS needs to continue to reform and adapt to ensure it is in a position to meet the expectations of the Government and the people of Australia, now and into the future.

Figure A: 2019 APS employee census highlights



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Public sector reform

The first Commonwealth Public Service Commissioner, Duncan McLachlan, suggested in 1910 that the public service and the legislation governing its operations would constantly be in a process of evolution. In more recent times, the 1974–76 Coombs Royal Commission and subsequent reviews of the APS have helped shape the modern system of public administration that has served Australia well over the last decades.

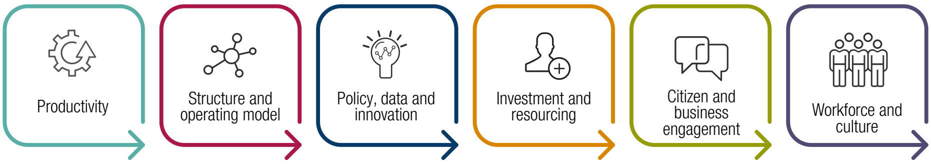
As the operating environment of the APS undergoes rapid change, however, and complex and interrelated policy challenges become the norm, it is clear that the evolution anticipated by Duncan McLachlan in 1910 requires greater impetus with transformative, not incremental change. Change is upon the APS and it is up to the APS to adapt.

This is not an indictment on the institution of the APS. Rather, it is a recognition that the definition of an effective public sector is changing in tandem with the world and society around it. Australia needs a public service that deals with issues that cut across organisational boundaries and traditional ways of working—one that is outward facing and more porous. To retain influence and credibility, APS employees need to be flexible and able to share ideas, resources and accountability. The APS needs to attract, develop and leverage the skills, knowledge, experiences and networks that individual employees bring to their work, while strengthening relationships and engagement with those outside the service to shape outcomes.

The APS is not sitting idle in the face of change. Hard work on public sector reform is already taking place to ensure that the APS can meet the challenges ahead, with strong momentum for change across the service. The Government has given a clear sense of where the APS needs to focus its efforts, and secretaries and heads of agencies are committed to realising genuine reform.

Through the APS Reform Committee, the Secretaries Board has already been overseeing short and medium-term reform projects designed to build a public sector equipped to meet current and future needs of government, citizens and business (Figure B). Secretaries have been focused on delivering for citizens, on data and innovation, and on improving the way the APS operates—its workforce culture and operating model. A number of these existing reform initiatives are mentioned throughout this report.

Figure B: APS Reform Committee work streams


Productivity
Structure and operating model
Policy, data and innovation
Investment and resourcing
Citizen and business engagement
Workforce and culture

The Independent Review of the APS, led by David Thodey AO, presented its final report to the Government on 20 September 2019 with an explicit focus on ensuring that the APS remains effective in the longer term. This is the first comprehensive review of the APS in more than 30 years and it is likely to have a long-term impact and influence on the institution.

The Review panel's final recommendations are expected to be ambitious in nature and transformational in scope. Several broad themes are already clear, including the need for more effective collaboration within and outside the APS; a greater focus on technology as an enabler of service delivery; investment in workforce capability; responsiveness to changing priorities; and improvements to leadership and governance. In one way or another, this report also touches on each of these themes.

It is not yet known which recommendations the Government will accept. However, what is known is that the public service and its leadership are already working towards the change that the current and future operating context requires.

The current state of the APS

The Australian public requires and expects that the APS will support the Government in securing the wellbeing, safety and living standards of the people of Australia. Fulfilling this expectation demands a high-performing APS, with a culture of excellence and a focus on developing and deploying the right capability in all fields of responsibility.

International comparisons continue to paint a solid picture of Australia's public sector. The most recent (2019) International Civil Service Effectiveness Index (InCiSE) ranks Australia fifth overall, with above average scores for all indicators.[1,2] Australia continues to perform particularly well on crisis and risk management compared to other jurisdictions. Policy making, regulation, integrity and inclusiveness are other areas of relative strength. The most recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Government at a Glance 2019* data similarly confirms the robustness of Australia's public sector.[3]

There are many lenses through which the APS can be examined. Each *State of the Service Report* has sought to provide an accurate, relevant and timely perspective on various aspects of the APS workforce. This 2018–19 *State of the Service Report* looks at the current state of the APS under two broad themes: culture and capability.

Leadership is a driver of both culture and capability, so leadership and the role of leaders are explored throughout this report. In addition, as the pace of technological and societal change accelerates, any assessment of public sector effectiveness requires more than ever an eye to the future. This report also seeks to highlight both opportunities and challenges ahead for the APS.

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[1] Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. (2019). *International Civil Service Effectiveness Index 2019.* Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/about/partnerships/international-civil-service-effectiveness-index-2019

[2] Although this is a drop from third position overall in 2017, a change in methodology means a direct comparison between years is not possible.

[3] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Government at a Glance 2019.*

Culture

Organisational culture plays a key role in the ability of the APS to deliver on its legislative obligations to the Government and the people of Australia.

The culture of the APS is shaped by many factors. The principle of stewardship is critical, as it underpins the full spectrum of work that the APS undertakes. In serving the Government, the Parliament and the public, the APS is the steward of numerous legislative, policy, service delivery and management functions. This stewardship role creates current and future responsibilities to the people of Australia, with a need for the APS to provide continuity of purpose and focus on outcomes across changing political climates.

The *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth) is another foundational element, laying out with clarity and precision the parameters of employment in the APS, including the APS Values, Code of Conduct and Employment Principles that govern all APS employees.

The PS Act is supported by the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016*, which also play a part in shaping the culture of the APS, by providing agencies with more detailed guidance on particular matters. For example, I have recently updated the directions relating to APS performance management, with a view to fostering an APS culture where employees at all levels take responsibility for performing effectively. This goes beyond managing underperformance, and seeks to actively foster a culture of high performance across the service.

Culture, however, is far more than guiding principles and documents. The culture of the APS is more fully expressed by the daily attitudes and behaviours of the 147,237 Australians that make up the APS workforce.

Integrity and ethics have always been necessary constituents of the public service ethos. However, in an era of declining public trust and increasingly complex and interconnected issues, operating ethically and with integrity is taking on even greater significance. It is encouraging that findings on these matters from the 2019 APS employee census are broadly on a par or slightly improved from last year, but there is still progress to be made.

Trust from the community also stems from the ability of the APS to implement government priorities in a timely and effective manner. Citizen engagement is key to this—both in program design and evaluation.

Public sector transparency is gaining in importance to the Australian community. Australia is one of more than 75 countries committed to realising the values of the Open Government Partnership, and the OECD's *Government at a Glance 2019* data reveals significant improvements in open government data availability and accessibility.[4] It is important to maintain this trajectory, as a driver of public trust.

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[4] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Government at a Glance 2019*.

Similarly, a culture of collaboration, across the APS and externally, is becoming more important. A traditional approach to addressing multifaceted policy and service delivery issues usually prioritises information sharing and consultation, rather than collaboration. However, genuine collaboration—with agencies, citizens, business and other levels of government—is potentially transformative. This report highlights some encouraging examples of this approach, but here again, there is more to be done.

Attitudes and approaches to risk—and, by extension, to innovation—also speak volumes about the way the APS approaches its work. Complex public sector challenges require a willingness to experiment with new approaches. This year's whole-of-APS innovation index continues to improve, but there remain a number of culturally ingrained attitudes to risk that stifle innovative practices. The APS needs to engage more positively with risk to build capacity to innovate.

Finally, diversity and inclusion continue to be important lenses to critically examine organisational culture. This report highlights the progress the APS is making towards reflecting the diversity of the community it serves. However, question marks remain regarding diversity of thought, and more is needed to ensure the diversity we have achieved translates to a culture that is genuinely inclusive of all employees.

Capability

Ensuring that the APS has the capabilities required to serve the Government and the people of Australia, now and into the future, is a multi-faceted challenge.

The operating environment for the APS is increasingly digital, bringing potentially seismic changes to the nature of work. It is therefore not surprising that digital skills and data analysis have been highlighted by APS agencies as priority areas for capability development. However, professional public service capabilities, such as policy expertise, and program and project management, also need to be maintained and developed.

A key consideration is the need to drive organisational performance across the APS. To achieve this, the APS needs to understand its workforce—both at agency level and at system level—in order to attract, retain and quickly deploy the capabilities needed now and into the future. In addition, the working environment for APS employees needs to be conducive to high performance.

The 2019 APS employee census and agency survey indicate that the APS is making progress on many fronts. APS employees are more engaged and feel more connected to the goals and objectives of their agencies. They are more satisfied with their job stability and security, and feel they have greater opportunities to use their skills than in previous years.

On the other hand, rates of mobility—an important enabler of organisational performance—remain low. Less than four per cent of the APS moves to a different agency each year, and within that figure, most movements take place in Canberra, especially between agencies with a policy focus (Figure C).

Employee mobility is a useful and effective means of fostering diversity of thinking and the contestability of ideas, as well as contributing to employee capability development. Well-designed mobility processes and structures will enable the APS to rapidly deploy staff where they are most needed. The APS does this well in a crisis, but as 'business as usual' responsibilities involve increasingly complex policy and service delivery issues, this approach will need to be more widely accepted and enabled across the workforce.

It is encouraging that some APS agencies are already working towards this goal through a pilot secondment initiative that is looking at how to move people within and across the APS, state and territory public services, and the private sector.

In adapting to rapid change, leadership capability will continue to be hugely important. The calibre of senior leaders across the APS is strong, and the 2019 APS employee census indicates that employee perceptions relating to their senior leaders continue to improve. However, there is room for progress. As well as investing in capability development for the current leadership cohort, the APS needs to ensure there is a pipeline of emerging leaders with the required capability to fill key roles into the future. Understanding what APS leadership capability should look like, and how best it can be developed, is already a priority for the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC).

Leadership capability is just one aspect of the broader capability requirements of the APS workforce and it is essential that APS employees at all classification levels have the knowledge and skills to effectively fulfil their responsibilities. The 2019 APS employee census indicates that employee perceptions relating to availability, relevance and support for capability development are broadly positive; in addition, the majority of employees report spending time out of working hours building their own capability.

All these issues come together in the whole-of-APS workforce strategy that is under development. The strategy aims to identify priority intervention areas in response to current and future workforce challenges. Drawing on a strong evidence base, the strategy will ensure the APS is able to deliver for Australia and Australians now and into the future.

Looking to the future

Much has been said and written about the future of work, but in many respects, the future of work is now. Change—be it technological, societal, demographic or geopolitical—is upon us. The APS must adapt to realise the vision set out in the PS Act—'an apolitical public service that is efficient and effective in serving the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public'.

The 1976 Coombs Royal Commission laid the foundation for the success that the APS has demonstrated over the last four decades.

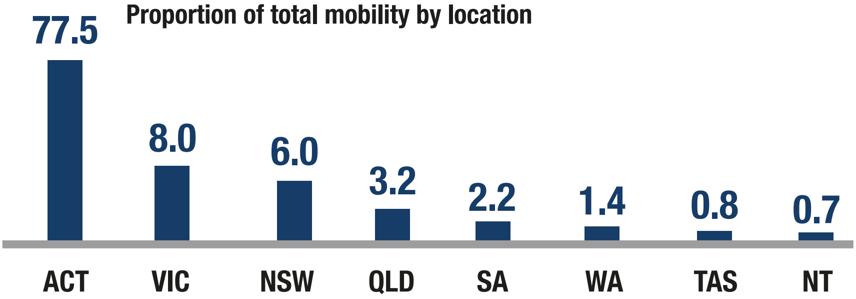
Figure C: Mobility of APS employees

Total of **4,776** ongoing employees moved between agencies in 2018–19 **(3.6% of APS)**

Median length of temporary transfer time is **six months**

Mobility **%** by gender: **3.0%** **4.0%**

Proportion of total mobility by location



71.2% of ongoing APS employees have worked in one agency

18.0% in two agencies

10.8% in three or more agencies

Source: APSED

However, as the operating environment for the APS has continued to evolve, more recent reviews, including *Ahead of the Game* in 2010, have emphasised the need for ongoing change.

One key outcome from *Ahead of the Game* was the establishment of the Secretaries Board to 'drive reform in areas including strategic policy, citizen-centred service delivery and collaboration across the APS'.[5] This recommendation, realised through amendments to the PS Act in 2012, has significantly enhanced the strategic leadership of the APS.

In his recent address to the APS, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, articulated six 'guideposts': a set of guiding principles for the role of the APS as it supports the Government to address the multiple interconnected challenges Australia is facing.[6] Each guidepost aligns in some way to the responsibilities for the public service set out in its governing legislation.

Of primary importance for the Government is an unwavering focus on serving the people of Australia, wherever they are located across the length and breadth of the country. A public service that is focused on the citizen is embedded in the APS Values and we must continue to concentrate our efforts on delivering outcomes for the Australian people.

The Prime Minister has given some examples that illustrate his perspective on how the APS might be more efficient and effective in serving the Australian public. These include: more seamless and efficient service delivery; openness to a greater diversity of views; clearer focus on outcomes, accompanied by clear priorities, targets and performance metrics; greater willingness to innovate and adapt; and, above all, a clear line of sight for every APS employee to understand how their work impacts on the community.

These, and other priorities articulated by the Prime Minister—such as the importance of respectful and constructive relationships between ministers and their departments—resonate strongly with the expected recommendations of the Independent Review of the APS. So, as the Government considers its formal response to the Review, there is no doubt that the APS has the imprimatur to continue, and expand, the reform agenda that is already in place.

The Chair of the Independent Review, David Thodey AO, has spoken about the scope, the direction and the urgency of change that is required. The Secretaries Board is committed to leading reform. Coupled with a highly engaged APS workforce, there are strong foundations for the successful realisation of the required transformation.

Leadership at all levels is a critical component of the change journey the APS is undertaking. Traditional leadership capabilities that focus on identifying and delivering outcomes will remain essential. At the same time, other capabilities—particularly relating to stakeholder engagement and emotional intelligence—are becoming increasingly important. The full range of leadership capability will be a key aspect of the change agenda.

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[5] Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration. (2010). *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration,* x.

[6] Morrison, S. (2019). Speech, Institute of Public Administration. Retrieved 3 October 2019 from https://www.pm.gov.au/media/speech-institute-public-administration

As the APS changes and evolves, the attitudes and behaviours of APS employees must continue to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity. Integrity underpins how APS employees engage with the public, with each other and with the Government. Integrity must continue to be front and centre in the mind of every APS employee.

The integrity of the APS is a key driver of public trust. And trust matters. It is a foundation of the serving relationship between the APS, the Government and the community. It is the bedrock of the legitimacy and sustainability of political systems. It is essential for social cohesion and well-being. As we look to the future—to different ways of working, new technologies, porous workforce boundaries, greater reliance on data—public trust in the APS will take on even greater significance.

The relationship between integrity and trust means that, in many respects, our future ability to serve the Government and the public hinges on our reputation for integrity. A recent Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) publication, commissioned by the Independent Review of the APS, raised the theme of 'institutional integrity', defining it as: 'a collective virtue of the institution itself' where the public can see the whole APS as an institution that is 'consistent, coherent, legitimate, praiseworthy, virtuous and trustworthy'.[7]

This is what the APS must aspire to—a change in mindset from compliance to a pro-integrity culture that promotes and exemplifies shared integrity-related values and practices. Every facet of APS engagement with the Government, the Parliament and the people of Australia must be grounded in integrity and public service professionalism.

An uncompromising emphasis on serving the Government and the people of Australia with integrity has always set the APS apart. These foundations of the public service vocation will remain unchanged. Many Australians wish to make a difference to their communities; however, many are unaware of the opportunities that APS employment provides. Communicating the APS brand more clearly in an evolving labour marketplace will be a priority over the coming months.

I look forward to reporting on progress towards this goal—and other challenges facing the APS—in next year's *State of the Service Report*.

Peter Woolcott AO
Australian Public Service Commissioner

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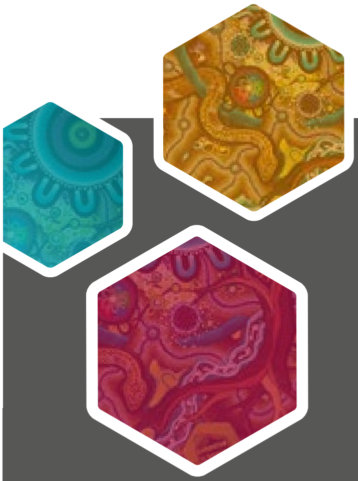
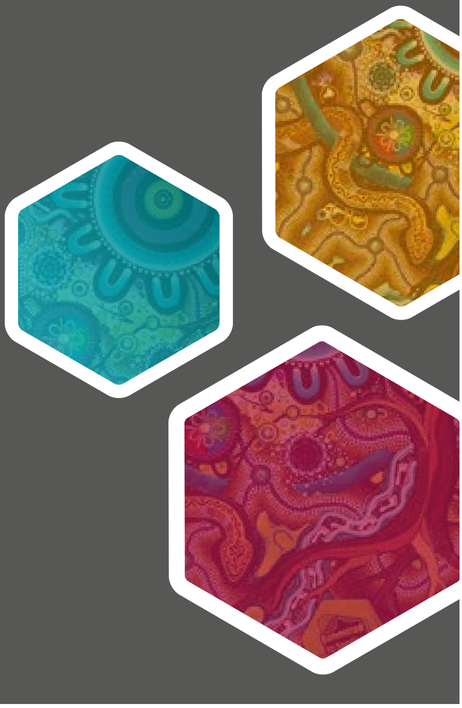
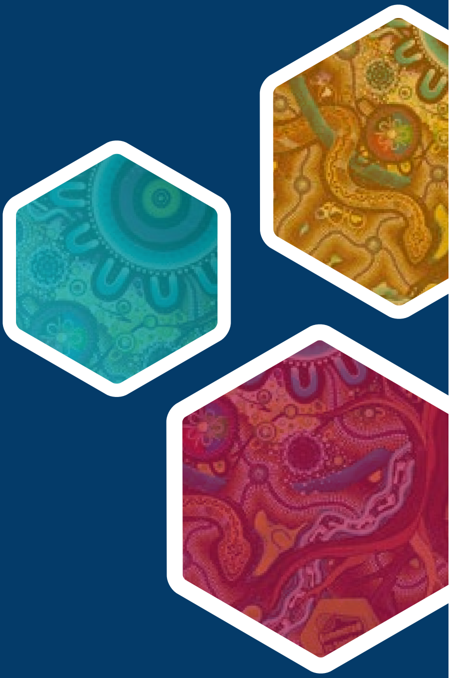
[7] Kirby, N. and Webbe, S. Australia and New Zealand School of Government. (2019). *Being a trusted and respected partner: the APS integrity framework*.



Theme:

CULTURE





Chapter
ONE

Institutional stewardship

> Stewardship relates not only to financial sustainability and the effective and efficient management of resources, but also to less tangible factors such as maintaining the trust placed in the APS and building a culture of innovation and integrity in policy advice.
>
> Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration[8]

The APS assists successive governments to administer laws and deliver services to maintain and enhance the wellbeing and prosperity of Australians. The PS Act sets out the values, rules and frameworks for an apolitical, efficient and effective public service. The PS Act also sets out the stewardship role of departmental secretaries, who are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring apolitical, efficient and effective service for Australians from within departments, and across the APS (through the Secretaries Board).

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[8] Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration. (2010). *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*, 15.

The stewardship role of the Secretaries Board is not separate from the responsibility to serve the government of the day. However, stewardship extends beyond electoral horizons, as the APS champions good governance of public institutions over the medium to long term to advance the interests of Australia and all Australians. The ultimate beneficiaries of APS stewardship are the people of Australia, both now and in the future.

At institutional level, stewardship involves objective and collective action to ensure the public service delivers the best results for Australians. A key aspect of this is unwavering focus on policy and program outcomes that deliver public benefit in an effective and efficient manner. As a result, in today's context stewardship demands the service work more collaboratively on the multifaceted challenges Australia is facing.

> Leaders have an important stewardship role in exercising their powers and using public resources, and it is important for leaders to govern public sector entities in a way that sustains strong capacity to serve government and the community over time.
>
> Australian National Audit Office[9]

Good stewardship encourages the provision of frank and fearless advice to government to inform and assist the design and delivery of government priorities, alongside a focus on the governance, sustainability and productivity of public sector institutions. Ultimately, stewardship provides for accountability to the Australian community that the APS serves.

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[9] Australian National Audit Office (2014). *Public Sector Governance: strengthening performance through good governance, 10.*

One APS

> In policy development and service delivery the APS needs to work together as one organisation so that it is equipped to tackle multi-dimensional and interrelated issues.
>
> Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration[10]

The 1976 Coombs Royal Commission sparked a gradual process of devolution across the APS, leading to a greater focus on agency-level outcomes, performance and accountability. This approach brought clear benefits in terms of responsiveness to government and delivery of services to the community. However, with the benefit of hindsight it is possible to see that agency autonomy has also worked against system-wide perspectives and longer-term management of issues across the APS.

A number of reviews of the APS have highlighted the need for the service to function in a more united and cohesive manner. *Ahead of the Game* saw APS-wide cohesion as a means for dealing with complex challenges; *Learning from Failure* presented the idea of one APS in terms of system-wide responsiveness. *Priorities for Change*[11] emphasised the need for the APS to be 'united in serving all Australians' and indicated that too much devolution resulted in poorly integrated advice and support to the Government on complex priorities.

> 'One APS' needs to reimagine itself as an adaptive organisation—flexible, experimental, facilitative and agile.
>
> Peter Shergold AC, former Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet[12]

'One APS' is not an end in itself—rather, it is a means to achieving better outcomes for government and for Australians. APS employees already operate under the same APS Values, Code of Conduct and Employment Principles, but the concept of 'One APS' goes beyond these legislative frameworks to the very reason the APS exists as outlined in the PS Act: efficient and effective service to Australia and Australians.

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[10] Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration. (2010). *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*, 10.

[11] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). *Independent Review of the APS: Priorities for Change*.

[12] Shergold, P. (2015). *Learning from Failure: Why large government policy initiatives have gone so badly wrong in the past and how the chances of success in the future can be improved, xi.*

There is no simple definition of 'One APS' but, fundamentally, as highlighted by *Priorities for Change*, it is about common purpose—a shared understanding of what it is that sets the APS apart from other organisations. The importance of this is also reflected in the Prime Minister's call for all APS employees to have a 'clear line of sight' between their work and delivery of outcomes to the people of Australia.[13]

Fostering a performance culture

A clear and common purpose fosters stewardship and high performance by organisations and individuals.[14] To meet the challenges of a complex, rapidly changing Australia, agencies, leaders and the broader APS workforce must think and work beyond agency boundaries to achieve common objectives. In this context the APS must adapt to new ways of working and display resilience to change while continuing to perform at high levels.

High performance—an essential feature of public service stewardship and accountability—is embedded in the APS Values and Employment Principles. 'Committed to service' is defined by the PS Act as an APS that is 'professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government'.

Upholding this value includes:

- managing change effectively
- promoting continuous improvement
- supporting collaboration and teamwork
- identifying and managing areas of risk
- encouraging innovative thought
- supporting innovative solutions.

These are all approaches that build strong foundations for high-performing organisations and an effective and efficient APS.

In the 2019 APS employee census, employees were asked to rate their agency's success in meeting its goals and objectives on a 10-point scale (where 1 means no success, 5 means usual levels of success and 10 means the best the agency has performed). Employee perceptions on this question have remained relatively stable, increasing from 6.7 in 2018 to 6.8 in 2019.

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[13] Morrison, S. (2019). Speech, Institute of Public Administration. Retrieved 3 October 2019 from https://www.pm.gov.au/media/speech-institute-public-administration

[14] Wilson, C. (2015). *Designing the Purposeful Organization: How to inspire business performance beyond boundaries.* Philadelphia: Kogan Page.

Cross-referencing 2019 APS employee census data reveals that employees who do not believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of their agency rate their agency's success in meeting its goals and objectives noticeably lower on average, at 4.6 out of 10. This suggests there is a relationship between perceptions of agency performance and employee engagement. Further drivers of performance are discussed in Chapter 7, under organisational capability.

Effective performance management

To deliver strong outcomes for the Australian community, agencies use a range of strategies, business plans and individual performance agreements to document the outcomes and outputs against which performance is measured. The APS Employment Principles require effective performance from each employee, and this demands a clear understanding of how their work contributes to their agency achieving its outcomes.

The *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016* were amended in July 2019 to clarify the obligations of agency heads, supervisors and APS employees in achieving, promoting and fostering a high-performance culture. The Commissioner's Directions emphasise that effective performance is a shared responsibility.

> The amendments [to the Commissioner's Directions] are about achieving optimal performance across all agencies. They also hold all APS employees accountable for upholding the APS employment principle that requires effective performance from every employee.
>
> Peter Woolcott AO, Australian Public Service Commissioner[15]

A high-performance culture is a system that promotes and incentivises effective performance and fosters talent. Performance expectations are clear, alongside a focus on performance improvement and prevention of underperformance. A high-performance culture also promotes active management of performance issues and requires mutual accountability for achieving effective performance.

Organisational culture is critical to fostering high-performing workforces and organisations. Leaders need to ensure that employees can ask for support and raise concerns, and that they feel trusted to do their jobs. Where this is promoted, employees feel confident in giving and receiving feedback, remain flexible and adaptable to change, and feel empowered to facilitate conversations on effective performance.

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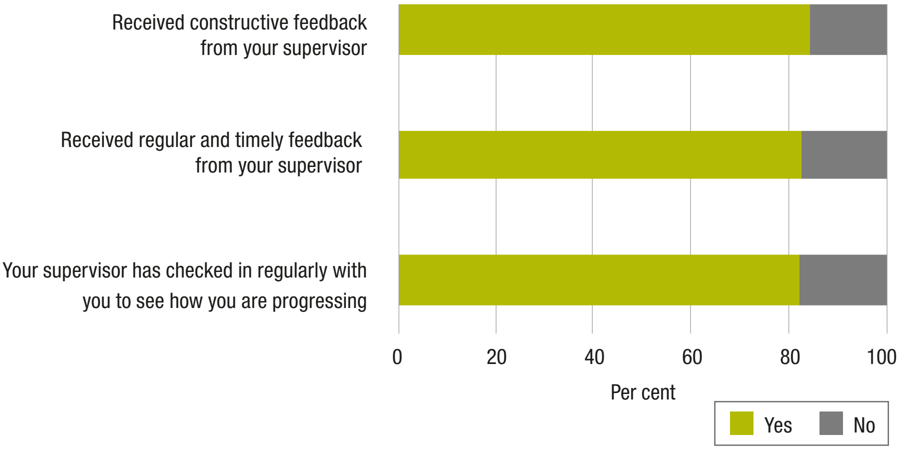
[15] Woolcott, P. (2019). *Performance Management in the APS* [video]. Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://youtu.be/bpUSykt49lI

Effective performance management systems and processes form one aspect of a high-performance culture and the 2019 APS employee census elicited various data on agency-level performance management. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, respondents were broadly very positive about their supervisor's involvement in performance management processes.

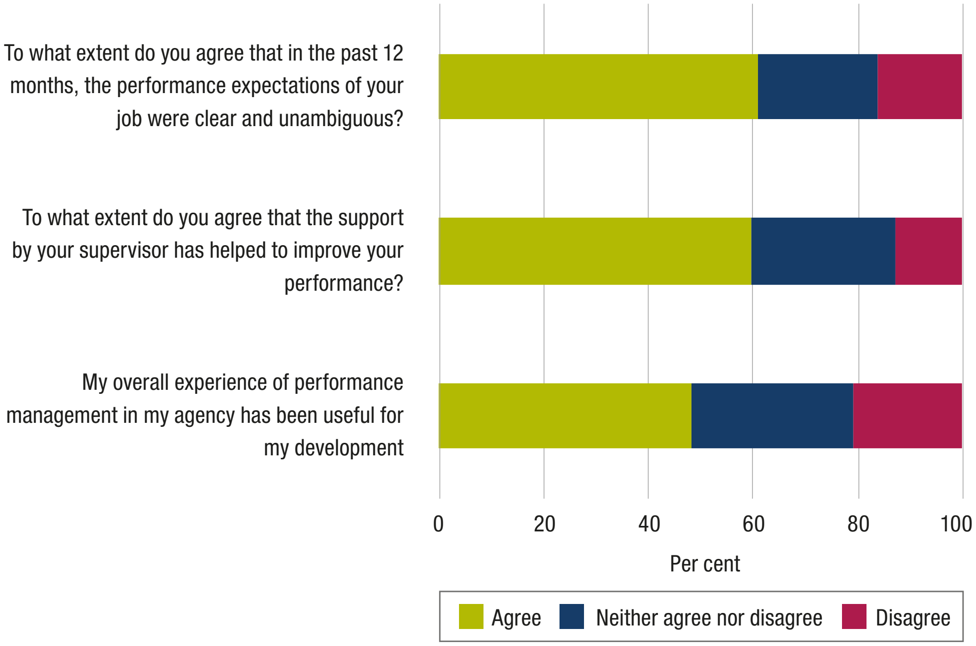
Figure 1.1: APS employee perceptions about supervisor involvement in performance management processes in the past 12 months



Source: 2019 APS employee census

While performance conversations are occurring across the APS, other APS employee census data raises questions about the quality of these discussions. In 2019, 61 per cent of APS employee census respondents agreed that the performance expectations of their job were clear and unambiguous—a drop of six percentage points from 2018. Sixty per cent of respondents agreed that support from their supervisor had helped improve their performance. Less than half of respondents (48 per cent) agreed that their overall experience of performance management in their agency had been useful for their development—unchanged from 2018 (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: APS employee perceptions of performance management in the past 12 months



Source: 2019 APS employee census

When it comes to managing underperformance, more than one third (37 per cent) of 2019 APS employee census respondents disagreed that their agency deals with underperformance effectively. The two most commonly cited reasons for this were managers' reluctance to have difficult conversations and their lack of confidence in addressing underperformance.

Performance management systems must be supported by strong leadership for increased effectiveness. APS employee census data over a number of years confirms that employee perceptions relating to performance-related questions are more positive when supervisors and Senior Executive Service (SES) managers are more effective communicators.

The recent amendments to the Commissioner's Directions on performance management explicitly address the role of senior leaders and supervisors in developing and sustaining a high-performance culture across the APS.[16] This includes rewarding and recognising talent, and managing underperformance when required.

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[16] *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Amendment (2019 Measures No. 1) Direction 2019.* (Cwlth).

Effective evaluation

A recurrent theme of this report is the increasingly complex public policy and service delivery challenges that governments are facing. The APS cannot assume that existing policy settings and delivery approaches remain the most suitable options for today, let alone that they are appropriate for future settings. To ensure high performance, the APS needs to promote a culture of evaluation and evidence-based decision making, recognising that good management requires outputs and outcomes to be measured.

Monitoring and evaluation encompass the systematic collection and analysis of information to answer questions about the effectiveness, efficiency and/or appropriateness of a program, policy or regulatory intervention.[17] Evaluation also enables a culture of organisational learning, public accountability and performance. These integral features of the APS stewardship role ensure that programs and services deliver value to the Australian public over the longer term.

> Citizens have a right to know how their money is used and what difference that is making to their community and the nation—what outcomes are being achieved, how, and at what price. Insightful performance reporting goes beyond simply measuring activities. It goes to measuring outcomes and impacts (the value created by these activities).
>
> Elizabeth Alexander AM and David Thodey AO[18]

In the APS context, evaluation involves assisting key decision makers and government to understand:

- the continued relevance and priority of objectives in light of current circumstances (the appropriateness of a program or policy)
- whether outcomes achieve stated objectives (effectiveness)
- whether there are better ways of achieving the objectives (efficiency).[19]

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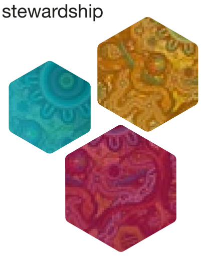
[17] Australasian Evaluation Society. (2017). *Submission to the PGPA Act 2013 and Rule—Independent Review*.

[18] Alexander, E. and Thodey, D. (2018). I*ndependent review into the operation of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 and Rule,* 11.

[19] Tune, D. (2010). Evaluation: *Renewed Strategic Emphasis*. Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/speaking-notes-for-David-Tune-presentation-18-08-2010.pdf



The ANZSOG Evidence and Evaluation Hub suggests that organisations that embed a culture of evaluative thinking and organisational learning are more likely to be equipped to understand what they need to achieve and how; to monitor their performance and improve their services; and to deliver and communicate success.[20] Iterative evaluation practice is also important where program or policy outcomes may not be observed for some time.

As outlined in *Ahead of the Game*, a culture of continuous improvement, driven by evaluation and performance measurement, will lead the APS to become a more flexible, innovative institution, in tune with the needs and requirements of the Australian public.[21] The APS is maturing its practice in these areas, which have advanced with the introduction of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cwlth) and the positive duty the PGPA Act imposes to demonstrate how agencies have achieved their purposes. This shift should be further accelerated following the Prime Minister's stated intention to set performance targets for policy, focused on outcomes. The quality measurement of public sector performance and impact of government policies over both the short and long term is critical to demonstrating accountability and may assist to counteract diminished levels of trust in public institutions.

Concerns about the quality of evaluation processes across the APS were highlighted in a paper developed by ANZSOG for the Independent Review of the APS. The paper indicates that evaluation activities do not currently add value because of: a narrow focus and not asking the right questions; poor methodology; limited data; and lack of independence.[22] The Australasian Evaluation Society has also suggested there is a broad lack of capability in evaluation and performance measurement across the APS, and highlighted the impact of this on program and policy related decision-making processes.[23]

There is very little data currently available on APS-wide evaluation capability, but there is little doubt that improvement is required. Assessments of agency performance statements by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) have highlighted the need to improve quality of performance monitoring to demonstrate impact.[24] Engagement with the Australian community will be increasingly important, to obtain feedback on their experience of public sector performance. As the APS moves through a significant period of reform to respond to increasing citizen expectations and rapid changes to the operating environment, borrowing from previous success and learning from failure will be essential.

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[20] Australia and New Zealand School of Government. *The Importance of Evidence and Evaluation*.

[21] Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration. (2010). *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*.

[22] Gray, M. and Bray, R. Australia and New Zealand School of Government. (2019). *Appendix B Evaluation in the Australian Public Service: current state of play, some issues and future directions*.

[23] Australasian Evaluation Society. (2017). *Submission to the PGPA Act 2013 and Rule—Independent Review*.

[24] Australian National Audit Office. (2018). *Implementation of the Annual Performance Statements Requirements 2016–17*.

Preparing for the future

An important aspect of the stewardship responsibilities of the APS involves having a constant eye to the future of Australia and the future needs of the Australian community. Reform initiatives and approaches are under way to ensure the APS remains relevant and well equipped to deliver its role: service to the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public.

The Independent Review of the APS, the first root and branch review of the APS since the Coombs Royal Commission in 1976, was a significant focus in 2018–19. The Review panel was given an explicit mandate to identify an ambitious program of transformational reforms. The panel's approach was characterised by an emphasis on evidence and engagement and included consultation across the full spectrum of public sector stakeholders: APS employees, ministers and their staff, academics, not-for-profit organisations, the business community and Australian citizens.

The panel released an interim report in March 2019, outlining four priorities for change to ensure that the APS is fit for purpose in the decades to come:

- strengthening the culture, governance and leadership model
- building a flexible operating model
- investing in capability and talent development
- developing stronger internal and external partnerships.[25]

The panel's final report was delivered to the Australian Government on 20 September 2019.

In line with the panel's original mandate, the final report is likely to propose wide-scale changes to ensure a more joined up, people facing, data enabled, capable and trusted public service that can deliver effectively now and into the future. The Prime Minister has asked the Secretaries Board to consider the final report and report to Cabinet on relevant issues and findings. Any subsequent implementation of the recommendations will be a priority for the year ahead.

A large part of the value of the Independent Review of the APS has been in ensuring a series of conversations across the service, including through the Secretaries Board, about what the future requires of the APS. The APS leadership recognises fully the need for change, and is committed to making it happen.

Future reform initiatives will also build on the work that has been done recently by the APS Reform Committee, a subcommittee of the Secretaries Board. The Committee has implemented a number of projects as part of a Roadmap for Reform launched in May 2018.

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[25] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). *Independent Review of the APS: Priorities for Change.*

The roadmap focused on short to medium-term strategies in six streams of work designed to improve:

- citizen and business engagement—ensuring more effective engagement between the public sector, citizens, business, and innovators when designing and delivering policies, programs and services
- investment and resourcing—better aligning funding to deliver government priorities and meet service delivery expectations
- policy, data and innovation—making the best use of data to support policy development and decision making and improve innovation
- structures and operating models—ensuring APS operating models support integration, efficiency and a focus on citizen services
- workforce and culture—adopting workforce practices that will meet future needs, including through strengthening talent management, data analytical capability and digital skills
- productivity—developing the best contemporary measures for public sector productivity and using this to improve administration.

This work will be taken forward by the Secretaries Board in conjunction with the Government's response to the recommendations of the Independent Review of the APS.

Chapter
TWO

Adapting to change

> The APS needs to evolve and adapt amidst constant change. Old ways of doing things need to be challenged and, if necessary, disrupted.
>
> The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia[26]

Change is not a foreign concept to the public service—the APS has always needed to evolve to keep up with the world around it. However, external change is taking place faster than ever, characterised by advances in technology, societal and geopolitical volatility, and heightened expectations of the Australian community about the services it receives from government. The evolution of the APS has not kept pace.

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[26] Morrison, S. (2019). Speech, Institute of Public Administration. Retrieved 3 October 2019 from https://www.pm.gov.au/media/speech-institute-public-administration

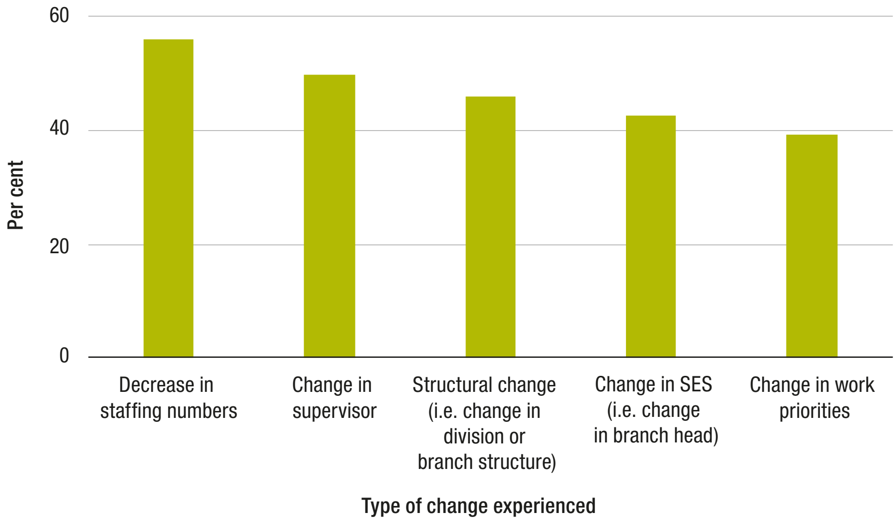
As outlined in Chapter 1, for the APS to adapt in the years ahead, significant change is required—fundamental adjustments to strategy, mindset and culture. At the same time, the identity and purpose of the APS must remain at the centre of reform processes. One factor that will not change is the importance of an apolitical public service that is effective and efficient in serving the Government, the Parliament and the people of Australia.

Several reviews into the APS have highlighted the need for transformational change and the role of leaders in managing change effectively. Adopting a mature and proactive approach to risk, ensuring strong and clear communication and supporting the workforce to positively respond to change, are also key components of a system where change is ever-present.

Perceptions of change management

The 2019 APS employee census captured employee perceptions on various change-related questions. Just under two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) reported they had experienced major workplace change in their immediate workgroup in the previous 12 months, a decrease of 9 per cent from 2014. Figure 2.1 demonstrates the top five changes experienced by APS employees in the previous 12 months.

Figure 2.1: Top five types of change experienced by APS employees

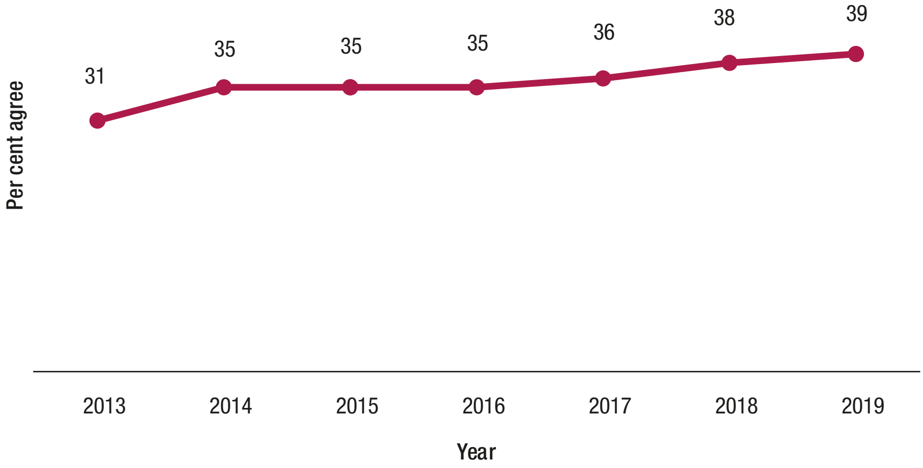


Note: As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Source: 2019 APS employee census

These responses are relatively consistent with previous years, but it is worth noting that the workplace changes described are largely transactional in nature—exposure to structural and staffing changes are a routine aspect of most public service careers. In the 2019 APS employee census only 39 per cent of respondents agreed that change was managed well in their agency. This result has remained consistent over time (Figure 2.2) and could suggest that the APS consistently struggles to manage even routine, transactional change effectively.

Figure 2.2: Proportion of APS employees who agreed change was managed well within their agency, 2013 to 2019



Source: APS employee census

Transformational reform will require more significant changes in mindset and culture with more complex and interconnected challenges to navigate. There is clearly much work to be done to ensure APS agencies can navigate the change the future requires.

Readiness for change

It is generally recognised that the ability of an organisation to implement change successfully depends on positive engagement by employees in the change process.

The engagement of the workforce in change processes takes on greater significance in the public sector. The Government and the community have high expectations that the APS will adapt and change to meet future needs while continuing to deliver stability and continuity in policy advice and service delivery. Ensuring the workforce is equipped to perform and adapt in the face of reform will be key to successfully implementing lasting change and driving a culture of high performance.

> People do not look to government for surprises, and politicians do not expect the Public Service to deliver the unexpected. They want to have confidence . . . that core government services, activities and frameworks are going to remain relatively consistent.
>
> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development[27]

Employee turnover is one factor that has the potential to destabilise the workforce and compromise delivery of outcomes. A recent report from the United Kingdom Institute for Government investigated mobility in the United Kingdom civil service and found that as well as creating additional expense, overly high rates of turnover negatively impacted on policy development and implementation. The report went on to suggest that 'staff turnover in the civil service is not healthy but debilitating'.[28]

In this context, the 2019 APS employee census data was analysed to explore the relationship between respondents' experience of change and their intention to leave their agency. The analysis revealed that negative experiences of change and negative perceptions of change management were both significantly associated with increased intention to leave. Conversely, respondents who had been affected by major workplace change and agreed that change was managed well in their agency were more likely to indicate they wished to stay working for their agency for at least the next three years.

Employee attitudes to change are also part of an organisation's overall change readiness. APS employee census questions relating to perceptions of organisational change did not elicit overwhelmingly positive responses, as indicated in Figure 2.3. However, it is worth noting that a large proportion of respondents selected 'neither agree nor disagree'. This could suggest a general lack of awareness relating to the benefits and/or purpose of change initiatives or a general disengagement from change processes.

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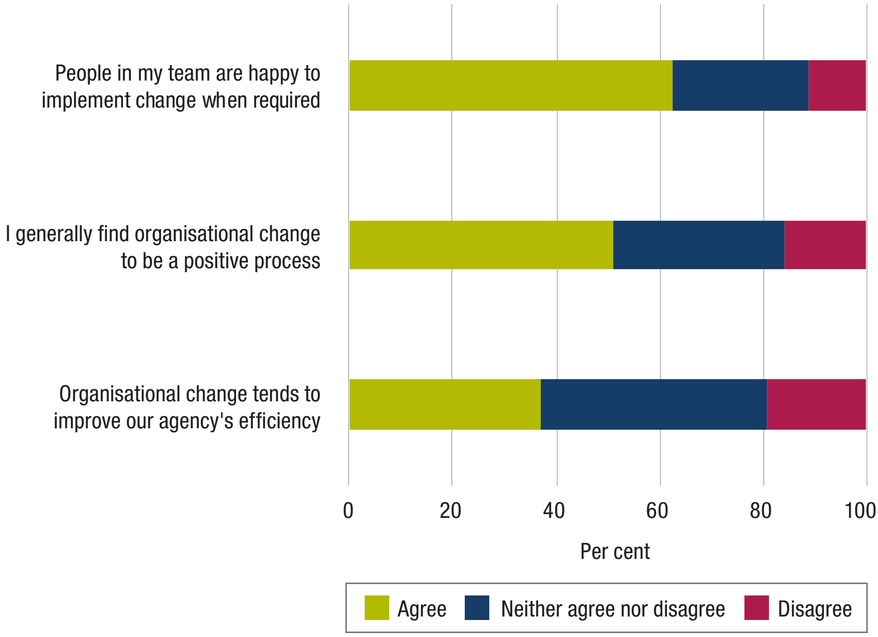
[27] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2018). *The Innovation System of the Public Service of Canada, 49.* Retrieved from https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/the-innovation-system-of-the-public-service-of-canada_9789264307735-en

[28] Sasse, T. and Norris, E. Institute for Government. (2019). *Moving On: The costs of high staff turnover in the civil service.* Retrieved from https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/moving-on-staff-turnover-civil-service

Figure 2.3: APS employee perceptions of change



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Research and lived experience across the public and private sectors emphasise the importance of effective communication during change processes. Consistent with 2018 data, analysis of the 2019 APS employee census data confirms a significant association between positive employee perceptions of change management and effective internal communication, employee consultation and SES communication.

Analysis of APS employee census data also highlights the importance of ensuring that employees understand their roles within the broader APS context. Employees who believed strongly in the purpose and objectives of the APS, or who understood how their role contributed to achieving an outcome for the Australian public, were more likely to agree that change was managed well in their agency.

Leaders play a critical role in managing change in any organisation, and the APS is no different. 'Committed leadership' and 'clear prioritisation of reforms' were identified by *Priorities for Change* as common elements required for a successful transformational change agenda.[29]

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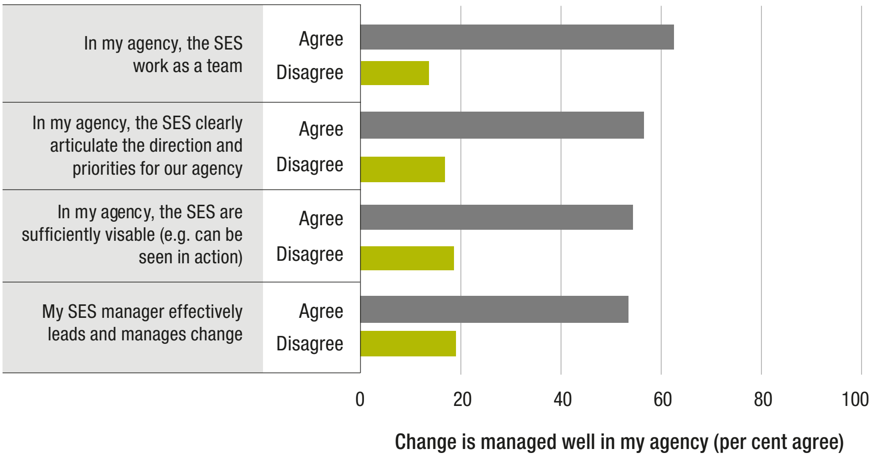
[29] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). *Independent Review of the APS: Priorities for Change.*

Analysis of 2019 APS employee census data demonstrates the importance of SES employees articulating the direction and priorities of their agencies, being sufficiently visible and working as a team to navigate change in a complex and ambiguous operating environment. It is also noteworthy that when respondents disagreed with the SES-related statements in Figure 2.4, perceptions of change being managed well in their agency also decreased significantly.

Figure 2.4: APS employee perceptions of whether change is managed well in their agency against perceptions of SES actions



Source: 2019 APS employee census

The future APS reform agenda, informed by the Independent Review of the APS and led by the Secretaries Board, will rely on a readiness for change across the service. It will be important for leaders to allocate time and resources to change processes, as well as building skills and capability to respond to change. This requires an APS-wide culture that supports the workforce to effectively deal with the demands of change.

Cultural change—Australian Bureau of Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) launched a transformation program in early 2015 with a focus on refreshing its culture. The importance of this work was highlighted through external reviews which found that elements of organisational culture impacted on the planning and risk management of the ABS.

To drive cultural change, a systems approach was adopted which included:

- defining 'culture' and creating a common understanding of high performance and customer service
- benchmarking existing and desired organisational culture
- applying organisational design principles to identify the levers to most effect desired culture change
- building leadership capability and changing leadership behaviour
- improving risk and issues management, communications and Agile work practices.

In 2017, the ABS undertook the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey, putting its cultural changes and performance to the test. The success of the survey (99 days, 79.5 per cent response rate and $40 million under budget) demonstrated a focus on concrete action, reflecting the culture the ABS desired, specifically one featuring:

- communication and collaboration, with partners, staff and customers
- changed work processes, including user-centred design, flatter decision-making structures, better issues and risk management, and Agile practices
- development of a sense of community and positive workplace behaviours, championed by senior staff.

Recent internal surveys and the 2019 APS employee census provide indications of positive changes in elements of desired culture such as customer focus, collaboration, agility and accountability. These cultural elements foster and support high performance, enabling the ABS to further develop its ability to deliver vital data and statistics to inform Australia's important decisions.

Innovation and risk

Innovation is critical for maintaining Australia's high standard of living, ensuring its ongoing international competitiveness, creating jobs and ensuring future economic prosperity.[30] Citizens are demanding better outcomes and services from government. Agile and effective responses to these demands must be underpinned by new thinking, new ways of working and new ways of interacting with and delivering for citizens.

The *OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation*, adopted on 22 May 2019 and to which Australia adheres, establishes five principles, each with associated actions, that the public service can use to promote innovation:

- embrace and enhance innovation within the public sector
- encourage and equip all public sector servants to innovate
- cultivate new partnerships and involve different voices
- support exploration, iteration and testing
- diffuse lessons and share practices.[31]

One key element for promoting innovation is organisational culture—how organisations treat risk, and whether employees feel empowered to experiment and learn from their experiences. If staff are afraid to fail, they are unlikely to take calculated risks and be innovative. Similarly, if an organisation is unclear about its risk tolerance, it cannot expect innovation.[32] Risk is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

> Try again. Fail again. Fail better.
>
> Samuel Beckett, Irish novelist and playwright[33]

A culture of openness, of learning from errors, and of collaborating across silos and sectors is central to embedding innovative thinking and practices in the APS. The *OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation* emphasises that it is increasingly important to encourage and equip all public servants to innovate. In practice, this means that:

- permission is given to take appropriate risks and to explore and engage with new ideas, technologies and ways of working as part of core business
- clarity is provided on responsibilities for innovation so public servants know how they can participate or contribute

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[30] Productivity Commission .(2017). *An Overview of Innovation Policy, Shifting the Dial: 5 year Productivity Review, Supporting Paper No 12.*

[31] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation*.

[32] Hehir, Grant. (2018). *Strategic governance of risk: Lessons learnt from public sector audit.* Retrieved from https://www.anao.gov.au/work/speech/strategic-governance-risk-lessons-learnt-public-sector-audit

[33] Beckett, S. (1983). *Worstward ho.* New York: Grove Press.

- recognition is given that innovation requires and involves a diverse range of skills and capabilities, as well as motivation
- support structures, processes and working conditions are developed that more easily allow the public service to innovate, and established routines are continuously assessed to ensure they do not unnecessarily hinder innovation.[34]

Clean Sport app and virtual reality experience—Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) has won several awards for its cutting edge approach to clean sport education. This includes being awarded the 2019 Public Sector Innovation awards for Citizen-Centred Innovation for their virtual reality doping control experience and their Clean Sport app.

The virtual reality experience guides athletes through the doping control process to demystify it. The Clean Sport app helps athletes to determine which supplements may contain banned substances to prevent inadvertent doping.

ASADA Chief Executive Officer David Sharpe says that ‘one in five supplements you can buy has an illegal substance in it under the World Anti-Doping Code’.

ASADA has also worked with former and current elite-level athletes to develop an innovative, engaging and forward-thinking education program that is presented by athletes themselves. The intention is to help aspiring athletes understand what is clean, fair sport and how they can reduce the risk of testing positive.

Using new, innovative technologies is key to engaging and educating athletes. ASADA will deliver even more unique approaches to educating athletes about their rights and responsibilities in future.

Promoting innovation

The 2019 APS employee census addressed innovation through a series of questions, including five items that contributed to an index score. This innovation index assessed if employees felt willing and able to be innovative, and if their agency had an enabling culture for this to occur. The 2019 overall innovation index score for the APS was 66 per cent, an increase of two percentage points from 2018.

Each of the five index items showed an increase in the percentage of respondents agreeing compared to 2018 (Figure 2.5). This is reflected in the overall innovation index increase. It is clear from the results that individual employees and their supervisors understand the value and importance of innovative approaches. Similar to 2018, however, questions on the extent to which agencies inspire or support innovation scored low in absolute terms, and attracted a large proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree' responses. This suggests that a greater whole-of-agency emphasis on innovation is needed.

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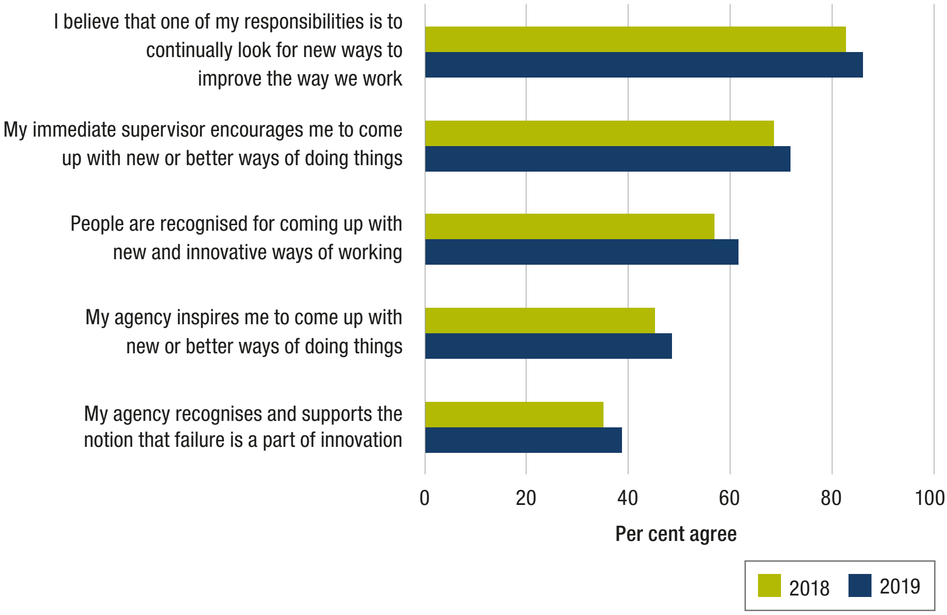
[34] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation*.

Figure 2.5: APS employee perceptions of innovation, 2018 to 2019

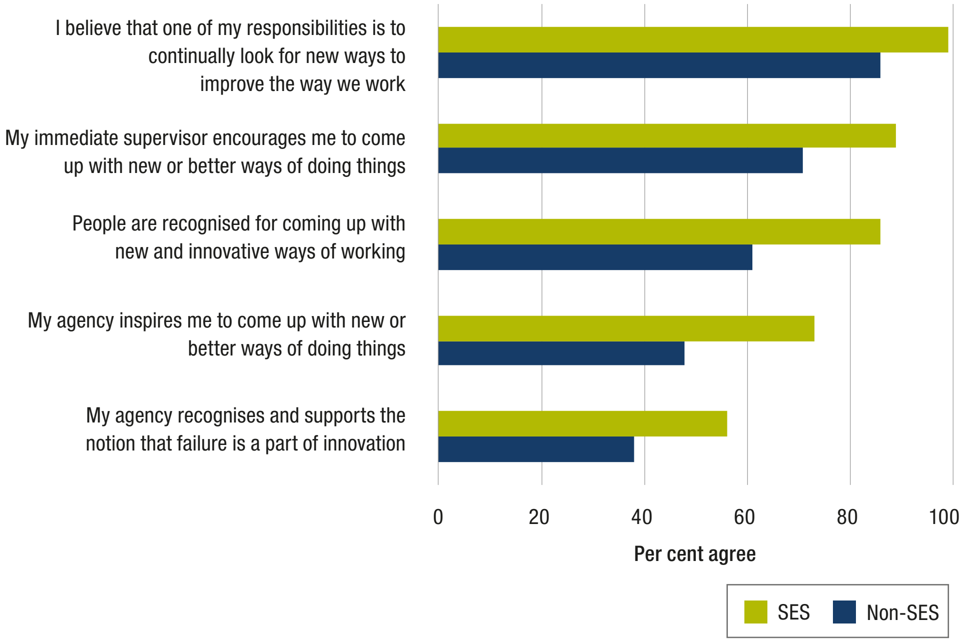


Source: APS employee census

Further analysis of APS employee census data (Figure 2.6) shows a significant disparity between SES and non-SES respondents on perceptions of agency support for, and realisation of, innovation. While this difference in perspective between SES and non-SES is common throughout the APS employee census results, two points stand out from this comparison:

- SES officers take seriously their responsibility to lead by example in looking for ways to innovate in the workplace.
- More needs to be achieved to ensure that recognition for innovative approaches flows down from SES to employees at all levels.

Figure 2.6: SES and non-SES perceptions of innovation



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Innovation is taking place across the APS. In the 2019 APS employee census, more than two-thirds (70 per cent) of Executive level (EL) and SES staff reported that their immediate workgroup had implemented innovations in the previous 12 months.[35] Almost 60 per cent of these innovations related to process improvements, with the main impacts relating to improved efficiency and service delivery. These findings suggest that the majority of APS innovations are resulting in incremental but nevertheless measurable changes to the way in which the service performs its core functions.

Head to Health—Department of Health

In response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services, the Australian Government, through the Department of Health, committed to delivering a new digital mental health gateway. Head to Health (www.headtohealth.gov.au) makes it easier for people to access a range of free or low-cost Australian-based phone and online mental health services and supports most suited to an individual's needs.

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[35] Defined as 'a new or improved product, process, communication or policy (or combination thereof)'.

Tackling mental health has proven to be a challenge for governments worldwide. The Department of Health prioritised innovation and user experience and, in partnership with Speedwell and Liquid Interactive, sought to provide Australians with an online self-service portal that would contain a list of, and recommendations for, quality Australian resources, and connect with users in a meaningful way. The portal contains professionally curated evidence based information and advice, a decision support tool, and underpinning service catalogue.

Using Agile methodologies, a Minimum Viable Product was released in 2017 and extensive user testing took place. The department worked closely with a broad range of end users to make sure Head to Health would be a valuable resource and used to its full potential. Users can filter digital resources by format (for example, an app, online program, online forum, phone line, information website, email, or web chat), target age, or population group to source the most relevant information.

The site has been very well received and attracts an average of 1,200 sessions each day. The department continues to iterate and enhance the site based on user feedback.

Head to Health has won several awards including, most recently, the 2019 Best in Class Award from Good Design Australia.

‘Evidence shows that for many people, digital interventions can be as effective as face-to-face services. Head to Health provides a one-stop shop for quality digital services and resources delivered by some of Australia’s most trusted mental health service providers. It provides a place where people can access support and information before they reach crisis. It will continue to grow with additional services, a telephone line as an alternative access channel, and further improvements to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Australian community.’

The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health.

Barriers to innovation can include risk aversion, leaders not embracing innovation, resource constraints, lack of direction and measurement, policy conflicts, hierarchical structures and silo mentality, legislative limitations, accountability concerns and resistance to change.[36] The top three barriers identified by EL and SES respondents in the 2019 APS employee census were insufficient time (71 per cent), insufficient resources (66 per cent), and information and communications technology (ICT) issues (53 per cent).

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[36] Commonwealth of Australia. (2010). *Empowering Change: Fostering Innovation in the Australian Public Service*.

A positive risk culture

> We need to lift our game by promoting a positive risk culture, walking the talk, making risk management a core part of doing business, articulating entity appetite and tolerance for risk, encouraging sharing of information with others.
>
> Jane Halton AO PSM, former Secretary, Department of Finance[37]

The Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and Section 16 of the PGPA Act set out a framework that encourages Commonwealth entities to engage with risk and establish and maintain appropriate systems of risk oversight and internal control. As outlined in the Independent Review of the PGPA Act, effective risk management and engagement underpins strategic and operational success.[38]

Appropriate behaviours and attitudes to risk are fundamental to driving effective engagement with risk and strengthening confidence and trust in the ability of the APS to deliver for government and the community. A positive risk culture exists when employees understand the risks facing their agency and consistently make appropriate risk-based decisions. Such a culture is likely to include these attributes:

- leaders, managers and supervisors consistently and positively demonstrate and discuss the importance of managing risk appropriately
- the agency's risk management framework is integral to its operating model, where employees understand and agree on the need and value of effective risk management
- employees are comfortable talking openly and honestly about risk, using commonly understood risk terms and language
- employees own and manage complex shared risks with others and incentives reinforce appropriate risk-related behaviour
- the agency has a supportive environment for escalating risk issues with the senior executive.[39]

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[37] Institute of Public Administration Australia. (2016). *Secretary Valedictory—Jane Halton—Department of Finance*. Retrieved from https://www.act.ipaa.org.au/2016-pastevent-halton

[38] Alexander, E. and Thodey, D. (2018). *Independent review into the operation of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 and Rule.*

[39] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Finance. (2016). *Implementing the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy—Guidance.*

Managing risk—Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) was established in April 2017. In a politically sensitive environment, IPEA raised awareness of inherent risks by building a strong and practical, pro-governance culture. IPEA created:

- a Risk Management Policy aligned with the Commonwealth's Risk Management Policy
- a Risk Management Framework that provides the foundation and organisational arrangements for embedding risk management into IPEA's culture and day-to-day activities
- four staff-led working groups to tease out the consequences of policies and risk tolerance.

An Audit and Risk Committee assists the Chief Executive Officer and independent members of the Authority in their risk oversight functions. The committee provides assurance and advice, guided by a charter.

The IPEA has established a culture of integrity and risk awareness in the organisation. Regular Curious Conversations translate agency priorities into concrete discussions and actions for staff. Curious Conversations involve short, 20-minute stand-up meetings to discuss a scenario on a key priority area. The scenario is emailed to staff the week before and staff, individually or collectively, return email their comments, solutions and/or options. The comments are collated and presented at the stand-up meeting. Further discussion is encouraged, which draws connections between the issue and identified IPEA risks. To keep the concept fresh, external subject matter experts are invited to present a Curious Conversation on a relevant topic.

Staff have found these discussions highly valuable as they share and learn from each other in a way that connects with their everyday experiences. They have greater clarity and develop better decision-making skills when dealing with unique questions in their work. Now, when confronted with a risk, staff understand the framework they are working from and feel confident to raise concerns with supervisors and team members.

Staff rated the agency's risk management approach and risk culture highly in the 2019 APS employee census, achieving a greater proportion of positive responses compared to the APS as a whole, in all eight risk-related questions.

IPEA's first internal audit focused on compliance with legislation and sought to confirm that the new agency has a mature approach to risk management. IPEA was awarded an Honourable Mention in the Enterprise-wide category of the 2018 Comcover Awards for Excellence in Risk Management.

Shared risks

Moves to increase collaboration across the APS demand a deeper understanding of shared risks—those risks that do not have a single owner—within the Commonwealth. Shared risk is a crucial element of program and policy delivery and failing to identify and manage these risks often impacts a broad range of stakeholders, including within the wider community.

The Commonwealth Risk Management Policy (established in 2014 to support the PGPA Act) outlines that each entity must implement arrangements to understand and contribute to the management of shared risks. Guidance is focused on sharing information so that risk is visible, and responsibility for implementing and managing risk controls is allocated across a number of agencies.

Comcover's annual risk management benchmarking program involves public sector agencies completing an annual self-assessment survey that measures the maturity of their risk framework against the nine elements of the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. It is encouraging that understanding and managing shared risk across the Commonwealth has seen the largest improvement in maturity out of the nine elements, with a 29 percentage point change over five years.[40]

However, understanding and managing shared risk was still assessed as one of the least mature elements of the policy. Fifty-eight per cent of public sector entities participating in the 2019 benchmarking program indicated that the accountability for managing shared risk was not clearly understood. Less than half included details of shared risks in their risk management reports.

There is a clear need for APS agencies to work with stakeholders to better understand common threats, shared vulnerabilities and enhance their collective ability to mitigate and respond to emerging risk.

Risk culture

The 2019 APS employee census aligned its risk culture questions with the assessment of risk culture across the Commonwealth through the Comcover risk management benchmarking program. Figure 2.7 shows APS employee perceptions of risk management in their agency.

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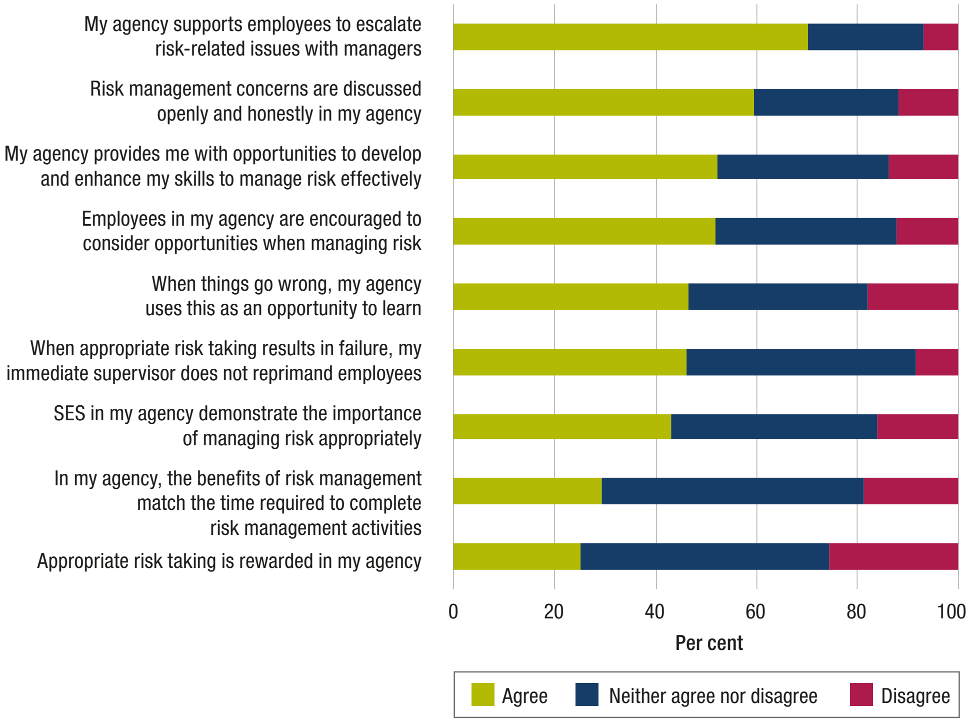
[40] Deloitte. (2019). *Risk Management Benchmarking Program 2019, Key Findings Report*. Retrieved 26 August 2019 from https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-key-findings-report.pdf

Figure 2.7: APS employee perceptions of risk management in their agency



Source: 2019 APS employee census

There has been a decline in positive responses to these questions since 2018. The largest increase in negative responses (four percentage points) related to risk taking being rewarded by the agency.

A large proportion of respondents also selected 'neither agree nor disagree' for risk culture items. This was particularly the case for items relating to the perceived benefits from time invested in risk management, agency-level attitudes towards risk taking, and the attitudes of supervisors when risk taking leads to failure.

General research suggests that risk culture is often hindered by a lack of communication from senior leaders, resulting in lack of staff awareness around expectations for risk management. Analysis of the APS employee census data tends to confirm this within the APS context: there were substantial differences in positive perceptions relating to risk culture between SES and non-SES respondents. This is no doubt partly due to SES employees having greater exposure to and engagement with risk, but it may also point to poor communication about appropriate risk taking and management.

The Independent Review of the PGPA Act found that risk practice across the Commonwealth was still relatively immature. The review suggested that significant work was required to embed an active engagement with risk and to have APS employees at all levels appreciate their role in identifying and managing risk. The 2019 APS employee census results suggest that agencies still have significant steps to take to instil a positive risk culture.

Engaging with risk to respond to citizen needs

In late January 2019, tropical Queensland received an extended period of heavy rainfall as a result of an intense slow-moving monsoon and tropical low, known as the Queensland Monsoon Trough Event. Thirty-nine local government areas were affected by flooding, covering 56 per cent of the state. Some locations, including Townsville, exceeded their average annual rainfall in less than a week, with more than 2,000mm of rain.

Federal, state and local government agencies, along with the Australian Defence Force, were mobilised during the event, working together in an unpredictable environment to respond to community needs. Agencies worked collaboratively across all levels of government to deliver resources, provide financial assistance and emergency relief funding and facilitate referral to housing services and health providers.

In particular, response efforts were empowered by a positive engagement with risk that enabled decision makers to take immediate localised action to address major issues. For example, the Australian Defence Force was provided with ‘freedom of action’ to undertake priority and time critical operations in support of the Event response, and local knowledge and decentralised decision-making saw critical infrastructure, such as railways and roads, reopened as quickly as possible for the community.

The 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review by the Queensland Inspector-General Emergency Management highlighted that this ‘freedom of action enabled quicker response to on-the-ground issues and a more efficient supply of services to those most in immediate need’.[41]

Relationship between risk and innovation

> … an over-reaction to things that go wrong … does not help to create a more mature approach to risk management in the Commonwealth. To the contrary, it reinforces risk aversion and stifles innovation.
>
> Elizabeth Alexander AM and David Thodey AO[42]

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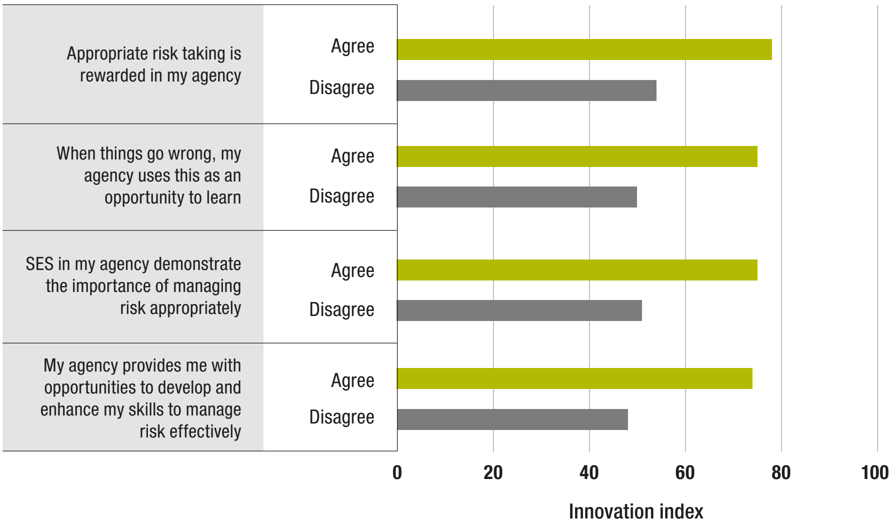
[41] State of Queensland (Inspector-General Emergency Management) (2019). *2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review, 9.*

[42] Alexander, E. and Thodey, D. (2018). *Independent review into the operation of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 and Rule, 22.*

General research suggests that positive engagement with risk is more likely to encourage an environment that promotes innovation. The 2019 APS employee census results showed that positive perceptions of risk culture were associated with significantly higher innovation index scores (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: APS employee innovation index score against perceptions of risk



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Governments and the community value stability and continuity in their public sector institutions, and this has certainly contributed to a cautious approach to risk and innovation across the APS. The potential outcomes of policy or program failure have likely also been a more influential factor. *Learning from Failure* highlighted that '[public servants'] circumspection is based on the knowledge that the rollout of major national programs is fraught with danger … it is uncertain exactly what policies will work, or how they should be delivered in the most effective way'.[43]

Learning from Failure also emphasised the benefits of experimentation, however, and there is no doubt that a positive risk culture can foster innovative approaches. This in turn has the potential to lead to policies and services that are more inclusive and better targeted to the needs of citizens. The APS can and must improve its approach to risk management.

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[43] Shergold, P. (2015). *Learning from Failure: Why large government policy initiatives have gone so badly wrong in the past and how the chances of success in the future can be improved.*

Chapter
THREE

A values-driven culture

To build a trusted and effective public service, a foundational set of values and behaviours must underpin APS culture. Trust is imperative in building effective engagement with stakeholders and the community, especially in an environment where public policy challenges are increasingly complex and interconnected. Recent trends worldwide have shown declining trust in public institutions and government, and Australia is not immune to this. In this context, nurturing a values-driven culture is increasingly important.

Steps are being taken to ensure that the Australian Government is conducting its activities in an open and transparent way. There is a renewed focus on the APS working more collaboratively with partner agencies, other governments, industry and the community, to achieve the best results for the Australian people and the Government.

APS employees at all levels need to live the APS Values: impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical. It is likely that the APS workforce will become more mobile, moving within, as well as in and out of the public sector, and from organisations with different values and systems. As such, the APS needs to ensure that the focus on promoting and embedding these values remains strong. The APS Values are cornerstones of a pro-integrity system and leaders have an important role to play in modelling these behaviours and setting the standard from the top.

The APS employee census asks APS employees if their colleagues, supervisor and senior leaders act in accordance with the APS Values. Most APS employees have responded positively to these questions and the results have been relatively stable over the past five years. Nevertheless, an ongoing focus on a values-driven culture remains important.

Public trust

The APS, like many institutions in Western democracies, is under challenge. Never before have public expectations been higher and trust in shorter supply.

The Edelman Trust Barometer, which measures changes in the levels of trust around the world, recorded an average trust level of 48 per cent for Australia in 2019. This ranked Australia 13 out of the 26 countries assessed. While this assessment remains disappointing, it is an improvement from Australia's trust level score of 40 per cent in 2018.

Australia also achieved a result of 42 per cent specifically related to trust in government; this is similarly an improvement on 2018. While these results are mildly encouraging, Australia still sits just below the global average of 47 per cent for trust across all three tiers of government. As outlined in an ANZSOG research paper for the Independent Review of the APS, institutional integrity is a key driver of trust and is one factor the APS can control as a united service.[44]

Trust in institutions underpins a successful society. Higher levels of trust are likely to result in increased levels of civic participation, institutional and social cohesion, a respected and valued public service, and lower transaction costs in policy development as well as compliance.[45] To ensure success, public institutions are required to be competent and effective in delivering on their goals but also in operating consistently with a set of values that reflect citizens' expectations of integrity and fairness.[46] It is when standards of integrity fall down that public trust declines, making it even harder to earn trust back.

The OECD suggests there are six key areas of focus for governments to increase trust: reliability, responsiveness, openness, better regulation, integrity and fairness, and inclusive policy making.[47] Much of this involves the crucial importance of effective delivery of policies and programs to the public. This also requires the APS to adopt a strong stewardship role to uphold integrity and encourage transparency and accountability in the actions it takes and outcomes it delivers, to ensure public institutions are trusted by those they serve.

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[44] Kirby, N. and Webbe, S. Australia and New Zealand School of Government. (2019). *Being a trusted and respected partner: the APS integrity framework*.

[45] ibid.

[46] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2017). *OECD guidelines on measuring trust*.

[47] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Trust in Government*.

Citizen engagement

Digital technology is having a transformational effect on the way government and the public sector interacts and transacts with the community. Citizens increasingly expect that governments will provide personalised and responsive services, and social media and mobile platforms are replacing traditional means of interaction with government. Digital platforms also have the ability to improve service quality, promote transparent and efficient interaction with public agencies, enhance the level of public trust in government and drive better citizen outcomes.

The benefits and challenges associated with this digital transformation are interlinked and the APS needs to deal with emerging issues, while keeping a clear line of sight back to the requirements and needs of the Australian public. For example, using big data to streamline and target government services has raised concerns relating to individual privacy. Similarly, an increase in digital applications may unintentionally exclude segments of the community that have lower levels of digital literacy or who experience accessibility issues.

Digital Transformation Strategy—Digital Transformation Agency

The Australian Government's Digital Transformation Strategy, facilitated by the Digital Transformation Agency and released in November 2018, sets out a clear direction to make all government services available digitally by 2025. It aims to make them simpler and easier to use and, most importantly, informed by the Australians who use them.

The accompanying roadmap shows more than 100 projects across government that will deliver on the strategy. In less than one year, 73 of these initiatives have already been delivered and are providing better outcomes for Australians. The Digital Transformation Agency will continue to add projects to the roadmap so it remains current and achieves the strategy's goals.

For instance, in August 2019, the Government released its digital identity solution, myGovID into the Apple iOS App Store, delivering the digital equivalent of the 100-point ID check. Since its release, more than 30,000 identities have been created. The app can be used to access the Australian Taxation Office's (ATO) Business Portal. More services will be added in the future.

The Child Care Finder is making it easier for hundreds of thousands of parents to connect with child-care service providers through a new, easy-to-use and expandable directory.

The online Business Registration Service provides a simpler and faster way to register a business. Since its launch in June 2018, it has supported 365,267 business registrations. This is an increase of 136 per cent on the previous year. The service reduces the average time to complete an application from 65 minutes to 16 minutes.

In addition to engaging with the public through digital platforms, the APS is increasingly looking to involve the public in various policy making, service design and delivery issues. These approaches need to become engrained patterns of working throughout the APS. In particular, it is largely in service delivery contexts that Australians interact with the public sector, and inclusive approaches in these environments will be a key driver of public trust.

Human-centred design, deliberative engagement and co-design practices have also emerged as mechanisms to strengthen collaboration between government agencies, non-government organisations, communities and individuals.

Human-centred design views problems from the perspective of the user and solutions are developed to account for user needs. The benefits of human-centred design can include improved citizen experience, increased program buy-in, lower errors and lower costs in government programs alongside better design and enhanced citizen satisfaction.

While capability is being developed across the APS to change the way it engages with the community, continuing investment and support is required to sustain and build upon collaborative approaches. Failure to keep up with rising citizen expectations, inadequate funding for information technology modernisation, protracted and repeated testing, and ineffective coordination across silos and different agencies, can all reduce the benefits, and ultimately negatively impact citizens' experience, of engaging with the public sector.[48]

Some case studies are emerging across the APS outlining successful programs of work that have embraced citizen engagement.

Measuring client and community confidence—Australian Taxation Office

One of the ATO's aspirations for 2024, articulated in its Corporate Plan, is 'building trust and confidence' in clients and the community. This aspiration sits at the heart of the ATO's Client and Community Confidence measurement suite.

To measure trust and confidence, the ATO surveys on a monthly basis recent clients (who have had an interaction in the previous month) and the general community (who have not had a recent interaction). The results provide metrics for the ATO to benchmark its performance in building trust and confidence in its services. Overall, survey outcomes have indicated a positive correlation between a taxpayer's confidence in the ATO and their willingness to voluntarily participate in the tax and superannuation system.

The suite involves measuring 15 factors that contribute to an individual's confidence in the ATO, including perceptions of fairness, conscientiousness and timeliness. The factors are all equally weighted to provide an index score the ATO uses as its Confidence Key Performance Indicator.

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[48] Chew, B. Rae, J. Manstof, J. and Degnegaard, S. (2019). *Citizen Experience in Government Takes Centre Stage, Deloitte Insights*. Retrieved 4 September 2019 from https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/government-trends/2020/citizen-experience-in-government.html

Beyond the benefit of measuring concepts like community confidence, the ongoing program has allowed the ATO to understand the benefits and challenges of its community engagement programs. By comparing confidence scores between clients who engaged online or offline, through myGov, by the phone or by the app, the ATO is gaining valuable insight into community engagement preferences. Measuring and comparing has also allowed the ATO to recognise changing expectations of government service from younger demographics, and to better understand how services should be evolving to capture the trust of digital-savvy citizens. This insight will guide many of the ATO's approaches to community engagement moving forward.

As the Client and Community Confidence approach develops further, the ATO intends to use outcomes to inform a range of client-facing products, processes and services.

While making tax an exceptional experience will always be challenging, the ATO is proud to be measuring, monitoring and improving the client experience. Investing in a confidence measurement program demonstrates the ATO's commitment to ensuring this experience is front of mind in administration decisions.

Digital transformation—Services Australia

Services Australia (formerly the Department of Human Services) is on the path of digital transformation.

The Australian community is seeking the same things from the public service that they want from other businesses: online services that are easy, quick and convenient; the ability to deal with government using the channel of their choice; comprehensive support, instead of multiple transactions; and assurance that their data is safe. Digital services have a profound positive impact on people's lives, making life events easier to handle.

Services Australia continues to respond to this expectation. For example, Australians can submit an increasing number of claims through myGov, update their details and report their income online. More than 98 per cent of Medicare services and more than 80 per cent of family, student, carer and jobseeker payment claims are submitted online. Customers can get instant answers from digital assistants, similar to the online experience they might get from their insurer or bank.

When parents have a child, for instance, they can now enrol their newborns in Medicare through myGov, and it takes only 3 minutes.

This work, and much more like it, has proven that digital transformation is a human process, not a technology fix. And while technology is obviously critical to better customer service, often a better service for customers is also a better process for business.

Services Australia continues to transform the way business is delivered digitally and face-to-face as they ensure that services to the Australian community are, as the Prime Minister has said, 'delivered seamlessly and efficiently, when and where they are needed'.

Openness and transparency

The OECD defines open government as a 'culture of governance based on innovative and sustainable public policies and practices inspired by the principles of transparency, accountability and participation that fosters democracy and inclusive growth'.[49] The World Justice Project Open Government Index takes into account four dimensions of government openness:

- publicised laws and government data
- right to information
- civic participation
- complaint mechanisms.[50]

Australia ranked ninth out of 102 countries in the World Justice Project Open Government Index 2015.

Easy access to government information and data is essential to promote public sector transparency and openness. The Transparency Portal—www.transparency.gov.au—is a new central repository of publicly available corporate information for all Commonwealth bodies. Throughout 2018, the Department of Finance led a digital annual report pilot project where participating agencies produced and digitised their 2017–18 annual reports. Following this pilot, the 2018–19 reporting cycle saw all Commonwealth entities and companies produce digital annual reports. These can be located on the Transparency Portal. Over time, the Transparency Portal will be expanded to incorporate additional information, with a view to establishing a single authoritative source of reporting requirements under the PGPA Act.

Australia has also been a member of the Open Government Partnership since 2015 and released its first Open Government National Action Plan in 2016. The partnership's vision is that more governments 'become sustainably more transparent, more accountable and more responsive to their own citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive'.[51]

It is important to ensure the APS proactively drives a culture of openness to be accountable to the Australian public and continue efforts to build trust in the APS as an enduring institution. At the same time, there is a need to safeguard the ability of the APS to provide frank and fearless deliberative advice to the government of the day. The Commonwealth Freedom of Information regime seeks to strike a balance between these two priorities.

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[49] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*.

[50] World Justice Project. (2015). *WJP Open Government Index Methodology*. Retrieved 12 August 2019 from https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/wjp-open-government-index/wjp-open-government-index-methodology

[51] Open Government Partnership. (2019). *Mission and strategy*. Retrieved 12 August 2019 from https://www.opengovpartnership.org/mission-and-strategy/

Australia's second *Open Government National Action Plan 2018–20,* launched in September 2018, comprises eight commitments to improve transparency, accountability and public engagement across all facets of government in collaboration with civil society.

This national action plan seeks to:

- strengthen the national anti-corruption framework
- enhance the transparency of political donations and funding
- improve the sharing, use and reuse of public sector data
- improve public service practices using place-based approaches
- enhance state and territory participation in the Open Government Partnership
- enhance public engagement skills in the public service
- engage Australians in the Independent Review of the APS
- expand open contracting and due diligence in procurement.[52]

Work started on the third Open Government National Action Plan in September 2019.

Data sharing frameworks

Australian Government data holdings contain crucially important opportunities to inform policy development, evaluate programs, contribute to economic growth, and support innovation, for the benefit of all Australians.

In July 2018, the Australian Government established the Office of the National Data Commissioner with responsibility for implementing a data sharing framework that improves access to, and re-use of, public sector data, while maintaining data privacy and security. The Government is working to treat its public data as fuel for the digital economy and a resource for the information society, including a focus on whether policies are working or not. However, this comes with an obligation for public scrutiny and a right to privacy for every citizen.

In September 2019, the Australian Government also released for consultation a discussion paper on data sharing and release legislative reform to enshrine data protection, together with a clear, consistent and transparent approach to sharing public sector data. As outlined in the paper, maintaining trust with the Australian community is fundamental to realising the full potential of data as a national asset. This will require the continuing enhancement of a values-based culture, driven by system-wide transparency and accountability, to ensure data is used in a manner that instils trust.

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[52] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2018). *Australia's second Open Government National Action Plan 2018–20.*

Strong governance frameworks are needed. Reforms under the Open Government Partnership aim to promote better sharing of public sector data while building the public's trust in use of public data through appropriate safeguards and integrity in the data system. To this end, the main aim of the Office of the National Data Commissioner is to build trust in how the Government manages its data.

A *Best Practice Guide to Applying Data Sharing Principles* was released in March 2019 to assist agencies holding Australian Government data to safely and effectively share the data for which they are responsible. This guide complements existing legislative data protections.

Collaboration and partnerships

> The APS needs to be world-class at collaborating with external partners on all the challenges we face as a country—everything from grasping the productivity opportunity of the digital economy, to ending the export of waste, to using big data to dramatically improve service delivery.
>
> The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia[53]

Individually, APS agencies have control of some mechanisms to address policy issues. However, it is only through collaboration and partnerships that the APS will be able to achieve the best possible outcomes when dealing with complex challenges. To facilitate this, the APS needs to drive a culture of collaboration, productive relationships and enhanced levels of trust, both within the APS and with external stakeholders.

The APS is already changing the way it works, moving from traditional bureaucratic methods towards an inclusive, agile and connected approach with key partners and the community. While there are strong examples of the APS collaborating effectively in a crisis, this needs to be extended to more aspects of policy design, regulatory activities and service delivery. Collaboration needs to become the norm, not the exception.

For the first time, the 2019 APS employee census included questions assessing employees' experience of collaboration within and between agencies and external stakeholders. These questions were only asked of EL and SES employees. Collaboration was defined as 'the process of two or more people or organisations working closely together to complete a task or project, or to achieve a goal'. Figure 3.1 outlines the results.

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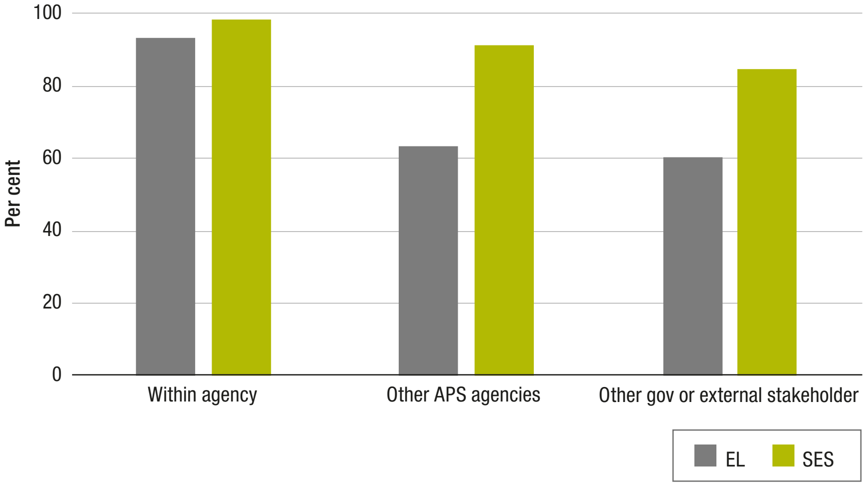
[53] Morrison, S. (2019). Speech, Institute of Public Administration. 19 August 2019. Canberra. Retrieved from https://www.pm.gov.au/media/speech-institute-public-administration

Figure 3.1: Proportion of EL and SES employees engaging in collaboration



Source: 2019 APS employee census

The 2019 APS employee census also included questions about the types of collaboration that EL and SES employees had engaged in. The most common form of collaboration reported within and across agencies, and with other government or external stakeholders, was informal discussions and activities, followed by formal project and working groups.

In addition, analysis of APS employee census data indicates that collaboration with other levels of government or external stakeholders varied across agency size and functional cluster.[54] For example, a greater proportion of respondents from policy agencies reported collaboration than respondents from larger operational agencies.

The PS Act requires SES employees to promote cooperation within and between agencies, including to deliver outcomes across agency and portfolio boundaries. In line with this requirement, a larger proportion of SES respondents than EL respondents indicated they had collaborated with people from other APS or Commonwealth government agencies over the previous 12 months. More than half of all SES respondents (58 per cent) had been involved in an interdepartmental committee, compared to just over a quarter (26 per cent) of EL respondents.

The 2019 APS employee census also asked SES and EL employees about perceived barriers to collaboration. Common responses included lack of time and resources, competing priorities, organisational and budgetary silos, and a culture of competition rather than collaboration.

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[54] Australian Public Service (APS) agencies are grouped into categories or 'functional clusters' to allow comparisons to be made between agencies with similar primary functions. See: https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-agencies-size-and-function

In the 2019 APS agency survey, the most commonly reported barriers to collaboration within agencies included geographical dispersion, workload and staffing levels, time pressures, and siloed approaches to working. Challenges to external collaboration reported by agencies included workload and staffing levels, information sharing (including security and approval concerns) and competing priorities.

As outlined in *Priorities for Change*, it is crucial to adopt new approaches, reconfigure teams and deploy skills where and when most needed to support a culture of collaboration. Leaders modelling this collaboration and partnership culture gives everyone across the APS licence to conduct themselves in this way.

To ensure true collaboration can take place across the public sector and with external partners, APS leaders must actively remove barriers to collaboration. It will be important to have rules, systems, structures and ways of working that empower, not encumber, the flexibility and collaboration essential to advancing Australia's long-term interests.[55] Effective collaboration also relies on a strong, pro-integrity culture, earning stakeholder trust by acting in accordance with the APS Values and delivering on commitments.

UNESCO World Heritage Listing for Budj Bim Cultural Landscape—Department of the Environment and Energy

The inscription of Australia's first Indigenous Australian landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List followed years of sustained collaboration between the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners, government and academia. Over the last two years the Department of the Environment and Energy has been working with Gunditjmara Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victoria to prepare the nomination for the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, which led to the successful inscription on the World Heritage List on 6 July 2019.

Located within the traditional country of the Gunditjmara peoples in southwest Victoria, the listing includes the Budj Bim National Park and Tae Rak (Lake Condah), as well as the Kurtonitj area, characterised by traditionally engineered wetlands, and Tyrendarra in the south, an area of rocky ridges and large marshes. The Budj Bim lava flows, which connect these three components, have enabled the Gunditjmara to develop one of the largest and oldest aquaculture networks in the world. Composed of channels, dams and weirs, they are used to manage floodwaters and create basins to trap, store and harvest the kooyang eel (*Anguilla australis*), which has provided the population with an economic and social base for six millennia.

The department continues to partner with the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners to support the ongoing protection and management of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage property. It is also collaborating with other Traditional Owners across Australia to recognise and protect places of Indigenous cultural importance.

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[55] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). *Independent Review of the APS: Priorities for Change*.

Barkly Regional Deal—Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development

The $78.4 million Barkly Regional Deal—Australia's first Regional Deal pilot—was signed on 13 April 2019 following a six-month community engagement process. The Barkly region is centred around the town of Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, and is Australia's second largest local government area. Local leadership, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, were at the heart of the deal's development, in recognition of their ongoing connection to country as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land.

Following an initial visit by the then Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, to discuss the suitability of a Regional Deal in July 2018, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Michael McCormack MP, and the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, commenced community engagement to determine local priorities for inclusion in the deal.

A taskforce comprising representatives from the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory Government and the Barkly Regional Council was established for a joined-up approach to community engagement. Taskforce members consulted collaboratively with Traditional Owners and representatives of the 16 Indigenous language groups across the region, local business leaders, young people and non-government organisations in Tennant Creek, and outlying remote communities. Community members shared, with unflinching honesty, their stories, struggles and ideas about how to address the region's challenges and build the region's resilience.

The chairperson of Barkly Regional Arts, a local service provider and resident of the region, described the deal as having 'an empowering and unifying impact across many sectors'. He believes 'the level of involvement demonstrates just how passionate the Barkly community is in participating in the regions positive development' and is 'confident the leadership, partnerships and collaborations that we are currently seeing will help strengthen and develop the region for future generations'.

The deal is a practical and innovative example of how collaboration and partnerships between the three levels of government and local community can drive positive change to support a community's needs, aspirations and vision for its future.

GovTEAMS: A digital collaboration service for government—Department of Finance

GovTEAMS was launched by the Department of Finance on 1 January 2019, focusing on delivering collaboration capability for the APS.

GovTEAMS allows APS employees to collaborate in real time, co-author information and share files in a single online workspace. It now counts 27,000 users and 3,900 communities from 168 organisations, with members in 33 countries. In addition to APS employees, more than 6,000 invited external partners, such as academics and industry partners, are collaborating with public servants by video, audio and instant messaging from around the world. Users have shared more than one million files and have exchanged more than 253,000 real-time messages across GovTEAMS since its launch.

GovTEAMS also provides greater opportunities for individuals with a disability to collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders.

'GovTEAMS allowed collaboration with colleagues and external third parties using a screen reader from both desktop and mobile platforms. As a blind user I was able to fully utilise the collaboration and content creation functions of GovTEAMS without training or assistance enabling me to contribute to projects from multiple client devices.'
GovTEAMS user feedback

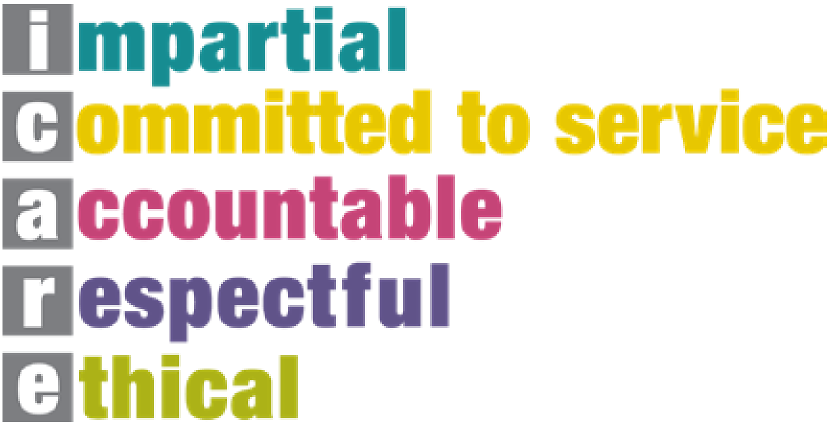
As a next step, PROTECTED GovTEAMS will start as a trial from December 2019. Based on GovTEAMS, with enhanced security features, up to 2,000 participants from across government and industry will have the power to communicate and collaborate with protected information in a secure mobile environment.

APS Values and integrity

APS employees occupy a position of trust. This brings a level of responsibility that must be matched by the highest standards of ethical behaviour from every APS employee.

Institutional integrity in the APS is about changing the mindset from a compliance-based approach as the default setting to a pro-integrity culture by promoting shared values and consistent practices.

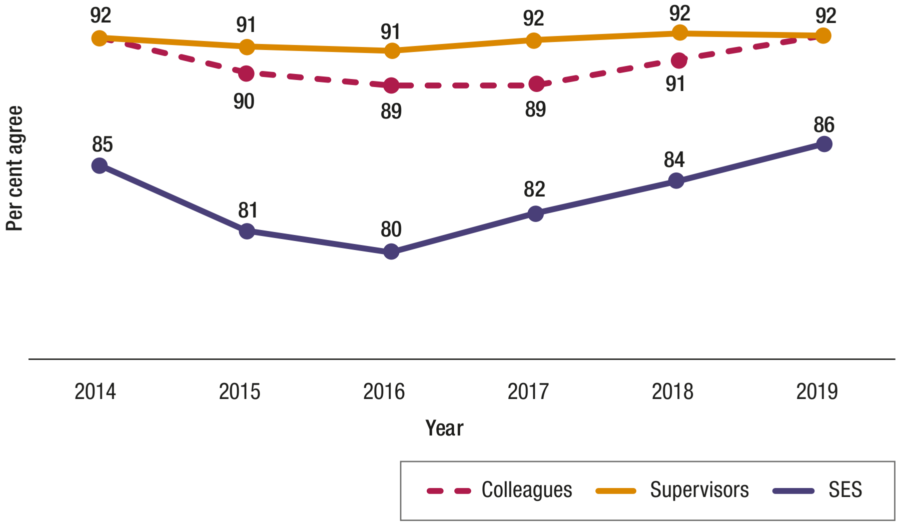
Figure 3.2: APS Values



Together, the APS Values (Figure 3.2), the APS Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct set out the standard of behaviour expected of agency heads and APS employees.

In the 2019 APS employee census, the majority of employees perceived that their colleagues (92 per cent) and supervisors (92 per cent) 'always' or 'often' acted in accordance with the APS Values (Figure 3.3). These perceptions have remained relatively stable since questions about this were included in 2014. Perceptions of SES have steadily increased since a low point of 80 per cent positive responses in 2016.

Figure 3.3: Proportion of APS employees perceiving their colleagues, supervisor and SES always or often act in accordance with APS Values, 2014 to 2019



Source: APS employee census

SES employees are also responsible under the PS Act to promote the APS Values, the APS Employment Principles and compliance with the Code of Conduct. In the 2019 APS employee census, 80 per cent of APS employees perceived SES in their agency to 'always' or 'often' promote the APS Values. Employees who reported that their SES manager was sufficiently visible were more likely to indicate that senior leaders in their agency promoted the APS Values.

Ethics Advisory Service—Australian Public Service Commission

The year 2019 marks the 10th anniversary of the Ethics Advisory Service (EAS) within the APSC. Since its establishment the EAS has responded to more than 7,000 requests for advice on applying the APS Values and Code of Conduct as well as making ethical decisions in the APS. Topics addressed included managing conflicts of interest, misconduct enquiries and, increasingly, the ever-evolving issue of employee participation on social media.

APS Code of Conduct

The principles of good public administration, embodied in the APS Values and APS Employment Principles, lie at the heart of the democratic process and the confidence the public has in the way public servants exercise authority in delivering the agenda of the government of the day. Good public administration is a protection against inefficiency and poor performance, as well as against fraud, corruption, inequity, inability to conduct business confidently and infringement of human rights.

All APS employees must comply with the APS Code of Conduct, as set out in Section 13 of the PS Act. This includes the requirement to behave in a way that upholds the APS Values as well as the integrity and good reputation of their agency and the APS. A breach of the Code may result in sanctions, ranging from a reprimand to termination of employment.

In the 2019 APS agency survey, responding agencies reported that 535 employees had been subject to an investigation into a suspected breach of the Code.[56] This is equivalent to less than 0.4 per cent of the APS workforce, and continues the decrease in such investigations since 2016 (Figure 3.4). The most common breaches related to:

- 'an APS employee must at all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and APS Employment Principles and the integrity and good reputation of the employee's agency and the APS' (Section 13(11) of the PS Act)
- 'an APS employee must behave honestly and with integrity in connection with APS employment' (Section 13(1) of the PS Act)
- 'an APS employee must act with care and diligence in connection with APS employment' (Section 13(2) of the PS Act).

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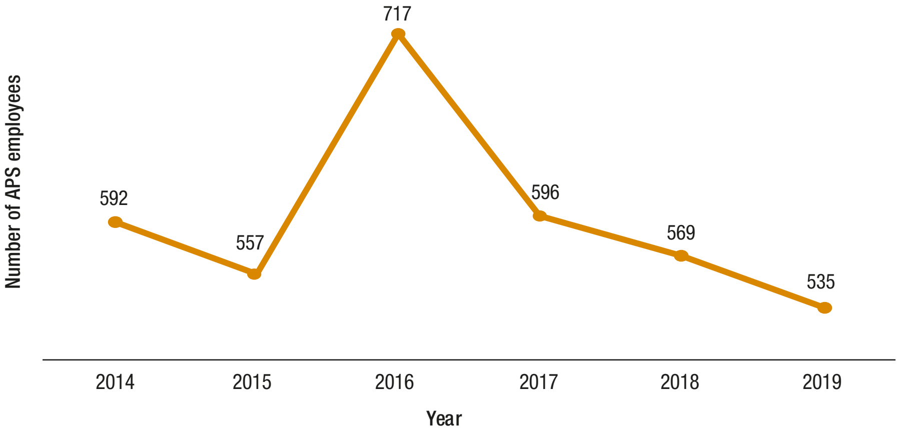
[56] This covers investigations that were finalised during 2018–19.

Figure 3.4: Number of APS employees investigated for a suspected breach of the APS Code of Conduct, 2014 to 2019



Source: APS agency survey

The outcomes of these investigations showed:

- 315 employees were found in breach of the Code and a sanction applied
- 152 employees were found in breach of the Code, however no sanction was applied (with 82 employees resigning prior to a sanction decision)
- 38 employees investigated were found to have not breached the Code
- 30 employees investigated had their investigation discontinued.

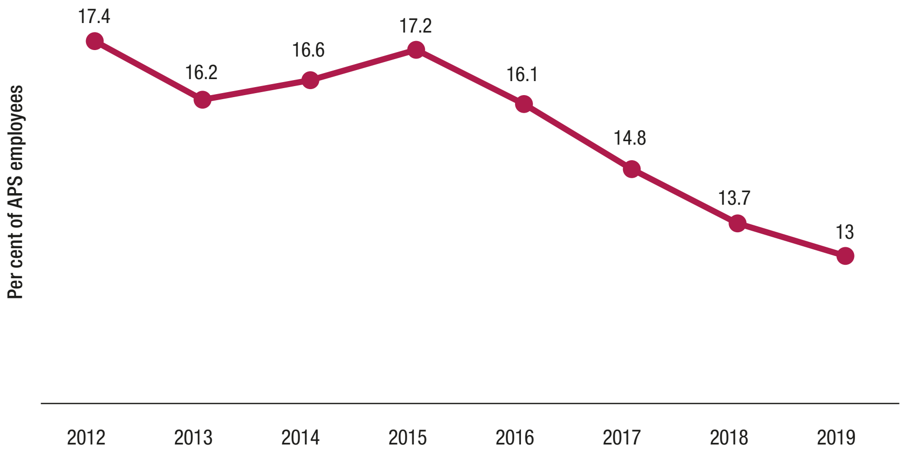
Where a breach of the Code was established and a sanction applied, the most common sanction was reprimand (40 per cent of cases), followed by a reduction in salary (20 per cent of cases) and deductions from salary by way of a fine (18 per cent of cases).

Bullying, harassment and discrimination

A positive workplace is characterised by mutual respect that supports employee engagement. It also creates a high-performance culture that encourages innovation and creativity. The APS Code of Conduct requires APS employees to treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment when acting in connection with APS employment.

In the 2019 APS employee census, 13 per cent of APS employees (n = 12,583) perceived bullying or harassment in the workplace in the previous 12 months. This perception has been decreasing steadily since 2015 (Figure 3.5). In 2019, the most common types of perceived bullying or harassment were verbal abuse, interference with work tasks and inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules.

Figure 3.5: Reported perceived rates of bullying or harassment, 2012 to 2019



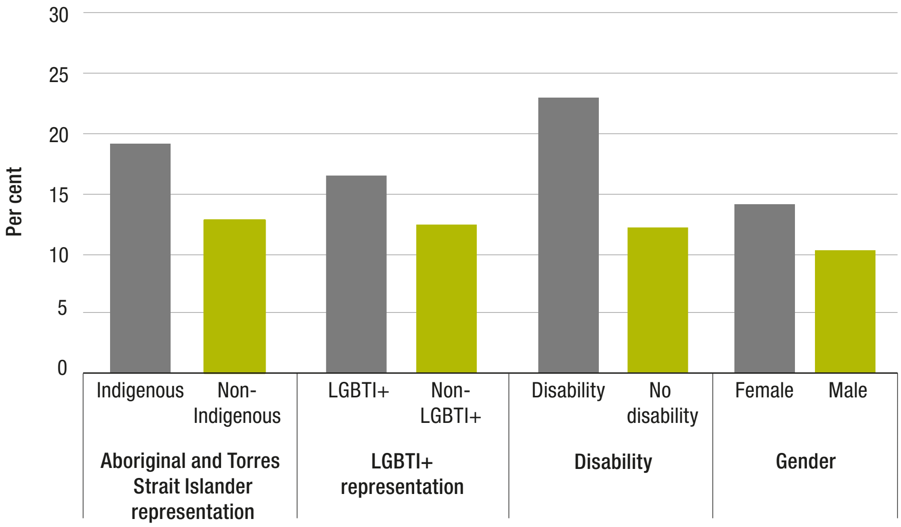
Source: APS employee census

In the 2019 APS agency survey, agencies reported 422 complaints of bullying or harassment. A single complaint can cover more than one type of bullying or harassment; the most common complaints related to verbal abuse, inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules and interference with work tasks.

In the 2019 APS employee census, 12.2 per cent of APS employees (*n* = 11,779) perceived discrimination at work in the past year. This compares to 12.3 per cent in the 2018 APS employee census. According to the 2019 APS agency survey, 28 complaints were recorded from employees about discrimination in 2018–19. The most common complaints related to gender, race, cultural background or religious beliefs, and disability.

Further analysis of the census data reveals that respondents who reported belonging to diversity groups reported higher rates of perceived bullying or harassment (Figure 3.6). This trend was also reflected in results from the 2018 APS employee census.

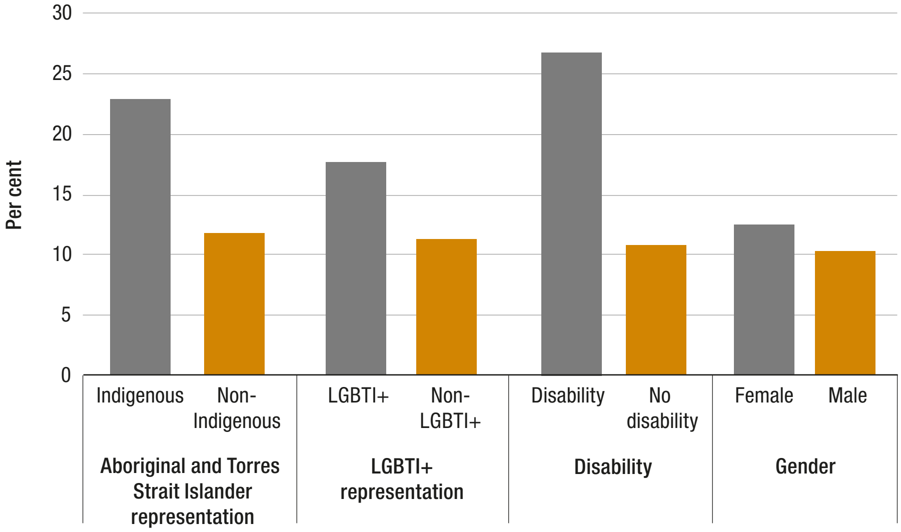
Figure 3.6: Rates of APS employee perceptions of harassment or bullying by diversity group



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Similarly, there were higher rates of perceived discrimination by employees who identified as part of a diversity group (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Rates of APS employee perceptions of discrimination by diversity group



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Corruption

> Corruption chips away at democracy to produce a vicious cycle, where corruption undermines democratic institutions and, in turn, weak institutions are less able to control corruption.
>
> Patricia Moreira, Managing Director, Transparency International[57]

Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perception Index ranked Australia as having the 13th least corrupt public sector out of 180 countries considered.[58] Although the Index consistently ranks Australia as one of the least corrupt nations in the world, Australia's ranking has continued to decline since 2012. Perceived levels of public sector corruption have seen Australia slip from an initial ranking of seventh on the Index, even though Australia has a strong record of global, regional and domestic action to prevent and expose corrupt activity.

Through the 2019 APS agency survey, agencies reported on the number of employees investigated under the Code of Conduct for potential corrupt behaviour. The agency survey defined corruption as 'the dishonest or biased exercise of a Commonwealth public official's functions'. A distinguishing characteristic of corrupt behaviour is that it involves conduct that would usually justify serious penalties, such as termination of employment or criminal prosecution. Types of behaviour that, if serious enough, may be considered corrupt include:

- bribery—domestic and foreign—obtaining, offering or soliciting secret commissions, kickbacks or gratuities
- fraud, forgery or embezzlement
- theft or misappropriation of official assets
- nepotism—preferential treatment of family members
- cronyism—preferential treatment of friends
- acting (or failing to act) in the presence of a conflict of interest
- unlawful disclosure of government information
- blackmail
- perverting the course of justice
- colluding, conspiring with, or harbouring criminals
- insider trading—misusing official information to gain an unfair private, commercial or market advantage for self or others
- green-lighting—making official decisions that improperly favour a person or company, or disadvantage another.

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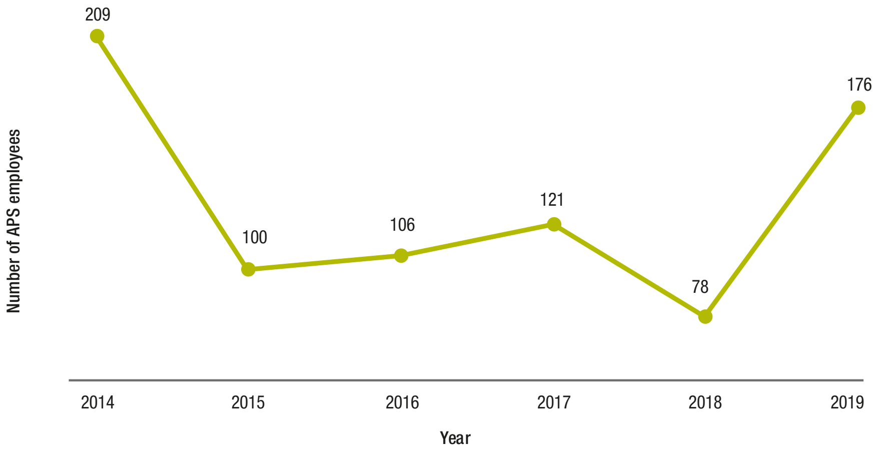
[57] Transparency International. (2019). *How Corruption Weakens Democracy*. Retrieved 14 August 2019 from https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/cpi_2018_global_analysis

[58] Transparency International. (2019). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2018*. Retrieved from https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018

Of the 535 employees who had investigations for a suspected breach of the APS Code of Conduct finalised in 2018–19, 176 investigations related to behaviour that could be categorised as corrupt (Figure 3.8). The main type of corrupt behaviour investigated was fraud, forgery or embezzlement (*n* = 107). Almost all employees (*n* = 173) investigated for corrupt behaviour were found to have breached the Code of Conduct. The number of employees investigated for behaviour that could be categorised as corrupt is the highest since 2014; however, most instances can be attributed to a single agency having an increase in corruption investigations in 2018–19.

Figure 3.8: Number of APS employees investigated for corrupt behaviour, 2014 to 2019



Source: APS agency survey

In the 2019 APS employee census, 4.4 per cent of respondents (*n* = 4,299) indicated they had witnessed another APS employee engaging in behaviour that may be serious enough to be viewed as corrupt. This proportion remained stable compared to data from 2018 (4.6 per cent). The most commonly witnessed forms of perceived corruption were:

- cronyism (69 per cent)
- nepotism (25 per cent)
- acting (or failing to act) in the presence of an undisclosed conflict of interest (23 per cent)
- fraud, forgery or embezzlement (15 per cent).

Cronyism was most commonly perceived in recruitment and/or promotion decisions (73 per cent) and in opportunities for acting, higher duties or other advancements (72 per cent). Similarly, the majority of respondents perceived nepotism through recruitment and/or promotion decisions (80 per cent) and through acting, higher duties and other advancement opportunities (74 per cent).

Of the respondents who had witnessed behaviours that may be serious enough to be viewed as corruption, 64 per cent said they did not report the behaviour. Nineteen per cent of respondents reported the behaviour in accordance with their agency's policies and procedures and 17 per cent indicated that the behaviour was reported by someone else. Employees were also asked why they chose not to report the behaviour. More than one response could be selected; the most common were:

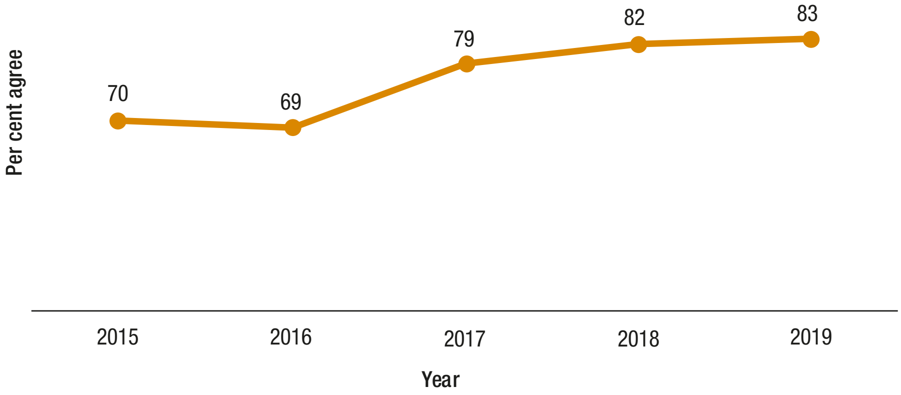
- believing no action would be taken (66 per cent)
- managers accepting the behaviour (61 per cent)
- reporting the behaviour could affect their career (54 per cent)
- concern about adverse consequence beyond the effect on their career (42 per cent).

Twelve per cent indicated they did not know how to report the behaviour.

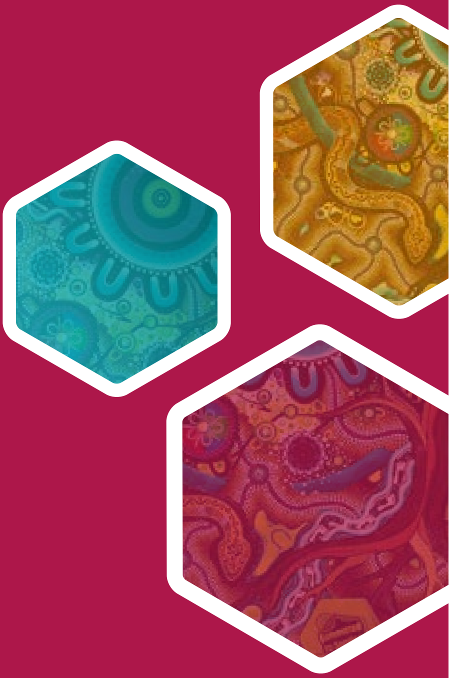
The APS employee census details employee perceptions of corruption rather than evidence of actual corruption. Care must therefore be taken when interpreting this data. The percentage of employees responding they feel confident in knowing what to do if they identified corruption in their workplace continues to improve (83 per cent in 2019), as illustrated in Figure 3.9.

While levels of corruption are very low in the APS, it is important that leaders continue to ensure that employees feel supported in reporting suspected corruption and that confidence in the reporting system is maintained.

Figure 3.9: Proportion of APS employees who felt confident they knew what to do if they identified corruption in their workplace, 2015 to 2019



Source: APS employee census



Chapter
FOUR

Diversity and inclusion

For years, we've known that diverse teams are better at solving problems. Inclusive workplaces also have more engaged employees. We achieve better outcomes when staff know their views count; and when they feel empowered respectfully to contest policy and ideas.

Diversity and inclusion matter for improved function . . . Embracing diversity also drives innovation and enhances our ability to relate to modern Australia.

Frances Adamson, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade[59]

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[59] Institute of Public Administration Australia. (2019). Secretary series | Frances Adamson. Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://www.act.ipaa.org.au/2019-pastevent-adamson

Australia is a diverse nation, and this should be reflected in the makeup of its public service. By increasing diversity in the APS, the service can better represent the Australian population, resulting in better public services and increased trust in those services.[60]

However, the true benefits of diversity cannot be realised without inclusion. When employees see their organisation as being committed to diversity and inclusion, they report better business performance through increased ability to innovate, respond to change and engage in team collaboration.[61]

The APS can capitalise on the unique experiences, knowledge and abilities of its workforce by creating inclusive environments that enable diverse thought to flourish and that drive innovation and creativity. An inclusive workplace culture can enable employees to bring their best selves to work and encourage them to work hard to achieve their organisations' goals.

Agencies should not only hold themselves responsible for their own culture but should be working together to increase inclusion and diversity across the entire APS, promoting a 'One APS' culture.

Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council

Senior APS leaders are driving diversity and inclusion initiatives across the APS through the Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council, comprising all 18 APS departmental secretaries and two external members. The Council's purpose is to break down formal and informal barriers to ensure the APS provides an inclusive and respectful workplace for everyone. Since its inception in 2016, the Council has been responsible for three APS-wide strategies to promote diversity and inclusion:

- *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015–18*
- *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19*
- *As One: Making it Happen, Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2016–19.*

Progress against these strategies is explored throughout this chapter.

The *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015–18* was evaluated towards the end of 2018[62], and *Are we there yet?: Progress of the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy* was published in June 2018.[63] At the time of writing this report, three updated diversity strategies are in development and are anticipated to start in 2020.

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[60] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Diversity and inclusion.* Retrieved 8 October 2019 from http://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/diversity-and-inclusion.htm

[61] Deloitte and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. (2012). *Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance.*

[62] Inside Policy. (2019). *An Evaluation of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Final Report*.

[63] Commonwealth of Australia. (2018). *Are we there yet?: Progress of the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy*.

Inclusion

> It is only through inclusion that organisations can make the most out of diversity.
>
> Diversity Council of Australia[64]

Inclusion—that is, acceptance, tolerance and respect for people regardless of their diversity—should shape the culture of any workplace, and the APS is no exception. This goes beyond simply seeking to ensure workplace harmony. For the APS, it goes to the heart of its ability to deliver effective services and solve complex policy challenges on behalf of the government and the people of Australia.

Inclusion is fundamentally about each employee's experience of both their work and their workplace. Inclusion plays an important part in creating and sustaining a meaningful career pathway through the APS for each member of the workforce, irrespective of cultural background, religion, gender, disability status, sexual orientation, age and socio-economic standing.

An inclusive, diverse workforce is thought to strongly promote innovation and staff engagement and, importantly for the public sector, build trust in public institutions. The OECD principles for a fit-for-purpose public service include ensuring an inclusive and safe public service that reflects the diversity of the society it represents.[65]

The value of inclusion was highlighted by a Diversity Council of Australia survey of more than 3,000 working Australians. The survey results demonstrated that inclusion:

- mattered to Australian workers—three out of four were strongly supportive of their organisations taking action to create a diverse and inclusive workplace
- was good for business—workers in inclusive teams were more effective, more innovative and provide better customer service
- was good for employees—workers in inclusive teams were more satisfied with their jobs, more likely to stay with their employers and more likely to receive career employment opportunities; even a somewhat inclusive team provided benefits to employee satisfaction, success and security, and team performance
- minimised harassment and discrimination
- benefited everyone—men and women can equally feel satisfied with their jobs.[66]

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[64] Diversity Council of Australia. (2019). *Diversity & Inclusion Explained*. Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/getting-started-di/diversity-inclusion-explained

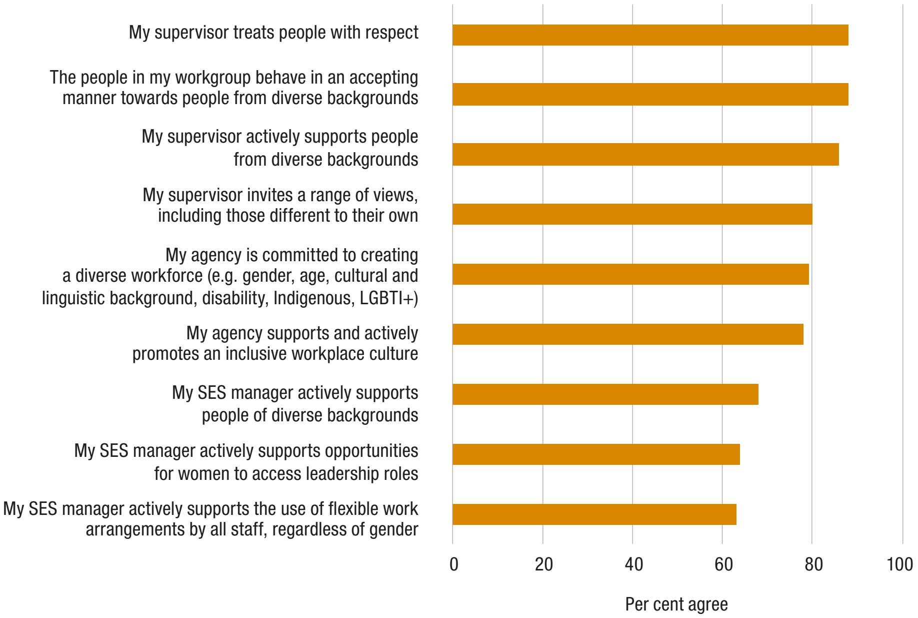
[65] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability* (adopted 17 January 2019).

[66] Diversity Council of Australia. *Inclusion@Work Index 2017–2018*. Retrieved from https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/inclusion-index

APS employee perceptions of inclusion

The 2019 APS employee census revealed that overall perceptions of inclusion in the workplace in 2019 were either unchanged, or slightly more positive, compared to 2018. As Figure 4.1 shows, employees were most positive about their immediate colleagues and supervisors. Their perceptions about their agencies and SES were lower, but still positive in absolute terms. It is worth noting that 80 per cent of respondents indicated their supervisor invited a range of views, a key contributing factor to diversity of thought within teams.

Figure 4.1: APS employee perceptions of inclusion



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Indigenous employees

Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015–18

The goal of the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015–18* was to increase the representation of Indigenous employees across the public sector to 3 per cent by 2018 through four key action areas:

- expanding the range of Indigenous employment opportunities
- developing the capability of Indigenous employees
- increasing the representation of Indigenous employees in senior roles
- improving the awareness of Indigenous culture in the workplace.[67]

Agencies employed various activities and initiatives in response to the strategy. In the 2019 APS agency survey, 55 agencies indicated they had agency-specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment plans. Measures included:

- affirmative measures and/or Indigenous identified positions to recruit Indigenous people
- entry-level recruitment programs such as Indigenous cadetships and Indigenous graduate pathways
- cultural competency training for selection panels to understand unconscious bias in recruiting
- Indigenous mentoring programs and agency facilitated employee networks for Indigenous staff
- participation in culturally significant events such as National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week and National Reconciliation Week.

An evaluation of the strategy in late 2018 found that the APS had made solid progress towards its Indigenous employment target.[68] The evaluation found that this progress largely resulted from an increase in Indigenous employment at the lowest APS classification levels (graduate/trainee).

An emphasis on entry level recruitment as the principal way of achieving the 3 per cent target meant less focus on clear promotion or leadership pathways for Indigenous employees. This has been reflected in a decrease in the proportion of Indigenous engagements at higher classification levels and an increase in the proportion of ongoing Indigenous employees leaving the APS workforce.

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[67] Commonwealth of Australia. (2015). *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015–18.*

[68] Inside Policy. (2019). *An Evaluation of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Final Report*.

Moving forward, the evaluation suggested setting a more complex employment target, with targets specific to classification levels, to address Indigenous employment overrepresentation in lower levels. It also recommended strengthening capability development for Indigenous employees and focusing on building Indigenous career pathways.

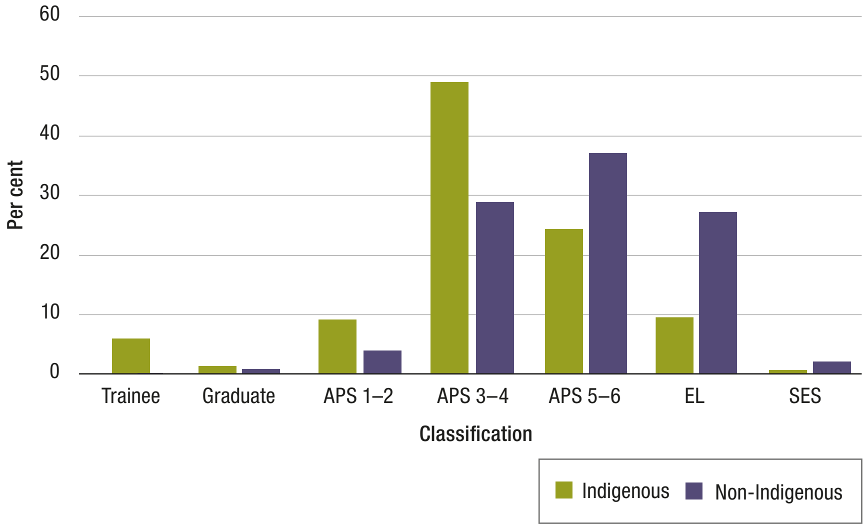
The next iteration of this strategy is being developed and is expected to launch early 2020. The Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council has stated that the strategy will aim to 'consolidate best practice employment programs, improve retention rates and build equity in promotion opportunities for Indigenous employees, particularly into SES ranks'.[69]

Indigenous representation and inclusion

At the last Census of Population and Housing in 2016, 2.8 per cent (649,200 people) of the population identified as Indigenous.[70] Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) data notes the proportion of APS employees identifying as Indigenous was 3.5 per cent as at 30 June 2019, an increase from 2.9 per cent in 2015. Figure 4.2 demonstrates that most Indigenous employment was concentrated at the APS 3–4 level and significantly declines at higher levels.

Higher proportions of Indigenous employees (37.7 per cent) compared to non-Indigenous employees (13.5 per cent) work in regional areas rather than capital cities. At 30 June 2019, Indigenous SES made up just 1.2 per cent of the SES workforce (32 Indigenous SES out of 2,780 total SES).

Figure 4.2: Proportion of Indigenous employment by classification, June 2019



Source: APSED

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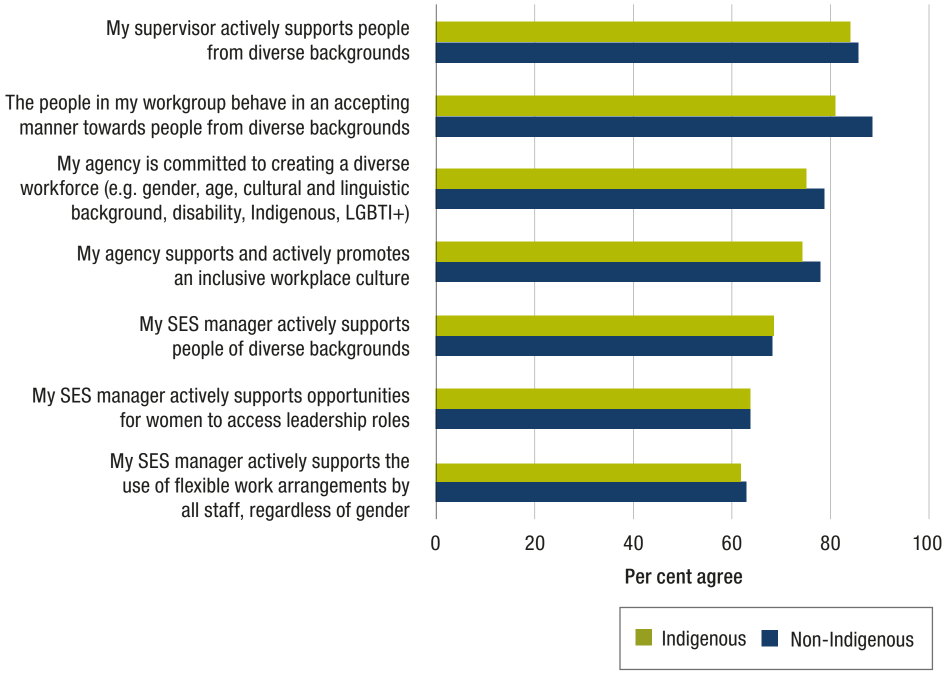
[69] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). *Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council. Communique No 11. July 2019.*

[70] Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *2016 Census shows growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population* [media release].

In responses to the 2019 APS employee census, Indigenous APS employees generally had similar perceptions of diversity and inclusion in the workplace when compared with non-Indigenous APS employees. However, Indigenous employees responded less positively to questions relating to agency support for diversity and inclusion, and perceptions of inclusion in their immediate workgroup (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Indigenous and non-Indigenous APS employee perceptions of inclusion



Source: 2019 APS employee census

The evaluation of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy noted feedback that many non-Indigenous APS employees, including in supervisory or leadership positions, have limited understanding of the pressures and challenges faced by their Indigenous colleagues. This can undermine relationships and create barriers to career progression for Indigenous employees.

As outlined in Chapter 1, recent amendments to the Commissioner's Directions address the responsibility of senior leaders and supervisors in developing and sustaining a high-performance culture across the APS. The Commissioner's Directions explicitly mention 'career conversations' as an important aspect of a supervisor's role. This should play a part in ensuring that all APS employees, including those who identify as Indigenous, receive appropriate support and encouragement as they move through their APS careers.

Nevertheless, there remains a question of cultural competency. Agencies have employed a number of strategies to develop Indigenous cultural understanding in their staff, including through face-to-face training, participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrations, and through participation in the Jawun APS Secondment Program.

Many of these initiatives fall under the umbrella of an agency's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a strategic document that supports an organisation 'to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'.[71] The RAP program was started in 2006 by Reconciliation Australia to provide a structured, nationally recognised, model for workplaces to formalise commitments to reconciliation, based on the pillars of respect, relationships and opportunities.

In the 2019 APS agency survey, 63 out of 97 agencies reported they had a RAP. Using RAPs, agencies are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increased pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This, in turn, increases inclusion in the workplace.

The new *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24* will emphasise the role of cultural understanding in driving Indigenous inclusion across the APS. RAPs will continue to be an important mechanism for achieving this goal.

The APS Indigenous Champions Network can also play a role in leading and driving initiatives aimed at increasing the workplace experience for all APS Indigenous employees. The network, chaired by Services Australia, is an advisory group of champions who are senior representatives from various APS agencies. Among other activities, the network is committed to seeking ways in which more Indigenous employees can move into APS senior executive roles. It also focuses on the recruitment, retention and development of Indigenous employees in regional areas.

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[71] Reconciliation Australia. (2019). *What is a RAP?* Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans

Indigenous cultural awareness initiatives—Department of Agriculture

A priority for the Department of Agriculture is to foster knowledge and understanding of Torres Strait Islander culture in the workplace, as the department's biosecurity work in the Torres Strait is carried out by local staff.

In conjunction with the Australian Public Service Commission, the department coordinated several *Kaymel Gasaman*[72] cross cultural workshops delivered by Torres Strait elder Gabriel Bani from Thursday Island. The workshops allowed employees the opportunity to immerse into the wisdom of this elder and be grounded in truth to foster positive relations with Indigenous people. This forms part of efforts to create cultural safety in the workplace.

Employees shared in a unique opportunity to engage in an inspiring cross cultural learning experience delivered as part of the celebrations of National Reconciliation Week. These workshops explored the cultural considerations and challenges of the Torres Strait kinship, taboos, culture, history, governance and Island politics as well as trans-generational pride and culture.

In a separate initiative, the department has been working with Ngunnawal Elder Tyronne Bell to teach executives and senior staff to speak in Ngunnawal language. Once trained, executives can deliver an Acknowledgement of Country in this language. It is powerful to hear Ngunnawal language spoken in the workplace and it contributes to recognition, celebration and acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture.

Reconciliation Action Plans—Department of Home Affairs and Services Australia

The Department of Home Affairs began its third RAP in May 2019. Successes from its previous RAP include implementation of affirmative measures recruitment, mandatory cultural competency training for all staff, participation in the Jawun APS Secondment Program and exceeding the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet targets for contracts with Indigenous-owned businesses.

The new RAP intends to build on these successes by extending targets and actions over the next three years and focusing on relationships, respect and opportunities.

'The department takes an innovative and solutions-based approach to addressing Indigenous disadvantage. A particularly noteworthy example of the Department's RAP initiatives is its immense contribution to the Uniforms 4 Kids program, which sees disused ABF uniforms donated to the Brighter Future 4 Kids Foundation and repurposed as clothing for students attending the Yarrabah State School in Far North Queensland. This partnership has resulted in over 300 disadvantaged children receiving clothing, and is a fantastic example of the collaborative and respectful approach the Department takes toward reconciliation.'

Karen Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia.

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[72] Language from the Western Islands of the Torres Strait: *Kaymel Gasaman*—'sit down together', 'look back' together, 'understand the present' together and 'formulate our future' together.

Services Australia was one of the first organisations to join the RAP program. In 2015, it became the first Commonwealth department to have an Elevate RAP, reserved for organisations with a proven track record of embedding effective measures internally and the ability to be a leader in advancing the national goals.

Through the RAP, Services Australia has increased the representation of Indigenous staff to 5.6 per cent, up from 3.1 per cent in 2011. It has adopted a 2022 target of 6 per cent, including at least 3 per cent in senior leadership roles. Recruitment has been boosted through the pioneering Indigenous Apprenticeships Program, complemented by mentoring and buddy networks, targeted leadership training and four internal Indigenous Champions. Ninety-five per cent of staff have completed Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training.

The *Indigenous Servicing Strategy 2018–22* has introduced a set of service design standards to ensure customer-facing systems are culturally appropriate and increasingly responsive to customer needs.

The department also leads the APS Indigenous Champions Network (senior representatives committed to improving Indigenous employment outcomes across the APS), in recognition of its unique role as a service delivery partner to Indigenous communities and a gateway for Indigenous staff into the APS.

Gender

Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19

Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19 has guided the APS to support Australia's 2014 G20 commitment to boost women's workforce participation by 25 per cent by 2025 through these key actions:

- driving a supportive and enabling workplace culture
- achieving gender equality in APS leadership
- working innovatively to embed gender equality in employment practices
- increasing take-up of flexible work arrangements by both men and women
- measuring and evaluating actions.[73]

The strategy recognised that gender equality in the APS should lead to improvements in organisational and financial performance, and enhanced innovation. It sought to improve the gender balance at senior positions of the APS by addressing the barriers women face in being recruited and promoted to certain positions.

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[73] Commonwealth of Australia. (2016). *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19.*

In 2018, PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned by the APSC to review progress against the gender strategy and *Are we there yet?: Progress of the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy* was published in June 2018. The progress report found that the overall representation of women in the APS had steadily increased since 2016. The progress report also noted that for departments to create a more inclusive culture, they needed to 'move beyond simple measures of success such as numbers of women, to developing a more rounded picture of what an inclusive organisation would look and feel like, and measuring success accordingly'.[74]

To support the strategy, initiatives continue to be implemented by agencies across the APS, including:

- developing gender equality plans, strategies or policies
- implementing flexible working arrangements plans, strategies or policies
- appointing gender champions and creating gender networks
- undertaking training in recruitment practices regarding unconscious bias
- promoting gender inclusive practices through awards, such as the APSC Diversity and Gender Equality Awards for best practice in gender equality in the APS.

Some stand-out initiatives by agencies include:

- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Women in Leadership program[75], which has driven deep cultural change in the department and led to an increase in female representation in senior roles in Australia and internationally
- The Digital Transformation Agency's Women in IT Executive Mentoring program, which won the 2018 APS Gender Equality Award, and has matched more than 780 participants at EL levels with mentor senior information technology leaders across government, nurturing confidence, skills and driving cultural change at agency level.

The Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council noted progress against the strategy at its July 2019 meeting. Early work on the development of a new APS gender equality strategy is under way and progress made to date will inform the next iteration.

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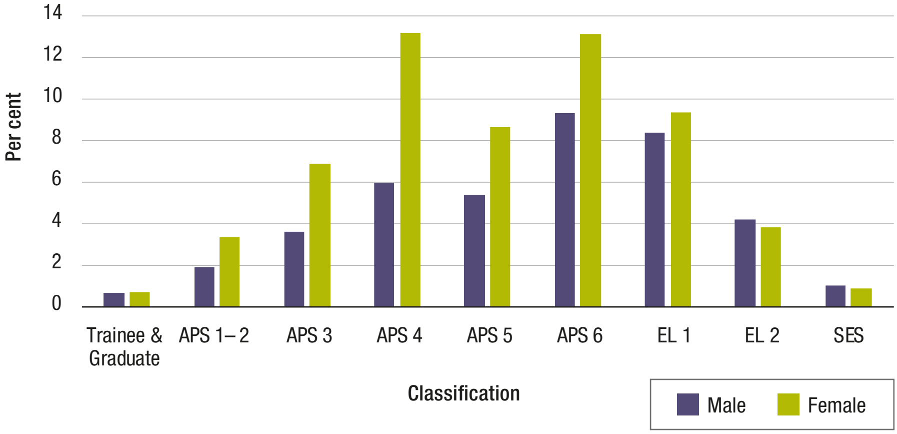
[74] Commonwealth of Australia. (2018). *Are we there yet? Progress of the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy*.

[75] Winner of the 2017 APS Gender Equality Award.

Gender representation and inclusion

Overall, the representation of women in the APS is higher than the proportion of women in the Australian population. At the last Census of Population and Housing in 2016, women made up 50.7 per cent of the population.[76] In the APS, at 30 June 2019, women represented 59.6 per cent of APS employees, with the highest proportion of women at APS 4 and APS 6 classifications (Figure 4.4). APSED data shows women are still underrepresented in the SES, at 46.3 per cent of the SES workforce; however, this represents progress from 41.8 per cent at 31 December 2015.[77]

Figure 4.4: Proportion of male and female APS employees by classification, June 2019



Source: APSED

APSED shows that during 2018–19, 57 per cent of employees joining the SES were women, the highest rate of female representation entering the SES cohort ever recorded. Women represent just 37.3 per cent of the SES over the age of 54 and only 43.8 per cent of ongoing separations during 2018–19. If this trend continues, the proportion of women in the SES should continue towards parity.

The move towards parity at the highest classification levels is reflected in a reduced gender pay gap across the APS. In 2018, the average base salary for males in the APS was $96,391 while the average for females was $88,896. This represents a 7.8 per cent gender pay gap for the APS and continues the improvement shown since 2014 (Figure 4.5).

It is important to note that the gender pay gap calculation is based on gender remuneration results for the whole of the APS. As a result, it reflects the underrepresentation of females at higher classification levels (EL 2 and above) and the overrepresentation of females at lower classification levels (APS 2–6). The actual differences between male and female median base salaries were minor at most classifications, with the majority within a range of 1 per cent variance.

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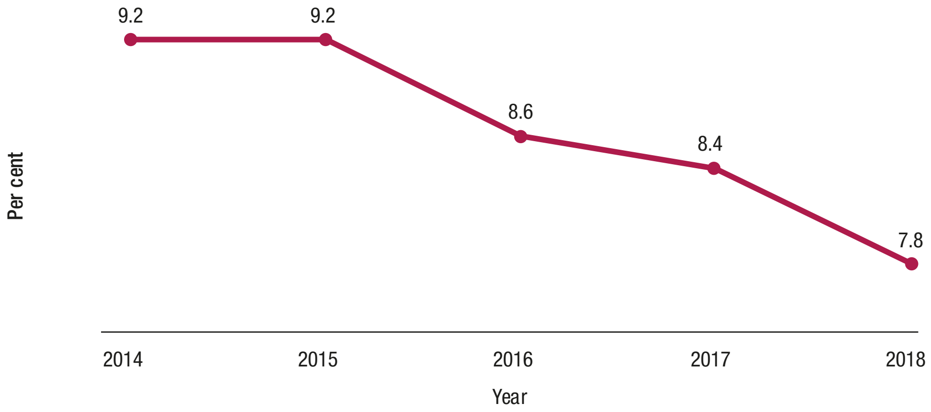
[76] Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia—Stories from the Census, 2016.*

[77] Commonwealth of Australia. (2016). *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19.*

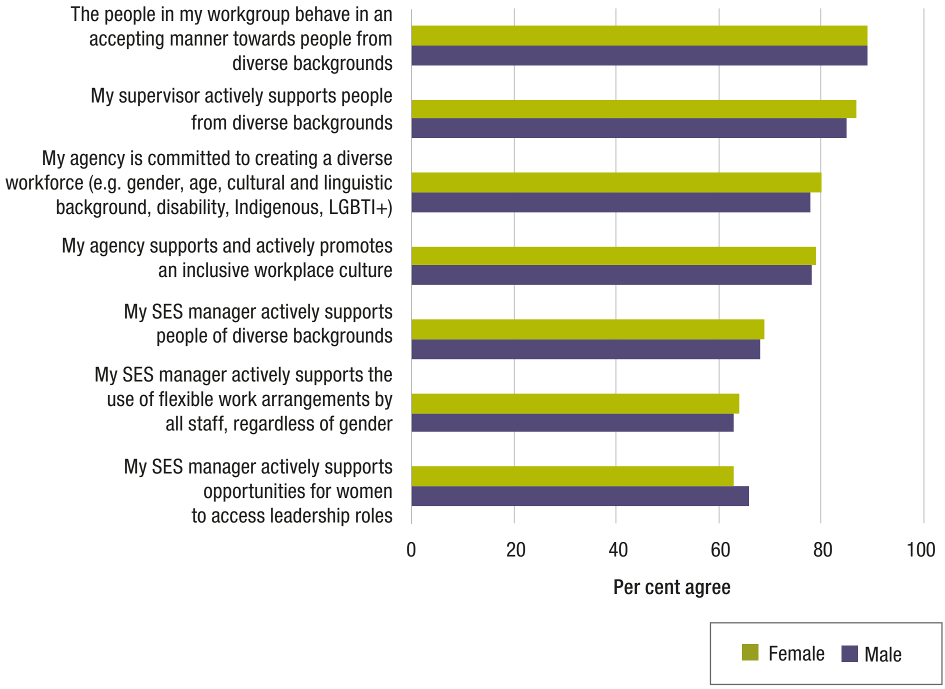
Figure 4.5: Overall APS gender pay gap, 2014 to 2018



Source: APS Remuneration Survey

Men and women had very similar perceptions of inclusion in the 2019 APS employee census (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: APS employee perceptions of inclusion by gender



Source: 2019 APS employee census

GENIE—Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business

The gender equality network of the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, GENIE (Gender Equality Network, Inclusion for Everyone), was a finalist in the 2018 APSC Diversity and Gender Equality Awards.

GENIE is an employee network comprising staff who volunteer time beyond their usual work to increase awareness of, and advocate for gender equality and workplace inclusion in the department. The network is governed by a committee with two Senior Executive Champions.

The GENIE network was established after an idea shared during Innovation Month 2015 to establish a women's network. Collaboration with other APS staff networks and an internal staff survey found that staff supported forming a network supporting gender equality.

The network has been instrumental in providing opportunities for staff to engage with senior management on issues that matter to them, including implementing flexible work arrangements, gendered work policy issues, societal changes and unconscious bias, leadership, and personal development.

GENIE's Chair, Priyanka Gupta, attributed the network's success to 'the passion and commitment of the committee members to facilitate tangible action and genuine engagement with departmental staff to improve gender equality and inclusion'.

In 2018–19, GENIE:

- led the department to win the 2018 Dignity Cup in the cross-agency Dignity Cup competition for Share the Dignity by donating the most feminine hygiene products
- fundraised more than $1,100 for gendered days of significance and charities
- implemented a bi-monthly Women in Leadership lunchtime series featuring guest speakers
- assisted to evaluate the department-wide Flexible by Default trial and initiated discussions on the department's next Gender Equality Action Plan
- in partnership with the People Branch, sponsored 11 staff to attend two women's leadership conferences.

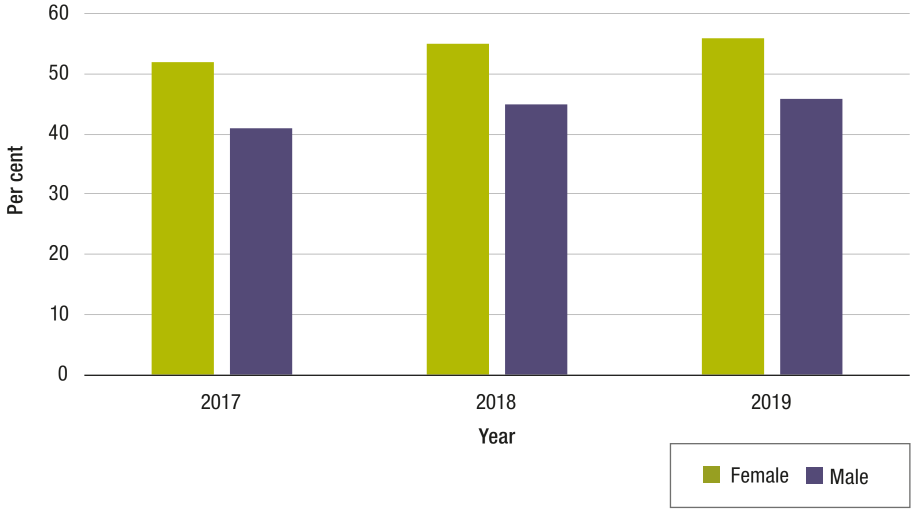
GENIE collaborates extensively when organising events and promoting inclusion, including with its membership, other internal and APS employee networks, the department's corporate teams, and the Senior Executive.

The department's Gender Champions, Kerryn Kovacevic (Chief Digital Officer, First Assistant Secretary, Digital Solutions) and Grant Lovelock (Assistant Secretary, National Careers Institute), both agree that while gender equality has come a long way from where it used to be, there is still work to be done. As Gender Champions, they aspire to lead the department towards becoming leaders in gender equality and workplace inclusion with the support of the GENIE committee.

The APS Gender Equality Strategy continues to seek improvement in gender balance in senior APS roles by addressing barriers to women being promoted and recruited to certain positions. For example, by promoting flexible work arrangements across the workforce, and enabling men to work flexibly, it was hoped to change the perception that 'flexible work is seen largely as an accommodation for women, and as incompatible with working in a leadership role'.[78]

The 2019 APS employee census data indicates that a greater proportion of females than males are using flexible working arrangements such as changes to work locations, work hours or patterns of work. However, the proportions of both men and women accessing flexible work have increased over the lifetime of the APS Gender Equality Strategy, as highlighted in Figure 4.7 (for more information on flexible working arrangements, see Chapter 5).

Figure 4.7: Proportion of APS employees using flexible work arrangements by gender, 2017 to 2019



Source: APS employee census

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[78] Commonwealth of Australia. (2016). *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19*, 4.

The Future Through Collaboration mentoring program—Department of Defence

The Future Through Collaboration is a mentor program designed to enhance organisational capability by attracting, supporting, developing and retaining women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) roles within the Department of Defence.

'We need to increase the representation of women in [the] Defence industry to better reflect Australian society and strengthen the retention of the women Defence has recruited and trained, particularly in the areas of STEM.'

The Hon Marise Payne MP, former Minister for Defence

The program facilitates supportive engagement between women in STEM and mentors in senior Defence and industry management roles. Mentees are matched to a mentor around shared goals, objectives, professional background, personalities and experiences. From meetings held every three to four weeks throughout the year, mentees have the opportunity to seek career guidance and advice to help with their professional development. The mentors, who champion the program through support and inclusive leadership, are critical to its ongoing success.

Since its inception in 2014, more than 280 women from Defence have participated, and around 50 per cent of participants gained a promotion within 18 months of completing the program. Retention rates of women in STEM roles who participated in the program increased during the program. In 2018, the program's scope expanded to address Defence industry sector capacity in cyber and Information, Communications and Technology.

The program's success shows that the barriers that may deter women from STEM roles can be overcome by enhancing inclusion. Mentoring has provided a practical and effective solution to the challenge of retaining women in STEM roles and developing their careers. Addressing this challenge effectively increases workforce capability in this much needed area and assists Defence in its ability to serve Australia.

Employees who identified as Gender X

Gender X was first introduced as a gender category in the APS employee census in 2014, to encompass employees who did not identify as male or female. In 2016, the APSC also began recording Gender X in APSED.

APS employee census data collected between 2014 and 2017 showed reasonable stability in the rates of APS employees identifying as Gender X. However, when 'prefer not to say' was included as a gender option in the 2018 APS employee census, the proportion of respondents identifying as Gender X dropped substantially from 1.1 to 0.2 per cent. This remained consistent in 2019, at 0.3 per cent.

The significant change in 2018 APS employee census data led to a hypothesis that some respondents had previously selected Gender X to further anonymise their responses. This year's data tends to support this suggestion.

APS employees with an ongoing disability

As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016–19

As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016–19 aims to improve the employment experience of people with disability in the APS by:

- expanding their range of employment opportunities
- investing in developing their capabilities
- increasing their representation in senior roles
- fostering inclusive cultures in the workplace.[79]

APS agencies have been working to increase employment of people with disability by:

- using affirmative measures and/or using the RecruitAbility scheme to recruit people with disability; more than 6,500 vacancies were advertised using RecruitAbility in 2018–19
- participating in, and facilitating, entry-level programs for people with disability such as Grad Access and the Dandelion Program
- implementing policy and documentation to increase inclusion and representation of employees with disability
- offering mentoring programs for employees with disability such as PACE Mentoring, promoting disability champions and establishing networks for employees with disability.

Stand out agency initiatives include:

- the ABS Leveraging Asperger's and Autism Employee Network, in partnership with the I CAN Network. The ABS network provides professional development, mentoring and networking opportunities for ABS staff at all levels, whether they, a family member or loved one are, or believe they may be, on the spectrum
- the Services Australia SES Changing Mindsets Program, winner of the 2018 APS Department Award, which has driven organisational cultural change by providing SES participants with direct exposure to the experiences of people with disability.

The new APS disability employment strategy that is being developed will seek to further improve outcomes for employees with ongoing disabilities. It will also include a 7 per cent employment target for people with disability across the APS by 2025, as announced by the then Minister for Families and Social Services, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, in May 2019.[80]

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[79] Australian Public Service Commission. (2019). *As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016–19.*

[80] Fletcher, P. Liberal Party. (2019). *Morrison Government's Plan to Support People with Disability.* [media release]. Retrieved from https://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2019/05/02/morrison-governments-plan-support-people-disability

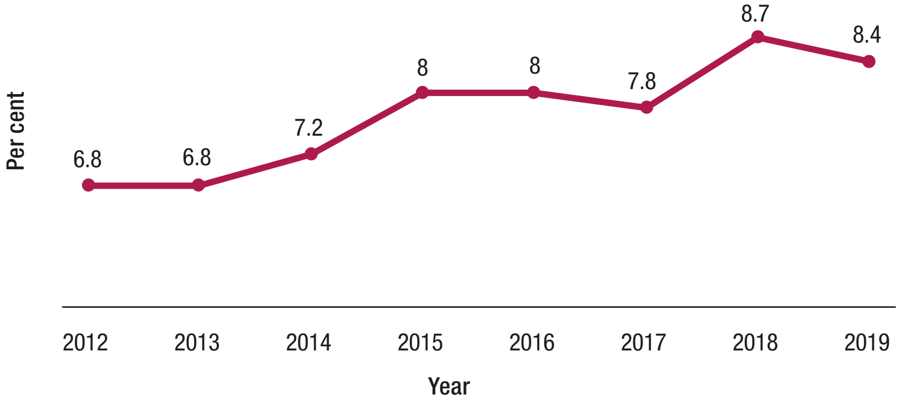
To promote better employment outcomes for employees with disability, the APS Disability Champions Network brings together senior level advocates to focus on disability employment matters of strategic and APS-wide importance. The network meets quarterly and assists in promoting and facilitating the sharing of good practice and collaboration between agencies on disability employment issues.

Disability representation and inclusion

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has reported that approximately 18 per cent of Australians have a disability and, of those, 32 per cent have a 'severe or profound' disability (5.8 per cent of the total Australian population).[81]

In the 2019 APS employee census, 8.4 per cent of employees reported as having an ongoing disability (Figure 4.8). This proportion is higher than the 3.7 per cent reported through agency HR systems as identifying as an employee with disability.

Figure 4.8: Proportion of APS employees with an ongoing disability, 2012 to 2019



Source: APS employee census

This disparity between agency data compared to APS employee census information has been consistently reported over many years and there are several possible explanations. For example, an individual's disability status may change during the course of employment but not be updated in their agency's HR system, or employees may not share information about their disability because they feel their disability does not affect the inherent requirements of their role. The confidential nature of the APS employee census may also be a factor, as some employees may be concerned about including disability information on their agency's HR system.

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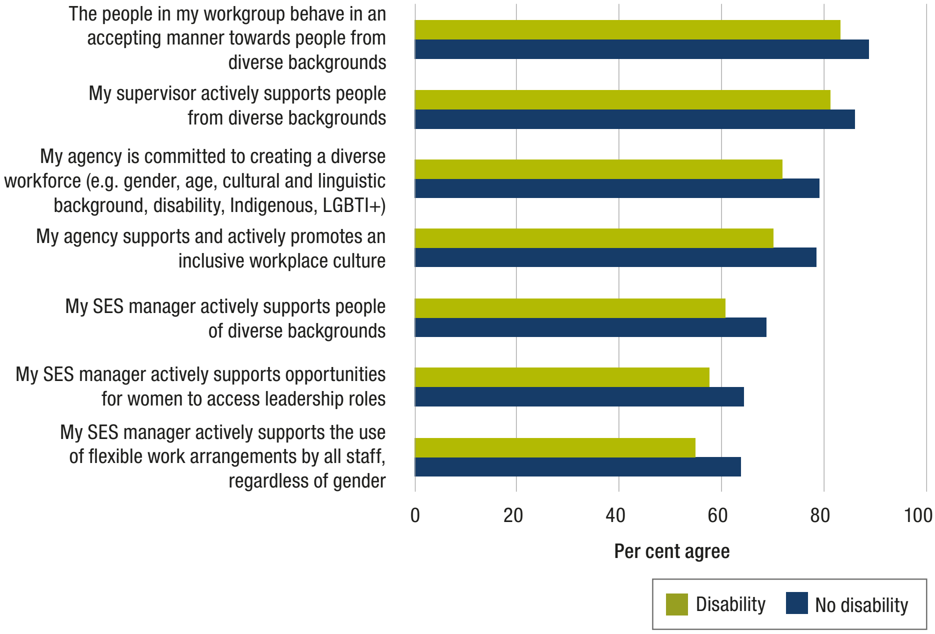
[81] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *People with disability in Australia: in brief.* [media release]. Retrieved from https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia-in-brief/contents/how-many-people-have-disability

Employees who identified as having a disability in the 2019 APS employee census had lower perceptions of inclusion (Figure 4.9) coupled with higher rates of perceived bullying and harassment in the workplace (outlined in Chapter 3). These trends may lead to employees with disability not having enough trust to identify as having an ongoing disability to their agency. There may be concerns that self-identifying with a disability might go against access to development opportunities, limit progress to more senior roles or negatively impact on employee experience in the workplace.

The difference in positive perceptions about workplace inclusion was greatest for questions relating to agencies supporting and actively promoting an inclusive workplace culture (70 per cent compared to 79 per cent), SES managers actively supporting people of diverse backgrounds (61 per cent versus 69 per cent) and SES managers actively supporting flexible working arrangements by all staff (55 per cent compared to 64 per cent).

Figure 4.9: APS employee perceptions of inclusion by disability status



Source: 2019 APS employee census

APS leaders have an important role to play in promoting an inclusive culture in the APS and empowering employees with disability by removing barriers to participation, addressing unconscious bias and engaging in open and meaningful conversations on accessibility and career development. As highlighted by the Australian Network on Disability, a more open and inclusive workplace is likely to build trust and facilitate an increase in employees sharing information on their disability.[820]

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82 Australian Network on Disability. (2016). *Sharing and Monitoring Disability Information in your Workforce: A Guide for Employers*. Retrieved from https://www.and.org.au/pages/resources-publi-sharing-and-monitoring-disability-information-967.html

Facilitating workplace adjustments and providing access to flexible working arrangement for employees with disability, as well as implementing disability awareness training for all employees, are some steps that can be taken to build a more inclusive culture. By doing so, employees with disability are more likely to feel valued and able to perform at their best to deliver better outcomes for the Australian community.

The Dandelion Program—Services Australia, Department of Defence, Department of Home Affairs and Department of Social Services

The Dandelion Program, originally founded by HPE (now DXC Technology), has been executed in four APS departments to date: Services Australia, Defence, Home Affairs and, most recently, Social Services.

The three-year program is open to people on the autism spectrum and builds valuable IT skills while providing high levels of support. The Dandelion program focuses on helping people to build sustainable careers by improving their technical skills, but also their life skills through a holistic employment experience.

'*The Dandelion Program is a win-win. We get to employ people with a set of unique skills and abilities that benefit our business while providing opportunities for those in our community who are sometimes overlooked in employment situations.*'

The Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Families and Social Services

Reach Program—Department of Agriculture

The Reach Program is a pilot program run by the Department of Agriculture which places skilled applicants with autism into roles in the department. People with autism often face significant barriers to employment including difficulties with recruitment processes, especially interviews, and moving through jobs due to lack of understanding or inclusion in the workplace.

The Reach Program recruitment process includes a skills and experience summary in place of a CV and work trials instead of interviews. This allows candidates to best demonstrate their skills and assess whether they have the right skills for the job.

The program addresses retention issues through providing autism and employment training to managers and colleagues. This education and training aims to provide an environment which is safe, inclusive, respectful and responsive to the needs of participants. Through addressing the key issues around recruitment and retention, the program gives participants the opportunity to join and remain in the APS and perform to their best.

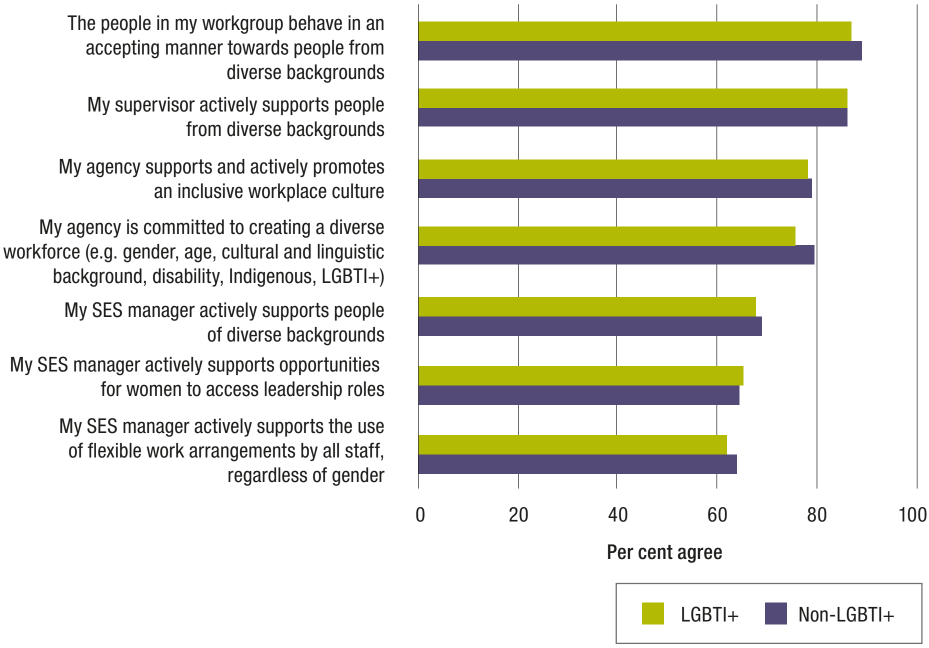
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Intersex employees

Data on representation of APS employees who identify as LGBTI+ has been gathered through the APS employee census since 2017. The proportion of 2019 APS employee census respondents who identified as LGBTI+ in 2019 was 4.8 per cent, up from 4.4 per cent in 2018 and 4.1 per cent in 2017.

Determining if the proportion of APS employees who identify as LGBTI+ is representative of Australia as a whole is complicated by lack of data, with several data sources estimating figures between 3 per cent and 11 per cent.[83] The ABS notes the lack of information presently available and is exploring the suitability of collecting additional data for the 2021 Census of Population and Housing.[84]

In the 2019 APS agency survey, 39 of the 97 participating APS agencies indicated they had an LGBTI+ inclusion strategy, plan or policy. Consistent with 2018 results, APS employees who identified as LGBTI+ had similar perceptions about inclusion in the workplace as those who did not identify as LGBTI+ (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10: APS employee perceptions of inclusion by LGBTI+ status



Source: 2019 APS employee census

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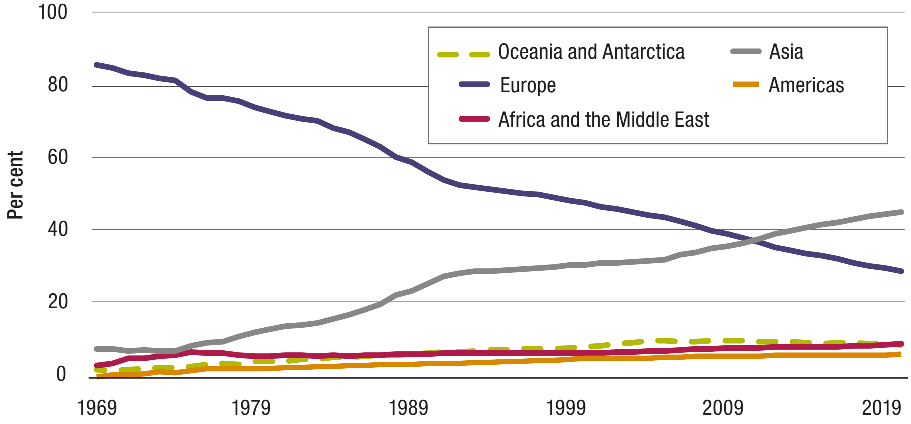
83 Such as: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2015). General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014. Retrieved from https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4159.0#Anchor2 and Australian Human Rights Commission. (2015). Face the facts: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People. Retrieved 9 October 2019 from https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/face-facts-lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-and-intersex-people

84 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2018). Census of Population and Housing: Topic Directions, 2021: Other Topics.

Culturally and linguistically diverse employees

At the last Census of Population and Housing, 26 per cent of the people living in Australia in 2016 were born overseas (6,163,667 of 23.4 million people)[85], and 21 per cent spoke a language other than English at home. In the 2019 APS employee census, 22.2 per cent of respondents indicated that they had been born overseas and 18.7 per cent reported they spoke a language other than English at home.

Figure 4.11: Proportion of APS employees by location of birth, 1969 to 2019



Source: APSED

As shown in Figure 4.11, there continues to be a decreasing trend in European country of birth of APS employees and an increase in employees born in Asian countries. In 2010, employees with an Asian country of birth replaced employees from Europe as the highest proportion of people born overseas.

In the 2019 APS agency survey, 36 of 97 APS agencies reported having an action plan, strategy and/or policy in place to support culturally and linguistically diverse employees.

Future considerations

The APS has made significant progress on various diversity measures in recent years, and inclusion must now be an area of focus. The foundations of inclusion in the APS are clearly set out in the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct in the PS Act. As a result, all APS employees have a part to play in fostering diversity and inclusion across the APS workforce.

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[85] Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Cultural Diversity in Australia: 2016 Census Data Summary*.

The APS is at an important junction with three key diversity strategies expiring. Senior APS leaders continue to drive diversity and inclusion initiatives across the APS through the Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council to ensure the service reflects the diversity of the community it serves. The development of new strategies is an opportunity for the APS to define a strategic inclusion and diversity framework that supports and reflects the service of the future.

Beyond specific diversity measures, however, lies the matter of diversity of thought. To address current and emerging policy, regulatory and service delivery challenges, the APS needs to bring various perspectives to bear at all levels. In this context, diversity of thought:

- helps guard against groupthink and expert overconfidence
- encourages new insights
- helps organisations identify the right employees who can best tackle their most pressing problems.[86]

Little data is available on the extent of diversity of thought across the APS. There are some encouraging indicators; for example, a more diverse workforce inevitably brings with it a greater diversity of perspective. In addition, 80 per cent of 2019 APS employee census respondents agreed their supervisor invites a range of views, including those different to their own.

At the same time, it is possible there is less diversity of thought among APS leaders. Officers in senior APS roles often come from similar backgrounds, have similar levels and types of education, and have had similar career paths. This has the potential to restrict the diversity of thought that is allowed to flourish at lower levels of organisations.

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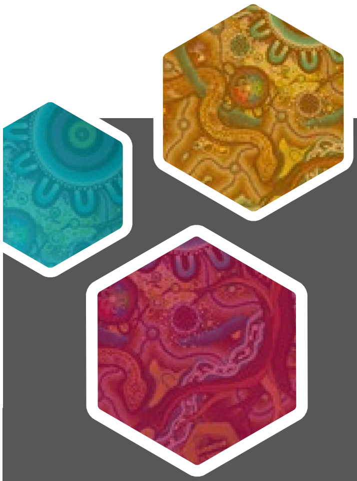
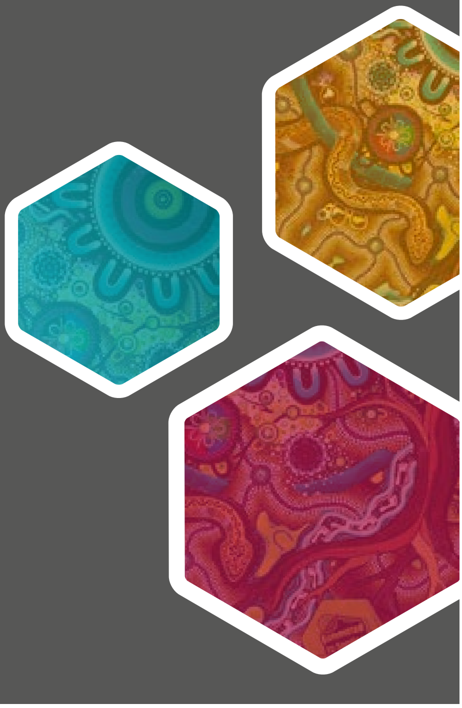
[86] Diaz-Uda, A., Medina, C. and Schill, B. Deloitte University Press. (2013). Diversity's new frontier: Diversity of thought and the future of the workplace. *Deloitte Insights*. Retrieved from https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/diversitys-new-frontier.html



Theme:

CAPABILITY



Chapter

FIVE

Enabling the current and future workforce

> A transformed workforce will underpin stronger institutional capacity, including to undertake deep research, evaluation and data analytics. It will also be critical to integrated policy approaches that take a strategic view of Australia's interests across economic, social, security and international domains.
>
> Independent Review of the APS: Priorities for Change[87]

As this report has already highlighted, the operating environment for the public service is rapidly evolving on a number of fronts. Changing public demands and expectations of government are giving rise to policy and service design and delivery challenges. Advances in technology have led to increasing moves towards digitalising service delivery.

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[87] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). *Independent Review of the APS: Priorities for Change*, 36.

The collection and management of data is growing in importance, along with better use of data and analytics to inform policy, compliance and service delivery. Generational changes in society are being reflected in the workforce and labour supply challenges for critical or emerging roles and functions are becoming more urgent.

To respond to these challenges and opportunities, the APS workforce of the future will need to be more empowered, mobile, diverse, adaptive and capable. APS workplaces will need to be better connected and characterised by continuous learning and feedback. As an employer, the APS will need to attract, reward and retain the best talent, and will increasingly compete with other jurisdictions and sectors to fill critical and emerging roles.

In addition, the APS will not be immune from the labour market disruption that has already started due to advancements in artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data. Reskilling some segments of the APS workforce will be an important aspect of workforce planning to manage job transitions for employees as skills requirements change. Lifelong learning and ongoing skills development will continue to underpin capability development as the APS grapples with the changing nature of work.

To work towards these objectives, an APS-wide workforce strategy is being developed. Announced in the 2018–19 Budget, this strategy will help position the APS as an employer of choice, with a high-performing, diverse and flexible workforce, mobilised when and where needed. The strategy aims to drive modern workforce practices, inform future capability requirements and help prepare public sector employees for the future.

The workforce strategy aims to better prepare the APS for the increasing pace of social, technological and environmental change, and ensure workforce planning efforts are guided by a shared vision. The strategy will also focus on outcomes that benefit the APS as a whole and encourage strategic leadership that is collaborative and future focused to address workforce impacts.

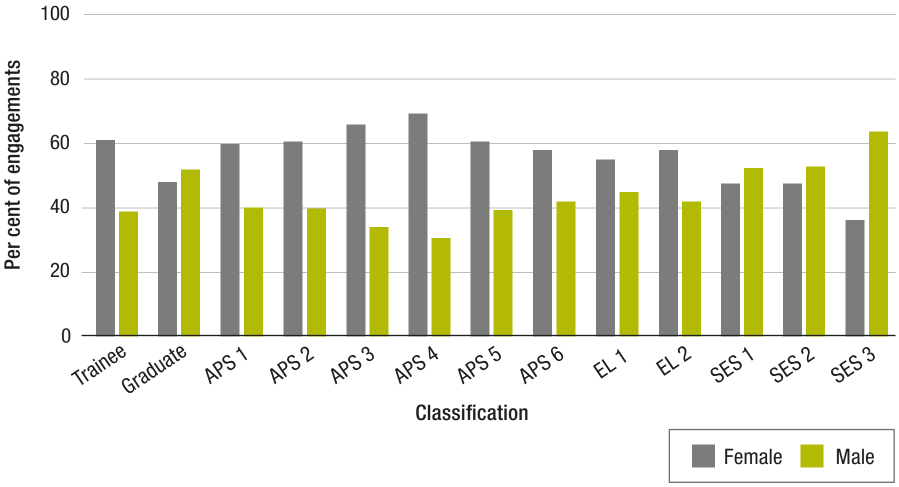
It is envisaged that the workforce strategy will have an impact across a wide spectrum of workforce capability areas, including recruitment and retention, learning and development, and leadership. However, strategy implementation will rely heavily on HR functions across the APS. Capability gaps in strategic HR roles will therefore need to be filled, including through the development of a professions model, where professional capabilities, career pathways and development are well defined and support high performance, talent management and succession planning.

Attraction and retention

The APS is competing in a contested market for talent and individuals' expectations of their employers continue to evolve. To address critical capability gaps in this environment, the APS needs to understand what attracts people to the service, position itself as an employer of choice, and adopt strategic and targeted recruitment at all levels.

APSED shows that during 2018–19, 8,564 people were engaged as ongoing employees in the APS, a fall of 4.9 per cent compared to 2017–18. Most engagements were at APS 6 (19.1 per cent), APS 4 (18.4 per cent) and APS 5 (17.8 per cent) classification levels. This trend reflects that APS 4–6 represented 55.5 per cent of the whole APS workforce in 2018–19. Approximately 40 per cent of people engaged as ongoing employees were under the age of 30, compared to 10.4 per cent of the ongoing workforce. In terms of gender, 59.7 per cent of newly engaged employees were women and 40.2 per cent men (0.1 per cent identified as Gender X). However, as Figure 5.1 shows, engagement gender proportions vary significantly at different classification levels.

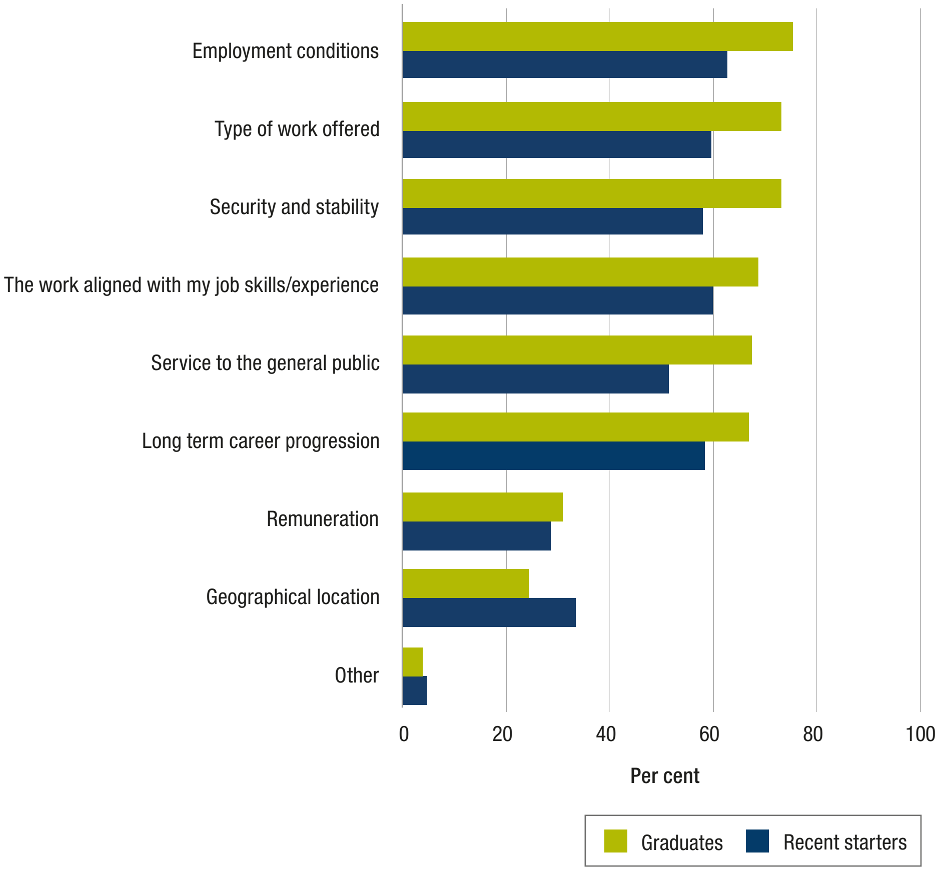
Figure 5.1: Proportion of APS employee engagements, by classification and gender



Source: APSED

The 2019 APS employee census sought views from employees with less than one year's service (that is, graduates and other recent starters) about what attracted them to work in the APS. Figure 5.2 shows that employment conditions continued to be a strong pull factor towards APS employment, far more so than remuneration. Other factors valued by new starters were the alignment between the work and their skills/experience, the type of work offered, long-term career progression, and security and stability.

Figure 5.2: Reasons for joining the APS, graduates and recent starters

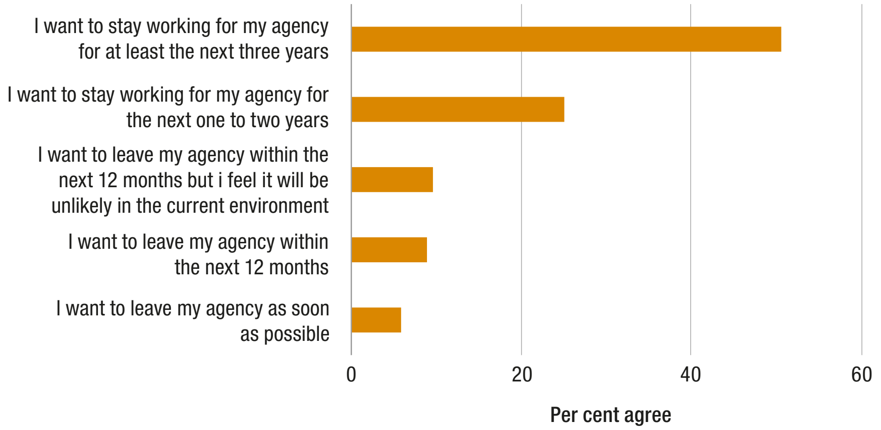


Note: Recent starters, in this case, are respondents who indicated their total length of service in the APS was less than one year. As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Source: 2019 APS employee census

The 2019 APS employee census also explored employees' career intentions. Approximately half of respondents indicated they had applied for a job in the previous 12 months. A greater proportion of respondents indicated that they had applied for a job in their own agency (38 per cent) than in another APS agency (18 per cent) or outside the APS (12 per cent). At the same time, 50 per cent of all respondents expressed a desire to stay with their agency for at least three years, while 25 per cent wanted to leave their agency within the next 12 months (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: APS employee career intentions



Source: 2019 APS employee census

The most common reasons employees selected for wanting to leave their agency were:

- perceived lack of future career opportunities (25 per cent)
- desire to try a different type of work or seek a career change (12 per cent)
- negative perceptions about the agency's senior leadership (8 per cent).

APSED data indicates that during 2018–19 there were 12,100 separations of ongoing employees, the highest number since 2007–08. However, this figure also includes movement of employees from the Australian Signals Directorate out of coverage of the PS Act on 1 July 2018. Resignations accounted for the bulk of 2018–19 separations (38.8 per cent), followed by retrenchments (21.6 per cent) and age retirements (20.5 per cent).

Professions model

One mechanism for attracting, developing and retaining the capabilities the workforce requires is through a professions model. This approach is widespread in the United Kingdom civil service, which has identified 28 professions covering all civil service employees. The model has recently been implemented in New Zealand to lift policy capability in its public service.

A professions model provides a unifying framework for a rewarding public service career in a particular field. This includes clear identification of pathways for career advancement, along with opportunities for professional learning, development and networking. Each profession is led by a head of profession—a senior sector leader with overarching responsibility for capability identification and development.

The focus on career pathways means the professions model is consistent with other initiatives across the APS to foster talent and drive performance at all classification levels (see Chapter 1 for discussion of recent amendments to the Commissioner's Directions; see Chapter 6 for discussion of talent management). Work has already started on professions in the APS, with an initial focus on the HR function, as well as digital and data-related roles.

Human resources

Recent reviews have highlighted enduring capability gaps within the APS HR function and have emphasised the need to focus on building and strengthening strategic HR skills across the service. This assessment has been confirmed through consultation and engagement to inform the APS-wide workforce strategy.

As external challenges and forces continue to shape the APS, the service will need the right workforce, structures and practices to be more adaptive and responsive to future requirements. The HR function—in particular, strategic workforce planning professionals—will play a critical role in driving and enabling successful transformation, and action is being taken to strengthen HR capability through development and implementation of a HR Professional Stream Strategy.

APS HR Professional Stream Strategy—Australian Public Service Commission and Australian Taxation Office

The APS HR Professional Stream Strategy was launched in October 2019. The strategy provides a systematic APS-wide approach to lifting strategic HR capability and leveraging skills and capability to improve overall performance of the APS for today and tomorrow.

The strategy will set and promote professional standards for HR in the APS, create a professional network of HR practitioners, connect and strengthen existing better practices across agencies, and create networks to strategically recruit, develop, grow and retain talent in the HR workforce.

An HR Head of Profession has been appointed to champion strategic HR capability development and strong collaboration across agencies. Other initiatives being progressed to bring the strategy to life and enable the momentum to grow and mature include:

- Streamlining HR Graduate recruitment for the APS
- Creating an HR Professional Network
- Implementing an HR mobility program
- Developing an HR workforce strategy.

This strengthened focus on building HR capability across the APS will improve the attraction, development, mobility and retention of capable people required to enable and drive organisations now and into the future.

Strategic workforce planning—Australian Financial Security Authority

The Australian Financial Security Authority is an executive agency in the Attorney-General's portfolio, with broad-ranging services aimed at facilitating improved and equitable outcomes for consumers, business and the community, and contributing to the health and confidence of the Australian economy.

Over the past four years, the Authority has built its evidence-based workforce planning function and realigned its HR service delivery model to business strategy. This ensures that reliable workforce insights inform workforce planning conversations, and that workforce planning activities inform all workforce management strategies and initiatives. Strong partnerships within and outside the organisation have been key to this approach.

The Authority is a risk-based regulator. As a result, the agency's workforce planning approach focuses on risk-based workforce management. This approach has resonated with the organisation's business priorities and has enabled HR professionals to 'speak the business language' when rolling out workforce planning, linking these activities directly to immediate or long-term business strategies and deliverables.

Developing organisational capability in evidence-based workforce planning has been another priority, accompanied by an emphasis on benefit realisation and a strong culture of monitoring and evaluation. The adoption of enterprise-wide, self-service workforce analytics has been a critical driver of success for workforce planning capability development.

As a result of this significant investment in strategic workforce planning capability and approaches, the Authority is now in a solid position to anticipate and respond to future workforce challenges.

Digital

> The world is changing, and Australia will need to adapt much more rapidly than in the past if it is to keep up. Nowhere is this more evident than in the role that new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, automation and life sciences, are playing in transforming established industries and creating new ones.
>
> Australian National Outlook 2019[88]

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[88] Commonwealth of Australia, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. (2019). *Australian National Outlook 2019: Security our nation's future prosperity,* 2.

Technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace, and has brought with it challenges to traditional ways of thinking, working and leading. The *Australian National Outlook 2019* predicts that the impeding wave of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence and automation, will further change the way people live, interact and work.[89]

Through the 2019 APS agency survey, agencies across the service reported skills shortages and difficulty recruiting to a range of digital roles. Agencies also reported widespread difficulties accessing specialised learning and development to support upskilling. Expected growth in digital roles, and the increasing requirement for digital capability across various public sector professions, will only compound this issue.

Measures are being adopted across the APS to boost digital capability, spearheaded by the Government's Digital Transformation Strategy[90], but much work remains. APS employee census results show only 1 per cent of respondents self-identify as working in 'digital' roles, which includes those in cyber-security. Strategic, targeted recruitment of entry and mid-level digital specialists, as well as APS-wide supported reskilling, may be necessary to meet this growing demand.

To date, efforts to boost APS digital capability have focused mainly on the technical expertise of staff working in specific digital roles. The need to invest in world-class digital capability will continue in many areas of the APS and a digital professional model has the potential to attract digital professionals to the service, provide more fulfilling career opportunities, and assist government to deliver better outcomes to the public. The DTA and the APSC have commenced planning for this approach.

At the same time, as the importance and influence of digital approaches continues to increase, it will likely become necessary to consider a common approach to minimum digital capability requirements across the APS workforce. For example, the ability to manage cyber-security risks would already be seen by most agencies and APS employees as a de facto core public service competency. As digital enablers such as virtual collaboration and the 'Internet of Things' transition from the domain of innovation to business as usual, more and more APS employees will need to understand how best to take advantage of the benefits of digitalisation.

This aspect of the changing nature of work is likely to give rise to minimum standards of 'digital literacy' for the APS workforce. APS leaders will have an important role to play, not only in developing their own digital capability, but also in driving new digital approaches to their agency's work.

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[89] Commonwealth of Australia, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. (2019). *Australian National Outlook 2019: Security our nation's future prosperity,* 2.

[90] Commonwealth of Australia, Digital Transformation Agency. (2018). *Vision 2025: We will deliver world-leading digital services for the benefit of all Australians.*

Leading Digital Transformation Program—Australian Public Service Commission and Digital Transformation Agency

‘Digital leadership is leadership for the present and future.’

Leading Digital Transformation Program participant

In June 2018, the APSC, in collaboration with the DTA, started the Leading Digital Transformation Program. The program aims to strengthen SES officer capabilities to lead change and digital transformation in their agency.

The program focuses on current and future challenges and opportunities of leading in the digital age, and develops participants’ digital maturity. It also explores the benefits of disruptive and diverse thinking, and builds capability to drive agile working, digital transformation and plan and implement change. The program emphasises user-centred digital services and products, and the creation of public value through digital ways of working.

‘I have greater appreciation of the challenges and approaches to digital transformation across the APS.’

‘I am taking away a suite of tools I can practically apply to facilitate better/richer solutions.’

Leading Digital Transformation Program participants

A total of 268 APS SES (approximately 10 per cent of the cohort) have now attended the program with participants consistently reporting significant improvements in their ability to apply the principles of digital leadership to enable digital transformation in their agency. Participants have also highlighted the value of collaboration and peer learning.

Data

Data literacy has been identified as one of six core skills required to drive public sector innovation.[91] Advances in data and analytics are impacting all sectors of the economy, and many agencies are struggling to keep up with demands and expectations from within and outside the APS.

All APS agencies use data and analytics to inform their work. This is not limited to specialised analytical teams—insights from data are becoming increasingly relevant and helpful to a wide variety of policy, program and corporate activities. Across the APS, large datasets represent a significant, but under-used asset and there is growing recognition of the need to improve the way agencies harness data to improve policy, program, regulatory and corporate outcomes.

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[91] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2017). *Skills for a High Performing Civil Service.*

A number of initiatives are under way to ensure agencies can gain greater benefit from the data they hold. The current focus of work taking place on APS data capability, including through the Secretaries Data Group, Deputy Secretaries Data Group and the Data Champions Network, is primarily on specialist data roles, some of which have been identified as areas of critical skills shortage by a number of agencies. This work is essential to ensure the APS can keep step with advances in data capability taking place in other sectors.

A likely outcome of work under way will be greater professionalisation of data roles and functions in the APS, including through consistent frameworks describing data and analytics capabilities. This approach will assist the service to attract and retain high quality employees to data-related roles. It will also enable the creation of career pathways to ensure the right balance of breadth and depth of experience.

At the same time, as with digital capability, minimum standards of data capability will become increasingly important for all APS employees, a significant majority of whom work with data at least some of the time. Even with pockets of highly trained data experts, each agency will need a broad degree of data literacy across its workforce to gain maximum benefit from the potential data has to offer.

Flexible work

Flexible work practices are another way to allow APS agencies to quickly adapt to the rapidly changing work environment, and support mobility and inclusivity. Flexible work also allows the APS to attract and retain capability as employees across multiple generations increasingly seek an enhanced work/life balance.

APS agencies provide a range of flexible working arrangements to support employees to modify when, where and how they work. Fifty-two per cent of respondents in the 2019 APS employee census indicated they currently access flexible work arrangements. Support for flexibility is widespread, with 83 per cent of respondents agreeing their supervisor actively supports the use of such arrangements by all staff, regardless of gender.

Current flexible work practices provide for adaptations to meet the different needs of each employee/employer relationship and can take various forms, including:

- flexible location through remote access, hot-desk set ups or the provision of laptop devices
- flexible hours such as compressed working weeks or reduced hours
- flexible leave such as flex time, purchased leave or time off in lieu
- flexible conditions including part-time agreements, career breaks, job-share arrangements, or individual flexibility agreements.

The value of flexible work to both the employee and the employer is widely recognised across the APS. The APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19 has driven a 'flexible-by-default' approach across the service, aiming to challenge traditional assumptions of how and where work should be performed. Part-time work agreements, individual flexibility agreements and remote work arrangements are accessible across the sector, and the APS agency survey shows the take-up of these initiatives is increasing.

Formal part-time hours are the most long-standing form of flexible work. Part-time APS employment is defined, for APSED reporting purposes, as employees who ordinarily work less than 35 hours per week. As at June 2019, data shows 16 percent of the total APS workforce worked part time.

APSED data shows that EL 2 participation in part-time work is markedly less at 8 per cent of the cohort, and this further decreases to 5 per cent at the SES level. However, the APS employee census data shows SES participation in broader flexible work arrangements, such as changes to work location, work hours or patterns of work, has increased by five percentage points to 40 per cent in 2019.

SES job sharing approaches—Australian Public Service Commission and Australian Bureau of Statistics

SES respondents to the 2019 APS employee census were more likely than staff at lower levels to see operational requirements as a barrier to participating in part-time work. However, some agencies have implemented approaches to facilitate part-time arrangements for SES officers, including formal job sharing.

Thirty SES respondents to the 2019 APS employee census indicated they were participating in job-sharing arrangements. Most of these arrangements involve two SES officers working on a permanent part-time basis. This is the case for the two co-group managers of the Inclusion and Implementation Group at the APSC.

In late 2018, the ABS implemented a slightly different approach. An EL 2 officer was formally promoted into a permanent part-time (two days a week) SES Band 1 position in the Communication and Parliamentary Branch, as part of a job-sharing arrangement with another permanent part-time SES Band 1 employee. However, the newly promoted SES officer retained their prior classification level of EL 2 for the remaining three days of the week.

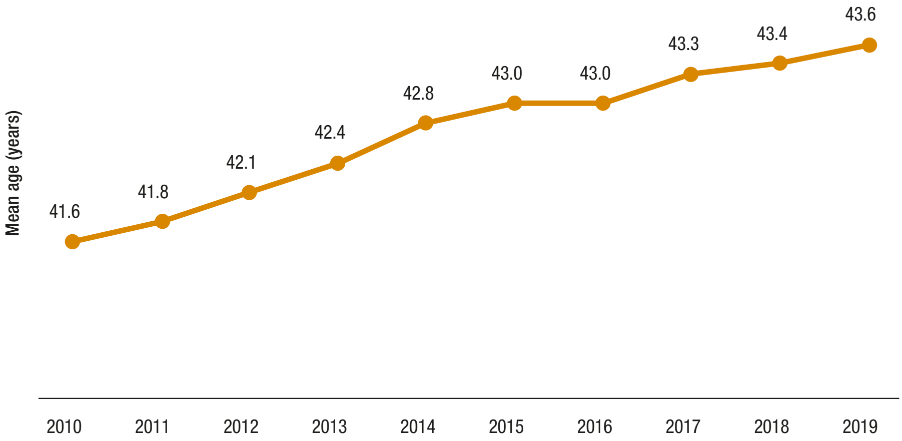
This approach enabled the ABS to retain two high-performing employees while still meeting the operational requirements of the roles in question.

The 2019 APS employee census revealed that 41 per cent of APS employees have carer responsibilities. Of respondents with carer responsibilities, almost two-thirds also accessed flexible work arrangements. Employees aged 35 to 49 years who had carer responsibilities were more likely to care for children, whereas employees over the age of 55 were more likely to have carer responsibilities for parents or a partner.

Multigenerational workforce

According to the ABS, 'the proportion of older people in Australia's labour force has increased over the past 10 years, with the 2016 Census of Population and Housing revealing about 14 per cent of people aged 65 years and over were part of the labour force in 2016, up from 9.4 per cent in 2006'.[92] The APS workforce continues to age in line with this trend, increasing from a mean age of 41.6 years in 2010 to 43.6 years in 2019 (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Mean age of APS employees, 2010 to 2019



Source: APSED

Access to flexible work is a core component of enabling an APS workforce that now stretches across four generations. As APS employees stay longer in the workforce, it is imperative for the APS to embrace the skills and experience that older workers can offer.[93] In the 2019 APS employee census, older employees were more likely to indicate they wanted to stay working for their agency for at least the next three years. They were also less likely to indicate that they had applied for a job outside the APS in the preceding 12 months.

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[92] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Census shares insights into Australia's ageing population.*

[93] Older workers are defined as those 50 years or older for the purposes of analysing APS employee census results.

Flexible working arrangements are likely to assist older workers nearing retirement, offering alternative options to stay engaged in the workplace or phased approaches to retirement. As older workers stay for longer in the workforce, ways in which to harness their skills and expertise include:

- developing mentoring/coaching programs to promote knowledge transfer between younger and older workers
- further promoting flexible work availability to accommodate older workers' changing needs (that is, health, transitioning to retirement or caring responsibility)
- re-skilling older workers
- investing in lifelong learning to harness new ways of working.[94]

The APS needs to plan for a multigenerational workforce. Alongside a focus on critical workforce capabilities generally associated with a younger generation, a focus on recruiting and retaining older employees is needed to take advantage of their expertise and knowledge, so that the APS workforce reaches its full potential. Career pathways, job roles, talent management, learning and development will look different across generations. Understanding workforce motivators and reward systems will also be central to enhancing workforce engagement and wellbeing in the years to come.

Employee engagement

> [Engaged employees] willingly go the extra mile, work with passion, and feel a profound connection to their company. They are the people who will drive innovation and move your business forward.

Gallup Business Journal: Five Ways to Improve Employee Engagement Now[95]

Employee engagement is more than job satisfaction; it is about employees' emotional commitment to their organisation and the contribution they seek to make to organisational outcomes. Research shows that high levels of employee engagement provide positive benefits to organisations—engaged employees feel motivated to contribute to agency-level outcomes, are often more productive, and foster a positive, high-performing organisational culture.[96]

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[94] Goonrey, A. & Mandel, J. (2018). *How to manage the challenges of an ageing workforce*, HRM. Retrieved 30 September 2019 from https://www.hrmonline.com.au/mature-age-workers/manage-challenges-ageing-workforce/

[95] Reilly, R. Five Ways to Improve Employee Engagement Now*, Gallup Business Journal.* Retrieved 4 September from https://www.gallup.com/workplace/231581/five-ways-improve-employee-engagement.aspx.

[96] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *Engaging Public Employees for a High-Performing Civil Service*.

The APS employee census generates an overall engagement index score from responses to questions against three aspects of employee engagement (Figure 5.5). In 2019, the APS-wide engagement index score was 72 per cent. This represents an increase of two percentage points from 2018.

Figure 5.5: Engagement index items

SAY

- I am proud to work in my agency
- I would recommend my agency as a good place to work
- Considering everything, I am satisfied with my job
- I believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of my agency

STAY

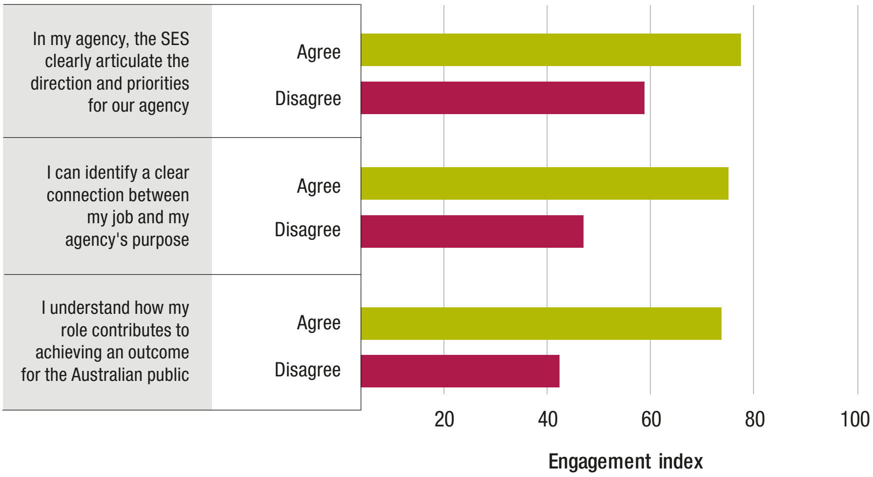
- I feel strong personal attachment to my agency
- I feel committed to my agency’s goals

STRIVE

- I suggest ideas to improve our way of doing things
- I am happy to go the ‘extra mile’ at work when required
- I work beyond what is required in my job to help my agency achieve its objectives
- My agency really inspires me to do my best work every day

The index can also be used to illustrate key factors influencing employee engagement at agency level. For example, Figure 5.6 demonstrates the relationship between the employee engagement index and employees’ line of sight from their role to the delivery of outcomes to the Australian public.

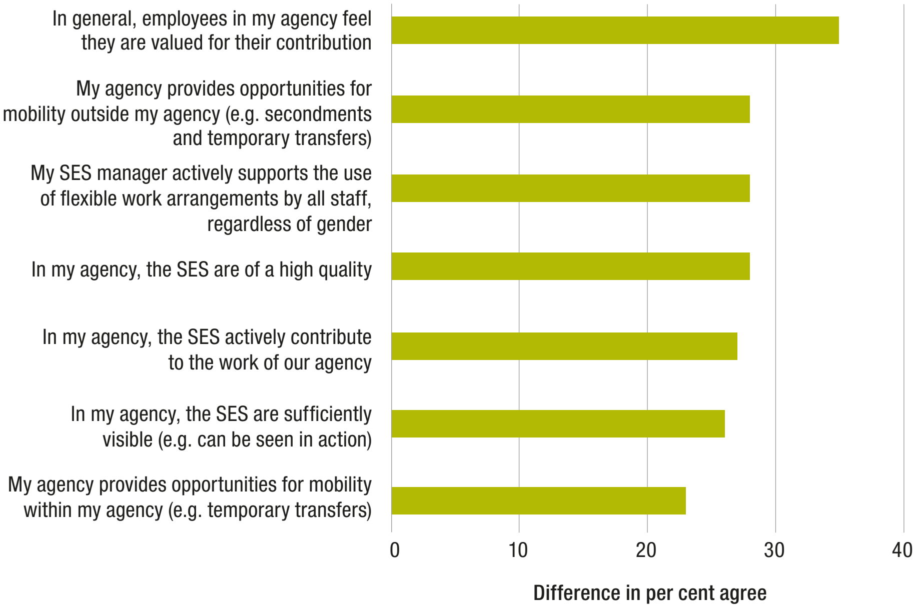
Figure 5.6: APS employee engagement index score against perceptions of role/purpose



Source: 2019 APS employee census

When agencies with the highest and lowest engagement scores were compared, the most significant differentiating characteristic was the extent to which employees felt valued for the contribution they make. This comparison also highlighted the important part that SES play in employee engagement (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Percentage point differences between the top and bottom 10 agencies for engagement



Source: 2019 APS employee census

Wellbeing

> When employees enjoy a happy, healthy work environment, you start seeing exciting innovations in business. It's the difference between an organisation that's simply functioning and an organisation that's capable of making huge leaps. It really comes down to the people who are working within it.
>
> Dr Amanda Allisey, Deakin University[97]

As an employer, the APS has a role in promoting and maintaining the health and wellbeing of its employees. Wellbeing combines aspects of physical, mental, and social health and is influenced by an individual's overall happiness and satisfaction with life. Employee wellbeing influences performance, engagement and productivity. Besides benefiting employees, a healthy and engaged workplace is more productive and leads to enhanced organisational outcomes. Research shows that having sound psychological wellbeing levels positively correlates to enhanced work performance.[98]

The 2019 APS employee census included questions relating to practical and cultural elements that allow for a sustainable and healthy working environment. Responses were broadly positive and indicated that perceptions of promotion of wellbeing in the workplace have increased from previous years. However, there is clearly more to be done at whole-of-agency level, with less than 60 per cent of respondents agreeing their agency cares about their health and wellbeing (Figure 5.8).

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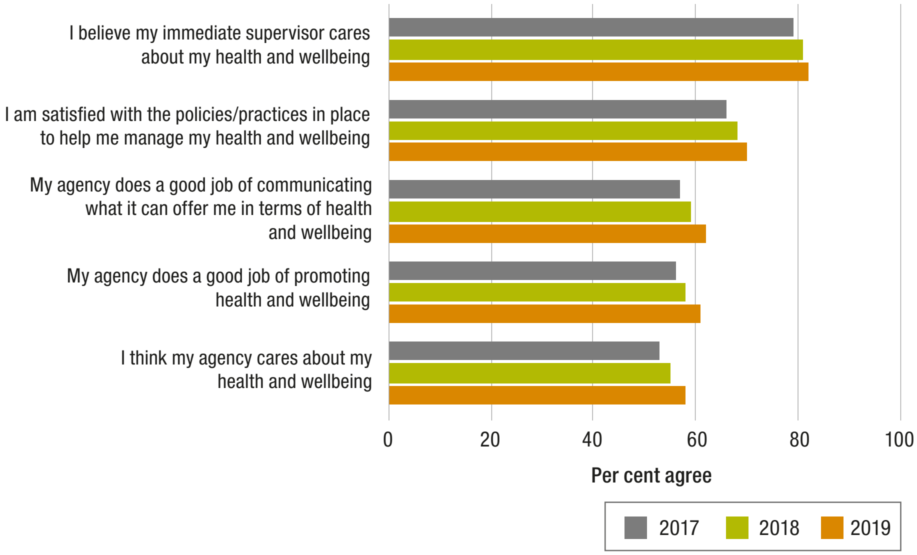
97 Allisey, A. *Understanding the importance of workplace wellbeing*. Retrieved 17 September 2019 from https://this.deakin.edu.au/career/understanding-the-importance-of-workplace-wellbeing

98 Commonwealth Government. Comcare. (2011). *Benefits to business: the evidence for investing in worker health and wellbeing*.

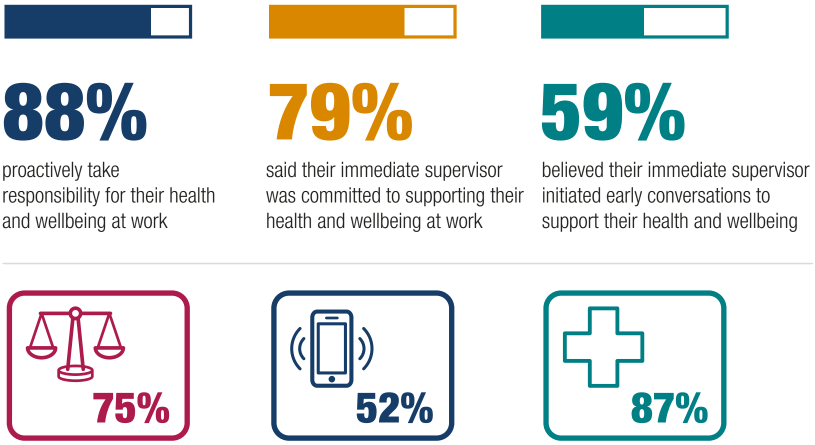
Figure 5.8: APS employee perceptions of wellbeing, 2017 to 2019



Source: APS employee census

Responses to the five wellbeing related questions in Figure 5.8 were used to calculate a wellbeing index score. The overall index for the APS in 2019 was 67 per cent, a one percentage point increase from 2018 and a two percentage point increase from 2017. Other wellbeing related questions in the 2019 APS employee census also paint a broadly positive picture of APS employees' work environment (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9: APS wellbeing snapshot



88% proactively take responsibility for their health and wellbeing at work

79% said their immediate supervisor was committed to supporting their health and wellbeing at work

59% believed their immediate supervisor initiated early conversations to support their health and wellbeing

75% were satisfied with the work-life balance in their current role

52% reported using flexible working arrangements

87% believed that the people in their workgroup were committed to workplace safety

Source: 2019 APS employee census

In December 2018, the *Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2018* (Cwlth) took effect, providing all employees with an entitlement to five days unpaid family and domestic violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards.[99] In addition, the *Workplace Bargaining Policy 2018*[100] encourages Commonwealth agencies to put in place policies and practices that provide maximum support to employees affected by family and domestic violence, using the existing range of generous conditions in enterprise agreements, such as miscellaneous leave.

The 2019 APS agency survey responses show that 65 per cent of APS agencies reported having a domestic and family violence action plan, strategy and/or policy in place during 2018–19.

Family and domestic violence policy—Services Australia

The Services Australia *Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2016–2019* underpins its commitment to supporting staff and customers who are at risk of, or experiencing, family and domestic violence (FDV).

The department has established a Staff FDV Contact Line where staff and managers access tailored advice and support from trained contact officers. Support includes referrals for assistance, safety planning, advice on leave options (including flexible working arrangements), compassionate transfers and relocation assistance where it is essential for the safety of the employee and family. Staff can also be referred to the Employee Assistance Program, which provides free, confidential and professional counselling for employees and their family members.

The department provides leave options to employees affected by FDV, in addition to existing leave entitlements:

Miscellaneous leave (paid) for:

- attending court hearings (such as for Apprehended Violence Orders and Domestic Violence Orders)
- attending meetings with the police (where the employee is a victim of violence)
- gaining emergency accommodation
- attending other legal, police, financial, housing requirements relating to being a victim of violence.

Miscellaneous leave (unpaid), up to five days per year if:

- the employee is experiencing FDV
- the employee needs to do something to deal with the impact of the FDV
- it is impractical for the employee to do that thing outside their ordinary hours of work.

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[99] The National Employment Standards are 10 minimum employment entitlements that are to be provided to employees under Australian Law.

[100] Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Public Service Commission. (2018). *Workplace Bargaining Policy 2018.*

Miscellaneous leave (special), up to two days, if the employee needs to:

- move out of their house immediately, and the timing or opportunity is unplanned
- attend to their needs or the needs of their children, and the timing or opportunity is unplanned and the circumstances do not fit into other categories of leave.

Front-line staff receive training to identify customers at risk of FDV and provide options for support. Six targeted training courses are available for employees, including facilitated sessions and self-paced e-learning modules.

The next iteration of the department's *Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2020–23* is under development, building on achievements to date in offering targeted support for vulnerable groups and those at risk of or affected by FDV. The new strategy will drive the department's continual engagement within government and the community. It is expected to launch in early 2020.

Workplace relations

Each APS agency is responsible for establishing and maintaining its own workplace relations arrangements governing wages and conditions, within the broader legislative and policy framework. These arrangements cover enterprise agreements, common law agreements and determinations applicable to APS employees.

The Government's *Workplace Bargaining Policy 2018* supports sustainable, high-performing public service workplaces through a series of key principles. The policy provides agencies with flexibility to best suit the needs of their employees and business. There is a continued focus on flexible work practices, modest remuneration increases and reflecting community standards.

One option some agencies and their employees have considered and adopted is to make a determination that sits on top of a nominally expired enterprise agreement to provide pay increases. This option allows the terms and conditions of the underlying enterprise agreement to continue with increases in pay and allowances provided through a determination made by the agency head. It continues all the rights and protections available to employees under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cwlth).

It is essential that agencies consult with employees and obtain their support before proceeding with a determination. However, the time and resources required to engage with employees to gauge their support is significantly less than negotiating a new enterprise agreement.

On 30 October 2018, following consultation with multiple agencies, the APS Commissioner advised of a change to the application of the bargaining policy, to provide agencies discretion in applying the first pay increase of newly approved enterprise agreements. Once an enterprise agreement has been approved by the Fair Work Commission, the first pay increase may have an application date of 12 weeks from the successful employee ballot for the agreement. This ensures employees receive timely, fair pay increases after voting up new agreements.

In 2018–19, employees in 22 APS agencies voted up new enterprise agreements. Another 19 agencies received the APS Commissioner's approval to make determinations on top of nominally expired enterprise agreements to provide pay increases, with the support of their employees.

Generally strong employee support for recent enterprise agreement ballots, support for determinations in lieu of bargaining and a low level of protected industrial action over 2018–19 suggests that employees are largely satisfied with their terms and conditions of employment. Increasing use of determinations also reflects recent APS employee census results that 77 per cent of employees are satisfied with their non-monetary employment conditions.

Twenty-nine APS enterprise agreements will reach their nominal expiry dates in 2019–20.

Chapter SIX

Building leaders

> The future isn't what it used to be . . . it is in these times of ambiguity and unpredictability that leadership becomes a key element of success for organisations.
>
> Nancy Chahwan, Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat[101]

Public sector institutions across the world are grappling with the impact of technological and societal change on existing approaches to leadership. Long-established leadership capabilities, such as conceptual and analytical thinking and strategic planning, remain essential; however, there is growing recognition that 'soft skills'—such as the ability to engage with multiple stakeholders, and effectively mobilise diverse teams—are core leadership capabilities for the future.

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[101] Chahwan, N. (2019). Enter the era of enterprise: leadership in the 2020s, Global Government Forum, 7 and 8 February 2019. Retrieved 8 October 2019 from https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/entering-an-era-of-enterprise-leadership-in-the-2020s/

In the APS context, at the broadest level, leadership is about mobilising people to make progress on challenges that make a difference for the nation. This includes engaging others to bring about change, to innovate, collaborate and move toward a new vision of the future. It also includes challenging current thinking and ways of working, to deliver better outcomes for government and citizens.

Senior APS leaders are high-calibre individuals, with a strong commitment to public service as a vocation. They have been part of an institution that has traditionally valued and rewarded conceptual, analytical and technical capabilities, as these have been critical to finding solutions and getting things done. A cautious approach to risk and innovation has also been valued, contributing to institutional stability.

However, as described elsewhere in this report, recent years have seen foundational shifts in the operating environment of the APS. 'Complex', 'ambiguous', 'uncertain' and 'disruptive' are not just buzzwords – they accurately describe the reality of the policy, regulatory and service delivery challenges Australia is facing. These challenges require a broader repertoire of leadership responses at all levels, particularly for the SES.

In this environment, being adept at working across organisational and system boundaries is just as important as technical expertise in delivering outcomes. Similarly, being able to draw on diverse skills and perspectives, and having the courage to test new approaches, are as critical to solving complex problems as analytical skills.

The Senior Executive Service

The SES functions as the senior leadership cadre of the APS. The SES was introduced in 1984, and 'was intended to produce a more unified and cohesive group of senior staff … and to provide a greater degree of management leadership'.[102] The role of the SES has evolved since its introduction. Its current functions, as listed in the PS Act, are to:

- provide APS-wide strategic leadership of the highest quality that contributes to an effective and cohesive APS
- provide professional/specialist expertise, policy advice, program or service delivery, and regulatory administration at a high level
- promote cooperation within and between other agencies including to deliver outcomes across agency and portfolio boundaries
- promote, by personal example and other appropriate means, the APS Values, the APS Employment Principles and compliance with the Code of Conduct.

The SES also has a role in supporting secretaries as stewards of the broader APS.

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[102] Commonwealth of Australia. Task Force on Management Improvement. (1993). *The Australian Public Service reformed: an evaluation of a decade of management reform*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Stewardship looks to build for the future, continually developing the right capability so the APS can always deliver the best outcomes for the Australian community.

As at 30 June 2019, there were 2,780 SES employees in the APS according to APSED data. Of these, 74 per cent were Band 1s, 21 per cent Band 2s and 5 per cent Band 3s. Ninety-six per cent of the SES were in ongoing roles. This suggests there is little appetite to use the flexibility provided through non-ongoing employees at the SES level. To compare, 10 per cent of non-SES staff are non-ongoing.

As highlighted in Figure 6.1, APSED and employee census data show that the SES remain the least diverse cohort in the APS. At the same time, SES are much more likely to have worked in multiple agencies than the rest of the APS workforce—63 per cent versus 28 per cent.

Figure 6.1: Snapshot of APS SES diversity

Total	Gender	Mean age	Indigenous
SES: 2,780 APS: 147,237	SES: Female 46.3% APS: Female 59.6%	SES: 49.7 years APS: 43.6 years	SES: 1.2% APS: 3.5%

LGBTI+	Ongoing disability	Born in a non-English speaking country	Employees in ACT
SES: 4.4% APS: 4.8%	SES: 3.1% APS: 3.7%	SES: 7.9% APS: 16.2%	SES: 72.4% APS: 37.5%

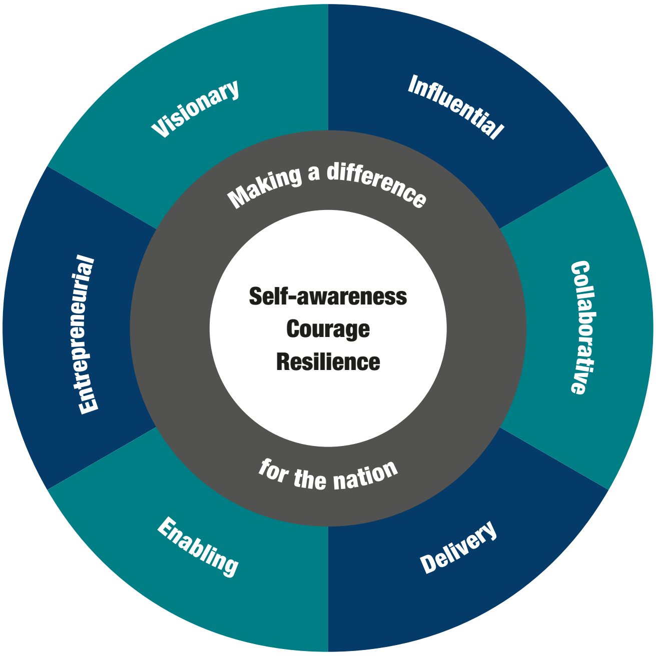
Note: SES (Bands 1, 2 and 3 grouped), APS as a whole (including SES)

Source: APSED and 2019 APS employee census

Leadership capabilities in the SES

In 2017, the Secretaries Board endorsed a set of leadership capabilities for SES roles that reflect what is needed from senior leaders. These capabilities underpin SES talent management, capability assessment and development. They reflect the expectation that, in serving government and citizens, senior APS leaders will provide vision and direction, be influential and collaborative, look for new ways of doing things that add public value, and build the capability of their teams and organisations.

Figure 6.2: Leadership capabilities for senior roles


Visionary
Influential
Collaborative
Delivery
Enabling
Entrepreneurial
Making a difference
for the nation
Self-awareness
Courage
Resilience

Visionary

To provide the best policy advice to government, senior leaders need to be able to scan the horizon for emerging trends, identifying opportunities and challenges for the nation.

Influential

To take the government’s policy agenda forward, senior leaders need the capacity to persuade others towards an outcome, winning and maintaining the confidence of government and key stakeholders.

Collaborative

In making progress on issues that cut across agencies, sectors and nations, senior leaders need to be able to develop relationships, build trust and find common ground with others. An openness to diverse perspectives is critical.

Entrepreneurial
In finding new and better ways of achieving outcomes on behalf of government and citizens, senior leaders need to be able to challenge current perspectives, generate new ideas and experiment with different approaches. They also need to be adept at managing risk.

Enabling
Creating an environment that empowers individuals and teams to deliver their best for government and citizens is a core requirement for senior leaders. This includes setting expectations, nurturing talent and building capability.

Delivery
Senior leaders need to be highly skilled at managing the delivery of complex projects, programs and services. This includes harnessing the opportunity provided by digital technology to improve delivery outcomes for citizens.

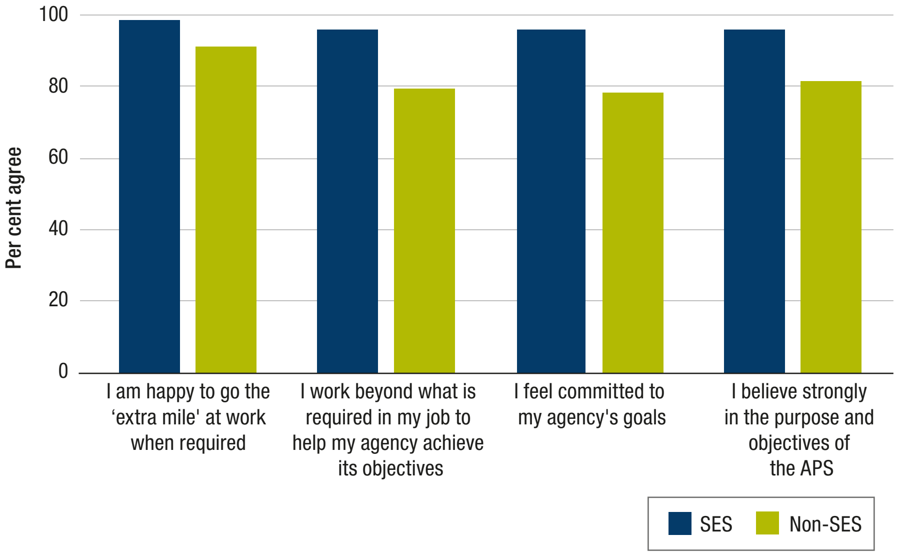
Self-awareness, courage and resilience
These personal qualities sit at the heart of effective leadership in the APS. For APS leaders, mobilising and driving change requires a strong capacity for action and agency on the one hand, and an equally strong capacity for understanding and contending with constraints. Self-awareness, courage and resilience enable senior leaders to hold steady through the challenges of leadership.

The SES are well educated and experienced. According to APSED data, 91 per cent have tertiary qualifications, and the number of SES with post graduate qualifications has remained steady over the past decade. The APSC's talent management assessments consistently show that SES participants in APS talent programs are highly intelligent and benchmark well against private sector executives. In particular, the assessments found that the ability of these leaders to navigate a much more complex set of objectives, issues and multi-stakeholder environments was a standout relative to the majority of the private sector.

SES officers are impressive leaders with potential to take on large and complex leadership roles. They have often excelled in demanding roles and are motivated by service to others. Across the six capabilities outlined in Figure 6.2, 'delivery' was consistently the strongest indicator in APSC talent assessments. The fact that 80 per cent of all SES roles filled in 2018–19 were promotions from within an agency (APSED data) could suggest that recruitment decisions focus on the requirements of the role and specific delivery experience rather than broader leadership experience.

The 2019 APS employee census results reinforce the focus on delivery and service to others. When SES were asked if they were happy to go the 'extra mile' at work when required, virtually all agreed (99 per cent). When asked about working beyond what is required in their job to help their agency achieve its objectives, responses were again strongly positive (96 per cent). Almost all SES reported being committed to their agency's goals (96 per cent) and believed strongly in the purposes and objectives of their agency and the broader APS (96 per cent) (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: SES and non-SES employee perceptions of commitment



Source: 2019 APS employee census

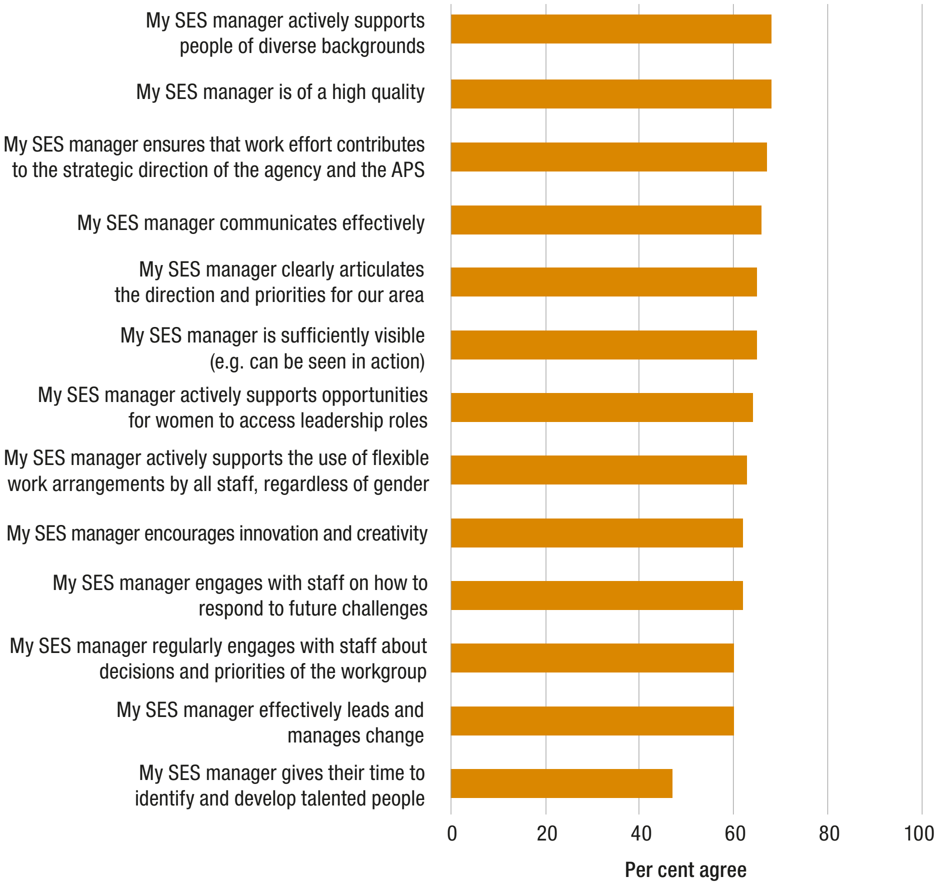
The focus on delivery is a key strength for the SES but there is evidence that other leadership capabilities important for the APS are less developed. Analysis of SES experiences reported in the APSC's talent assessment processes shows that the two lowest measured capabilities for SES are 'enabling' and 'entrepreneurial'—the two capabilities key to delivering innovative outcomes through teams.

The APS employee census results reinforce the view that enabling and risk management are not areas of strength for the SES. The statement that 'my SES gives their time to identify and develop talented people' was not rated highly, with 47 per cent of respondents agreeing. Only 60 per cent of respondents perceived their SES manager could effectively lead and manage change. Sixty-two per cent of employees reported their SES manager encouraged innovation and creativity.

Only 43 per cent of APS employee census respondents agreed that senior leaders in their agency demonstrated the importance of managing risk appropriately. This contrasts starkly with the perceptions of the SES cohort on the same question (74 per cent positive).

Nevertheless, SES managers are well regarded across the APS. Figure 6.4 presents a number of questions relating to APS employee perceptions of their SES managers, as recorded in the 2019 APS employee census. Although lower across the board than employees' perceptions of their immediate supervisors (see next section in this chapter), the findings are broadly positive in absolute terms.

Figure 6.4: APS employee perceptions of their immediate SES manager

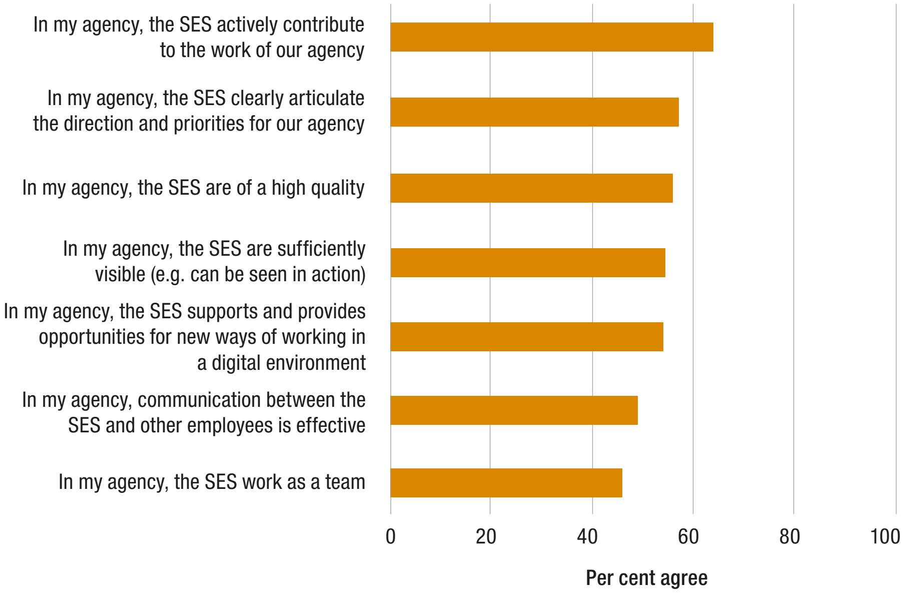


Source: 2019 APS employee census

The APS employee census also captured employee perceptions of the SES as a cohort within their home agency (Figure 6.5). Respondent perceptions of their agency-specific SES cohort were lower than perceptions of their immediate SES. The highest rated perceptions of the SES group included contributing to the work of their agency, and clearly articulating the direction and priorities for the agency. These align with the 'delivery' and 'visionary' capabilities.

Just under half of 2019 APS employee census respondents agreed their SES work as a team. Coupled with lower perceptions of communication between SES and other employees, this suggests that the 'collaborative' leadership capability (outlined in Figure 6.2) requires continued focus and further analysis to understand if the system currently incentivises collaborative behaviours.

Figure 6.5: APS employee perceptions of SES within their agency



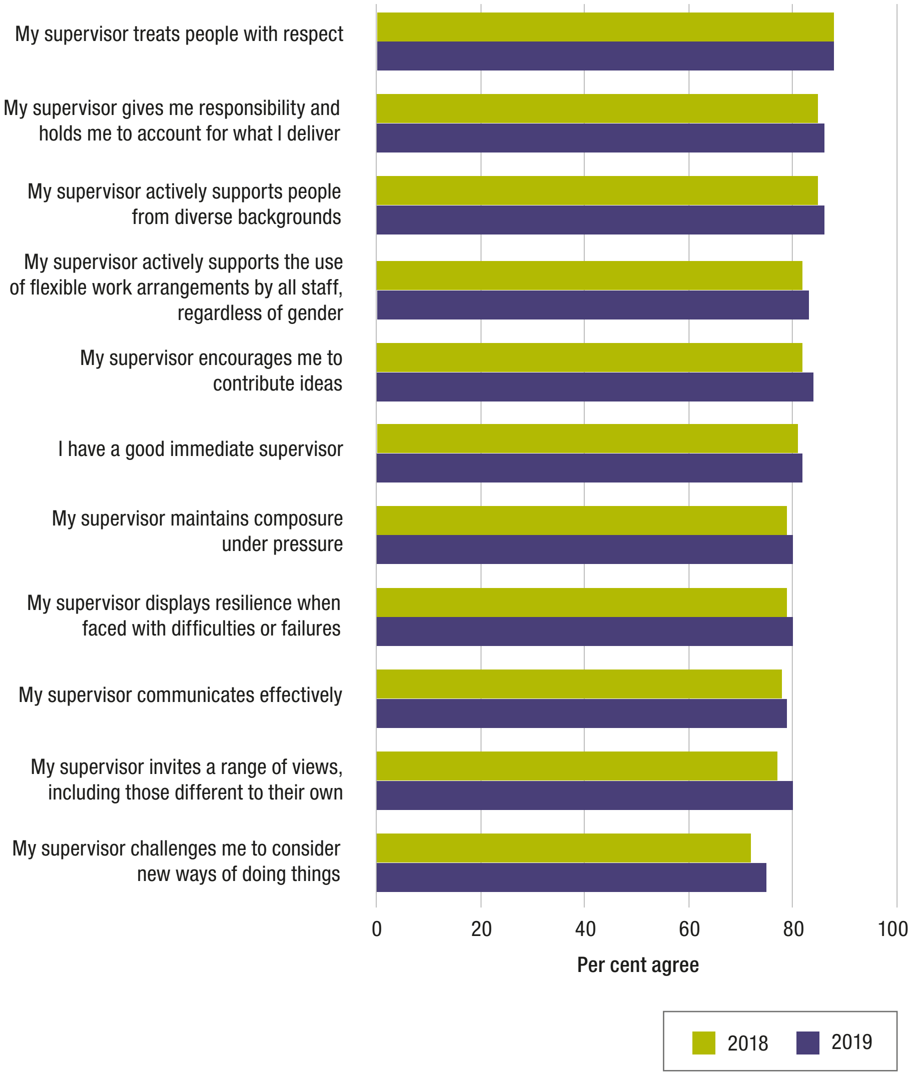
Source: 2019 APS employee census

Immediate supervisors

While the SES have a key part to play as the senior leadership cadre of the APS, the role of immediate supervisors in managing and leading the APS is also critical. Every year the APS employee census measures employee views about the quality and capability of immediate supervisors, which largely comprise APS 5 to EL 2 staff.

Consistent with results from previous years, employee perceptions about their immediate supervisors were very positive, with increases in 2019 across almost all questions (Figure 6.6). A high proportion of respondents agreed their immediate supervisor treats people with respect, supports people from diverse backgrounds and holds employees to account for what they deliver.

Figure 6.6: APS employee perceptions of their immediate supervisors, 2018 to 2019

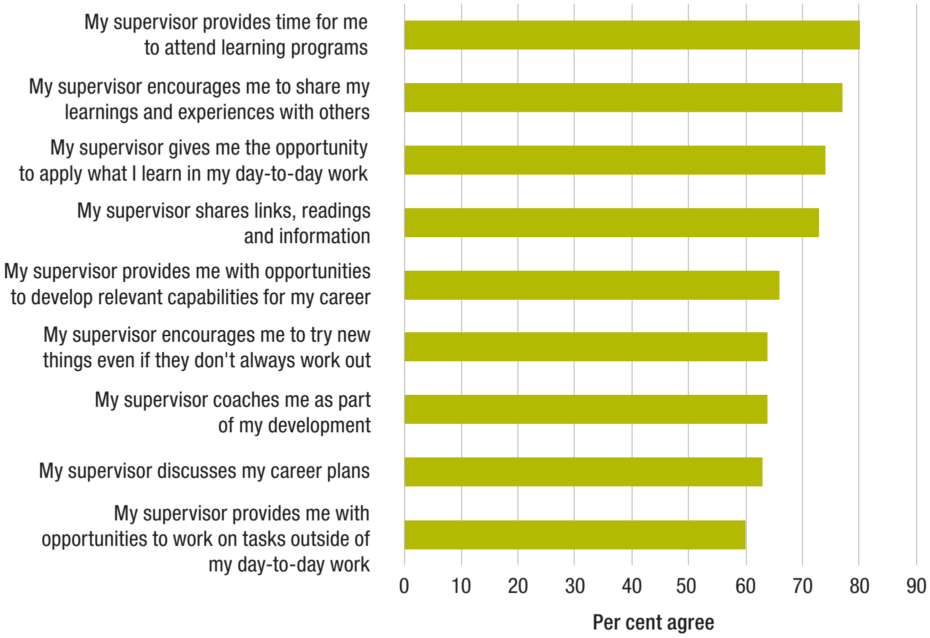


Source: APS employee census

Supervisors also play an important part in developing employee capability and APS employee census respondents indicated that supervisors provide time for their employees to attend learning programs (80 per cent positive response) and share learnings with others (77 per cent), as well as giving employees opportunities to apply learnings (74 per cent) (Figure 6.7).

It is widely recognised that formal learning programs, while important, only make up a relatively small part of an employee's total time investment in learning and development activities. Activities that occur as part of an employee's regular work—such as coaching, constructive feedback, acting opportunities, and peer-to-peer learning—are just as important in developing employee capability. Supervisors play a key role in these sorts of learning opportunities, particularly through targeted and constructive coaching and feedback to their employees. However, the 2019 APS employee census results indicate that employee perceptions of these aspects of the supervisor–employee relationship, along with career discussions and career planning, were relatively less positive (Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: APS employee perceptions of their immediate supervisor's approach to developing capability



Source: 2019 APS employee census

The benefit of coaching and career discussions extends beyond employee capability development. Employees who rated their supervisors more highly on these measures also had higher scores on the engagement index. There is no doubt that coaching and career conversations require an additional time investment, but the relationship with engagement suggests that the return on the time invested is potentially substantial.

The 2019 amendments to the Commissioner's Directions specifically address this issue by requiring all employees with supervisory responsibilities to conduct career conversations with their staff annually at a minimum. (See Chapter 1 for further discussion on the Commissioner's Directions.)

Developing existing leaders

There are many stakeholders involved in supporting development of leadership capabilities across the APS. These include individual agency learning and development units, external education providers (including universities and ANZSOG) and APS specialist development hubs.

The APSC also plays an important role in supporting the APS with strategic guidance and services in learning and development, leadership development and talent management. The APSC performs this work on behalf of the Secretaries Board, with the support of a cross-sector Advisory Board.

The APSC currently offers formal leadership development programs for SES and EL 2 employees. These programs support participants to build networks of peers across agencies and learn together. They aim to build critical leadership capabilities in areas such as:

- reading and navigating the political context
- influencing through complexity and ambiguity
- harnessing difference and working with complex stakeholder networks
- building high performing work cultures
- leading change
- building self-awareness and resilience.

Participant and manager evaluations of these programs indicate that individuals take significant value from their experiences across leadership development programs. Formal evaluation of participant confidence to apply particular skills has consistently shown increases in individual capacity, both immediately after workshops and six months later.

SES Band 2 community immersive—Australian Public Service Commission

The SES Band 2 Leadership program offered by the APSC assists SES leaders to better understand the interaction between citizens and government.

In 2019, SES Band 2 Leadership program participants were immersed in the Nowra local community. They engaged with community leaders, organisations and citizens, listening to their experiences of interactions with government as well as the challenges and opportunities they had faced.

Viewing government interaction through the eyes of those who deliver and receive government services on a daily basis prompted program participants to reflect on how the APS could be more innovative, citizen-centric and effective when designing and delivering services for the Australian people.

The community experience highlighted to participants:

- the value of discussions on the ground with communities
- the importance of deep listening and understanding, not simply rushing to solve complex issues
- the need to take into account multiple perspectives on complex issues
- the impact of building trust when working with communities
- the need to get out, consult more and keep programs and policies simple and effective, always conscious of the impact on the ground.

Before leaving Nowra, the program participants shared what they had learnt with the community and personally committed to future action. As a group, they promised the Nowra community to 'work hard in our roles to serve your community and all the other communities you represent'.

Identifying and growing future leaders

Talent management in the APS is the systematic identification, development and deployment of individuals with potential for more challenging roles in the future (Figure 6.8). It is a key business strategy and an investment in the future capability of the APS. Taking a systematic approach to managing the growth of high-potential employees ensures the APS has the right people ready for critical roles now and in the future.

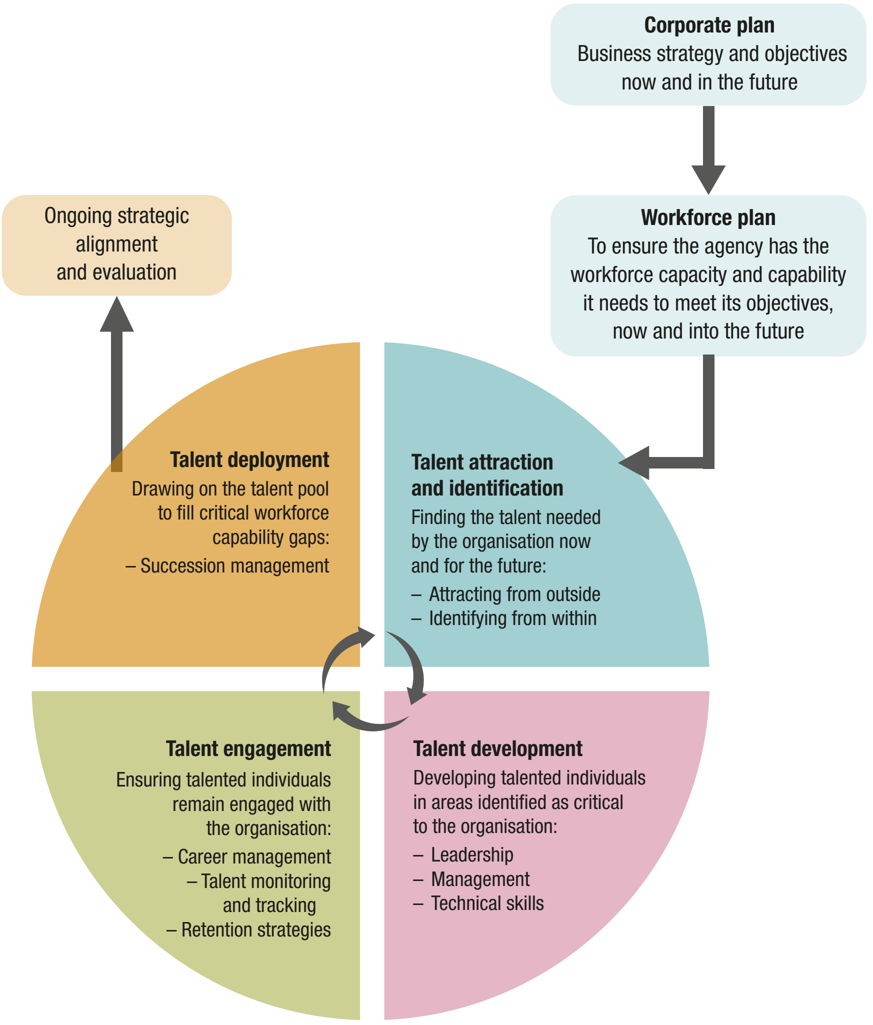
The Secretaries Board endorsed an APS-wide approach to talent management in December 2017. As part of this approach, talent processes for the SES cohort are managed at a cross-APS level, with active support from agencies. Cross-APS talent management is led by the Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council on behalf of the Secretaries Board. Below SES level, talent is managed by agencies, drawing on common APS guidance and tools provided by the APSC.

The key principles underpinning talent management in the APS are:

- Talent management is owned and led by APS leaders, who are actively engaged in the process with a view to the longer-term interests of their agency and the wider APS. Senior leaders, as stewards of the APS, play a particular leadership role in driving effective talent management in their agency and across the APS.

- The identification of talent is based on valid and objective assessment, ensuring officers are receiving the right development and focus at specific times in their career.
- Talent management is systematic and dynamic and the process:
  - involves regularly and actively identifying, planning and monitoring high-potential individuals: who they are; how they are being developed; the career 'next steps' that will best help them realise their potential
  - recognises that an assessment of potential may change depending on an individual's circumstances or career stage. As such, potential is regularly monitored and reassessed.
- Talent management recognises the importance of a diverse leadership cadre and actively seeks to develop one.

Figure 6.8: Talent management system



Corporate plan
Business strategy and objectives now and in the future

Workforce plan
To ensure the agency has the workforce capacity and capability it needs to meet its objectives, now and into the future

Ongoing strategic alignment and evaluation

Talent deployment
Drawing on the talent pool to fill critical workforce capability gaps:
– Succession management

Talent attraction and identification
Finding the talent needed by the organisation now and for the future:
– Attracting from outside
– Identifying from within

Talent engagement
Ensuring talented individuals remain engaged with the organisation:
– Career management
– Talent monitoring and tracking
– Retention strategies

Talent development
Developing talented individuals in areas identified as critical to the organisation:
– Leadership
– Management
– Technical skills

Talent management of the SES cohort is overseen by two talent councils—the Secretaries Talent Council and the Deputy Secretaries Talent Council. The initial focus of the Secretaries Talent Council was on high-performing SES Band 3s with the potential to move into secretary or agency head roles, or more complex Band 3 roles. In June 2019, the Secretaries Board agreed to broaden the Band 3 talent assessment process to include all Band 3s. This will assist the Board with its leadership and stewardship responsibilities at whole-of-APS level.

The Deputy Secretaries Talent Council focuses on SES Band 1s and Band 2s with high potential for SES Band 3 roles. Those assessed as having potential for careers that span across the APS to Band 3 in the future, and who would benefit from a cross-APS focus to their development at this point in their career, may become members of the Deputy Secretaries Talent Pool. These individuals receive guidance and input from the Council on their career development.

In addition to the benefit to individuals participating in formal programs, work undertaken by the two talent councils has assisted secretaries and deputy secretaries to gain a deeper understanding of the capability and potential of the broader SES cohort.

In previous years the APSC offered a Career Development Assessment Centre as a common tool to assist agencies to assess EL 2 readiness for entry into the SES. The conclusion of the contract for the assessment centre process during 2018 created an opportunity for a revised approach to talent management for the EL 2 cohort.

In early 2019, a new program was developed, using the SES Band 1 Work Level Standards to assess participants' future potential for SES Band 1 roles. A pilot of the revised program began in May 2019, with 12 participants from four APS agencies. Feedback from pilot participants has been positive. An evaluation report and post implementation review will consider suitability of the process and inform decisions on broader use across the APS.

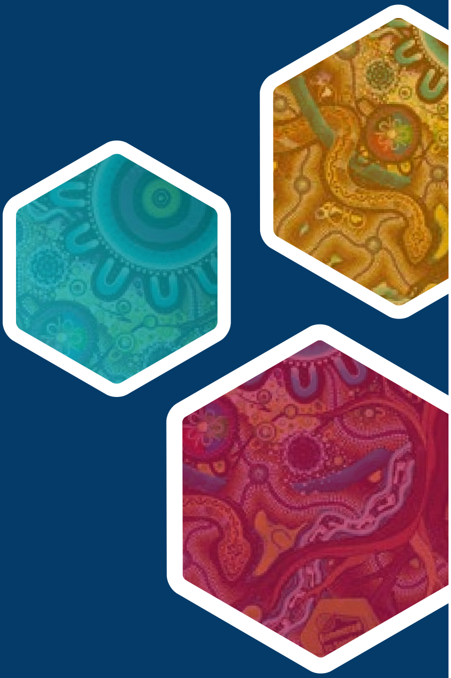
Leadership challenges

Responding to challenging policy and delivery requirements in a rapidly changing and increasingly digital environment requires leaders who are transformational and expert change managers. They need to be adaptive and collaborative. Complexity and increased expectations mean leaders need to find new and better ways of doing things, question current perspectives and generate new ideas. They need to manage risk deftly and enable their staff and networks to deliver for the end user.

The APS is not alone in the challenge of recruiting, developing and managing talent that can respond to changing leadership pressures. Both private and public sector organisations are considering the capability needed to lead organisations into the future.

The data currently available is not comprehensive, but shows apparent gaps in SES capability in enabling staff, managing change, being innovative and having diversity of perspective. In addition, demographic data suggests the organisation and deployment of the APS leadership cohort may not be as effective as it could be in supporting the workforce that they lead.

These issues need to be examined further to ensure the SES and other leaders can assist the APS in responding to future challenges. Talent and mobility initiatives currently under way will also play a part in ensuring there is a pipeline of APS employees with the required leadership capabilities. The integrity of the public service, and citizen and government trust in its ability to provide high quality and responsive advice, depend on a capable, dynamic, collaborative, innovative and supported leadership cohort.



Chapter
SEVEN

Assessing and developing capability

> . . . the nature of work in the public sector is changing rapidly, and the capabilities of public servants and those who lead them are constantly required to adjust.
>
> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development[103]

The skills and abilities of individual employees, together with an organisation's structures, systems, processes and culture, are critical to an organisation's ability to achieve its current and future objectives. While these are all drivers of organisational performance, at present there is no complete picture of the capability of individuals or organisations across the APS.

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[103] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability.*

APS agencies have traditionally invested in learning and development (L&D) activities as a primary means for developing the capabilities of their employees. This continues to be the case, and APS employee census data shows that APS employees are broadly positive about the support for learning and development they receive.

A commitment to and investment in L&D aligns with pillar two of the OECD's Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability: 'Skilled and effective public servants'.[104] Among other things, this pillar emphasises the importance of a learning culture and environment in developing the capability that a public service requires to respond to the changing nature of work and community expectations. The Recommendation also points out that the capabilities of an effective public service—and effective public servants—are not static.

Assessing capability

The maturity of processes and structures for assessing employee capability varies across the APS. In the 2019 APS agency survey, 91 per cent of APS agencies reported using a capability framework when considering individual employee capability, with at least half using the APS Integrated Leadership System. Agencies reported using capability frameworks primarily for recruitment and performance management activities; it is not clear whether capabilities unrelated to an employee's current role ('latent' capabilities) are captured or considered.

Almost all agencies reported challenges in assessing and tracking the capability of individual employees, with the most common difficulties relating to resource constraints and the functionality of HR systems. The capability and capacity of supervisors to assess and track the capability of their direct reports was also raised by a number of agencies. Although some agencies have embarked on extensive capability mapping exercises, it is not clear how many agencies have an accurate picture of existing capabilities—and therefore capability gaps—of their employees. This uncertainty is replicated at system-wide level.

Integrated Job Role Profiles—Department of Home Affairs

The Vocational Competency Framework was established as part of the department's commitment to ongoing investment in its people and to meet future workforce requirements. The Vocational Competency Framework and Integrated Job Role Profiles are key to informing the department's approach to professionalising the workforce. They align recruitment, development, performance and career pathways.

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[104] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability*

The Integrated Job Role Profiles identify key responsibilities of the job role at different classification levels, as well as the role-specific knowledge, skills and attitudes/attributes required to be effective in a role. The profiles also reflect the future workforce state where it is known.

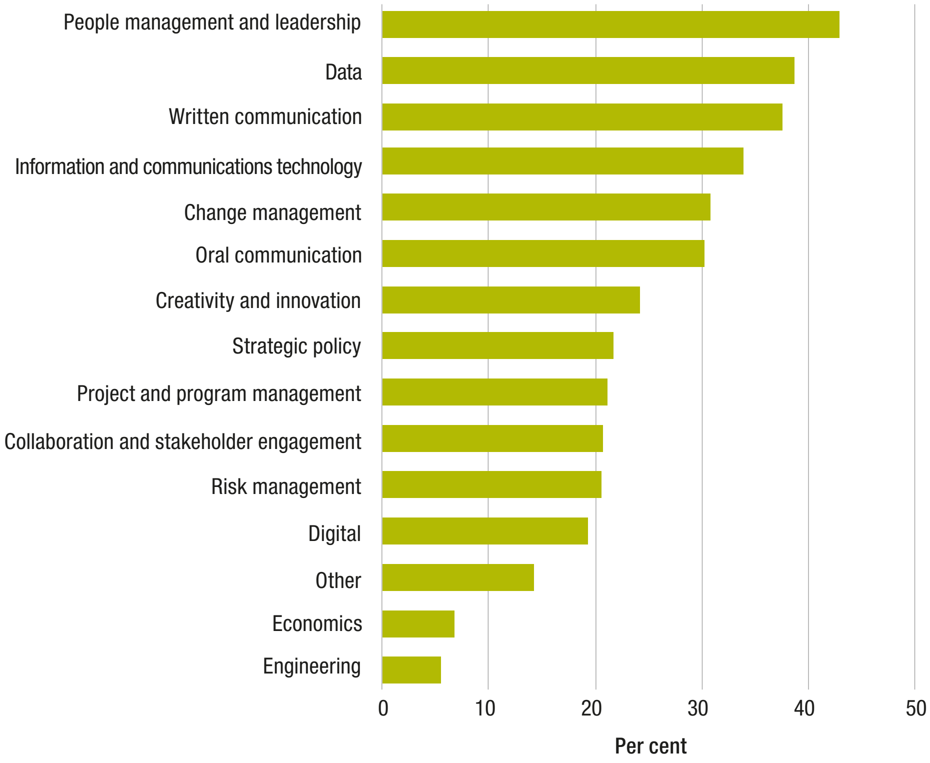
Since July 2017, the department has worked across the business to progress the development of high priority job roles that are specific to the department. This work has created significant value for business areas, particularly those that are driving an agenda of professionalisation across their workforce. Job role profiles provide business areas with opportunities to better plan their workforce requirements; recruit the right skills, knowledge and attributes; better inform development of performance goals; and inform learning and development planning and career conversations.

To date, 53 per cent of the workforce has a completed Integrated Job Role Profile. A further 20 per cent are anticipated for completion by June 2020.

The most common immediate L&D priorities identified by APS agencies through the 2019 APS agency survey related to leadership and management skills and digital/data capability. Technical skills specific to particular agencies and roles were also an area of focus, along with professional APS capabilities such as policy development.

For the first time, the 2019 APS employee census asked employees about current skill or capability gaps within their immediate workgroup (Figure 7.1). More than half of respondents indicated that gaps exist. This figure rose to more than 70 per cent for SES respondents. The two most commonly reported gaps related to people management and leadership and data capability and so were broadly aligned to agency L&D priorities. Almost 40 per cent of respondents also suggested that written communication was an area of concern.

Figure 7.1: APS employee perceptions of skill or capability gaps in their immediate workgroup



Note: As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Current learning and development approaches

L&D encompasses a wide range of activities designed to improve employee capabilities. Capabilities comprise the technical skills and knowledge people have, as well as their attributes, attitudes and behaviours.

Learning activities can target specific skills in a short period to meet an immediate need or they can be designed to achieve broader capability requirements over a longer period. Learning activities extend beyond formal classroom learning to include on-the-job training, development opportunities (such as taskforces, conferences, secondments) and mentoring. Responsibility for the professional development of APS employees is shared between the agency, supervisor and the individual employee.

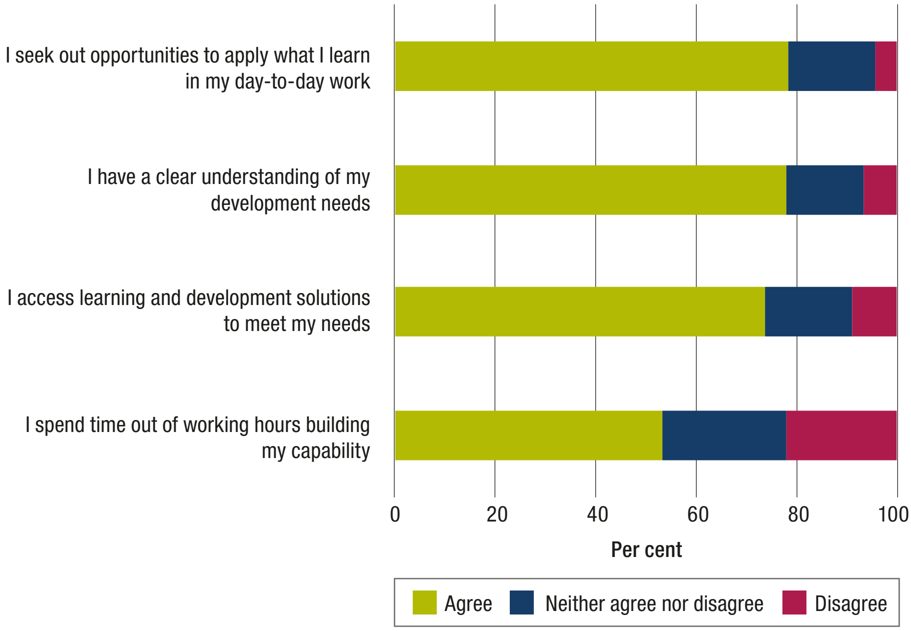
APS agencies are responsible for ensuring that employees can access relevant and appropriate development activities. With this devolved responsibility there is no whole-of-APS data on L&D expenditure; however, 65 per cent of 2019 APS employee census respondents indicated their workplace provided access to effective L&D. This represents a slight increase from the 2018 figure of 63 per cent.

The 2019 APS agency survey sought agency views on challenges to providing effective L&D. The most commonly reported were time and budget pressures and delivering programs to geographically dispersed staff.

Immediate supervisors also play an important part in enabling employees to access and make the most of L&D activities. Employee perceptions of supervisors on this were generally positive, especially support for attendance at learning programs and opportunities to apply learnings in the workplace. However, as outlined in Chapter 6, APS employee census results suggest that supervisors could invest more in coaching and career conversations with their staff. The role of supervisors in this regard is a clear focus of the recent amendments to the Commissioner's Directions.

Employees are also responsible for engaging fully in their own capability development. The 2019 APS employee census indicated that most APS employees were aware of their own development needs, were accessing L&D solutions, and were seeking opportunities to apply learnings in the workplace (Figure 7.2). Just over half of 2019 APS employee census respondents reported spending time out of working hours building their capability.

Figure 7.2: APS employee perceptions related to individual learning and development



Source: 2019 APS employee census

The impact of learning activities extends beyond the immediate capability that is targeted. Analysis of 2019 APS employee census data revealed that positive perceptions about access to development programs was associated with higher engagement, innovation and job satisfaction. L&D is not the only contributing factor to these higher perceptions, but the relationship adds weight to the value for agencies to provide access to effective learning programs for their employees.

The devolved approach to APS workforce management means that most capability development across the APS is organised and managed at agency level. *Priorities for Change* highlighted this fragmented approach to L&D across the APS, and suggested it had the potential to undermine organisational performance.

The APS-wide workforce strategy under development will likely include a system-wide perspective on workforce capability, supporting a more integrated approach to L&D across the APS. An important first step in this will be to share learnings across the service and consolidate understanding of current capabilities and emerging needs.

In the meantime, the APSC continues to play an important role in fostering high-quality L&D initiatives across the public service, and it encourages and supports a broad approach to L&D. The APSC maintains a strong focus on core public sector skills and leadership development, to complement agency offerings and profession-specific formal and informal learning. The APSC is also the custodian of the Integrated Leadership System, Work Level Standards, and capabilities for senior APS roles.

The APSC's core skills programs cover a number of capability areas under four broad headings:

- Working with People
- Working with Government
- Management Skills
- Decision Making and Judgement.

A total of 466 learning programs under these headings were delivered to more than 8,000 participants during 2018–19. Feedback on the value and relevance of the programs was very positive and participants also reported significant capability shifts as a result of their attendance.

Diplomatic Academy—Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Diplomatic Academy is a learning and development hub within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It is a centre of excellence for sharing best practice in modern diplomacy and a valuable resource for all APS employees working to advance Australian interests internationally.

The Academy offers learning opportunities to build international engagement capability across the APS and state and territory governments. It also builds collaborative links with other academies and foreign ministries, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, to exchange best practice and resources on training and to provide additional learning activities and programs for staff in Australia and around the world.

The Academy provides formal and informal digital and face-to-face learning across nine faculties, including trade, investment and economic diplomacy, international policy and strategies, international development, diplomatic tradecraft and language.

Additional learning opportunities include lunchtime seminars for the APS, delivered by eminent academics and experts on the full range of international policy issues. Bespoke courses for APS agencies are also offered to meet specific interests and needs. For example, the Academy recently delivered Diplomatic Protocol and Representation Skills training for officers of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science in preparation for the November 2019 Group on Earth Observation Conference and Ministerial Summit. Another example is the one-day multilateral diplomacy workshop provided to the Department of Health in preparation for their attendance at the World Health Assembly.

The Academy has also developed Ngunnawal language workshops as part of its 2019 Understanding Australia curriculum. These workshops teach the Ngunnawal language Acknowledgement of Country. In addition to departmental staff, 11 APS secretaries and more than 20 APS agency heads and SES have participated.

Uptake of learning opportunities by departmental and other agency staff has been significant. During 2018–19, over 1,000 classes and seminars were provided under the auspices of the Academy, with more than 8,000 participants. Feedback on activities offered by the Academy is regularly collected and used to refine and better target course offerings.

Mobility

In an APS context, mobility can be understood as the movement of capability, skills and experiences within and between APS agencies, other jurisdictions, and the private and not-for-profit sectors. Mobility of employees supports continuous development of the workforce by enabling employees to move freely within and through the APS system throughout their career.

Mobility in the public sector is important. The APS must be more permeable and mobile to foster diversity of thinking, the contestability of ideas and capability uplift. Mobility also plays an important part in enabling the APS to direct resources towards complex challenges quickly and efficiently.

The 2019–20 Budget Paper No. 4 underlined the importance of mobility in fulfilling the core purpose of the APS: 'Enhanced mobility will allow the public sector to draw on a broad base of experience when developing programs, designing and delivering services for citizens, and providing advice to the Government'.[105] The Unlocking Potential Review suggested some specific individual and organisational benefits of targeted mobility:

- exposing employees to different approaches to policy development, service delivery, leadership styles, and management practices
- helping to build employee networks, which in turn can forge closer partnerships across agencies
- providing opportunities for employee development and building their range of experiences.[106]

Successive reviews of the APS have commented on relatively low rates of APS mobility and emphasised the importance of addressing barriers. Despite this, intra-agency mobility rates remain low across the APS. During 2018–19, only 3.6 per cent of ongoing employees moved to another agency within the APS either through a permanent transfer, promotion, or temporary transfer.

Over the past 20 years the mobility rate has remained fairly steady, only fluctuating between 1.5 per cent and 3.6 per cent. It is therefore unsurprising that a significant majority (70.1 per cent) of ongoing APS employees have only worked in one agency across their APS career. This also aligns with results of the 2019 APS employee census—only 29 per cent of respondents agreed their agency provides opportunities for external mobility.

Movements between agencies are a relatively small part of the whole-of-APS mobility picture. While internal mobility data is not recorded in APSED, for the first time, the 2019 APS employee census included a question on internal mobility. Sixteen per cent of respondents indicated they had taken an internal opportunity in 2018–19.

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[105] Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). Budget 2019–20. Budget Paper No. 4: Agency Resourcing 2019–20, 11.

[106] Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Public Service Commission. (2015). *Unlocking potential: If not us, who? If not now, when? Australian Public Service Workforce Management Contestability Review*.

The traditional view of mobility within the APS has focused on individuals moving internally and across agency boundaries. This is supported by 2019 APS employee census data—only 0.7 per cent of respondents indicated they had taken a mobility opportunity outside the Commonwealth public sector in the past year.

There is a growing recognition of the benefits of a more porous APS, characterised by greater cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral mobility opportunities for APS employees. In light of this, a group of APS agencies is working with the private sector and state and territory governments to broaden the service's view of mobility to include movement to and from the different tiers of government, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector.

While mobility can deliver positive outcomes for the APS, it needs to be balanced. International experience indicates that too much, or poorly targeted, mobility can have an adverse impact, through added expense, disruption and loss of subject matter expertise. More work is required to ensure that mobility is an enabler of end results for the Government and the people of Australia.

Organisational capability

> The 21st century Public Servant . . . needs organisations which are fluid and supportive rather than siloed and controlling.
>
> Reimagining the Future Public Service Workforce[107]

Organisational capability is more than an aggregate picture of the capabilities of individual employees. It also includes the structures, systems, processes and cultural settings that enable employee capability to be directed towards achieving organisational objectives. In short, organisational capability enables organisational performance.

While the introduction of the PGPA Act initiated an APS reform process to improve the way delivery of organisational outcomes is measured, there has not been a comparable effort to assess organisational capability and measure its growth.

The APS employee census captures various data that can contribute to assessing capability at agency level. Each year, agencies receive tailored reports providing detail and analysis of agency-level APS employee census results. This information, in conjunction with data available on the online APS employee census portal, can inform agency-specific capability initiatives and interventions.

Similar to previous years, the 2019 APS employee census showed significant variation between agencies on most questions relating to organisational capability. In particular, agency size tended to be a key differentiator of employee perceptions, with smaller agencies typically presenting more positive views than larger agencies. However, some organisational capability questions scored low in absolute terms across all agencies (Figure 7.3).

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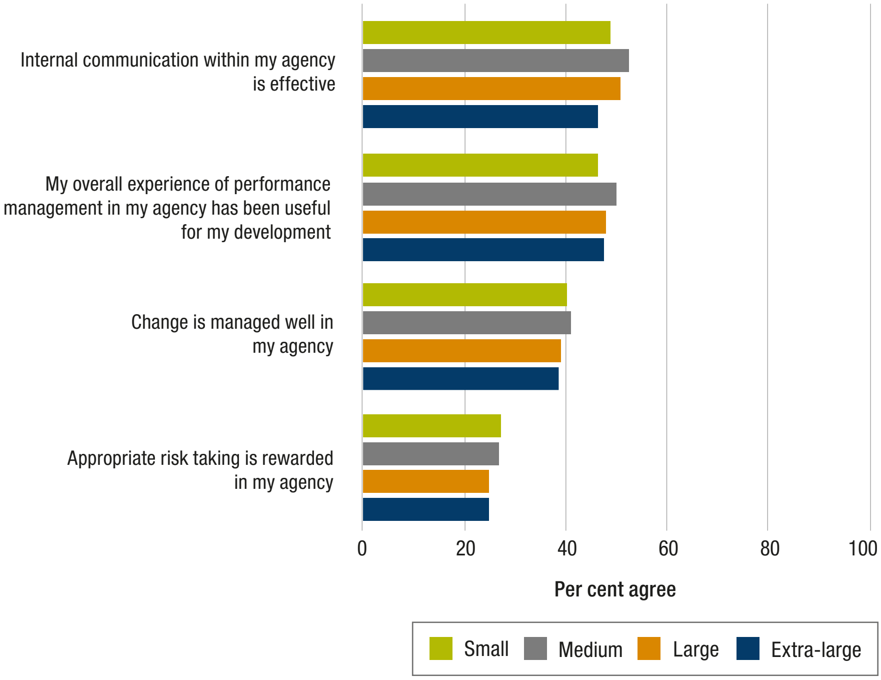
[107] Dickinson, H., Needham, C., Mangan, C. & Sullivan, H. (2018). *Reimagining the Future Public Service Workforce,* 10. Singapore: Springer

Figure 7.3: APS employee perceptions of organisational capability, by agency size



Source: 2019 APS employee census

A more complete assessment of an agency's organisational capability can be undertaken through a formal organisational capability review. Organisational capability reviews provide a strategic and independent assessment of an agency's capability. They consider how an organisation aligns processes, systems and the expertise of its people to deliver on objectives.

Between 2012 and 2016, the APSC delivered a program of capability reviews across a number of departments and agencies.[108] Analysis of reports prepared through this program provided an indicator of whole-of-APS systemic challenges at that time, and highlighted opportunities for the APS to develop, mature and build on organisational strategic capability.

While the program of capability reviews is not currently active, some agencies have commissioned independent reviews to assess their organisational effectiveness and identify opportunities to best position themselves for the future. The Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), for example, initiated a capability review in October 2017 to evaluate the effectiveness of its client service, engagement and collaboration approaches. This strategic assessment catalysed an extensive and ongoing organisational change process to assist the agency to meet current challenges, measure progress, and build future organisational capability.

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[108] Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Public Service Commission. *Capability Review Program.*

Capability review implementation—Austrade

Austrade undertook an organisational capability assessment in 2017–18 to evaluate current capability and future capability needs. The assessment considered strategy, operating model, processes, systems, and Austrade's collective expertise. The resulting report highlighted an unprecedented rate of change in Austrade's and its clients' operating environments and made a number of recommendations for Austrade to remain relevant and continue to add value for current and future clients.

In response, Austrade developed and has begun to implement a five-year strategy and transformation plan to ensure the organisation can respond, grow and deliver in a time of rapid and ongoing change. Austrade's journey started with setting a shared purpose and clear vision to take the agency forward and transform the work they do, who they do it with, and when and how they do it.

One strategic priority has been to strengthen client service delivery. To better understand and identify client needs, Austrade adopted agile and human-centred design techniques to help improve services and design new offerings. Recognising it could not deliver all client needs on its own, Austrade has started to move beyond its traditional operating model to embrace the talents of other organisations through a networked approach.

Through the capability review and change process that followed, Austrade has developed a clear understanding of ts role, its client needs, and capability needs to help the agency best prioritise its resources and effort, establish new ways of working, and partner effectively with others.

'As Austrade prepares to celebrate 100 years of promoting Australian products and services around the globe, we are taking stock of our core business and the changing needs of our clients. Technological advances, the rise of online commerce and significant shifts in the international trading environment are creating challenges and opportunities for Australians who export – or who are thinking of exporting for the first time.

On the flip-side we also identify and attract productive foreign investors who can contribute to Australia's competitiveness. We are embracing 'digital-first' thinking to extend the reach of our services, and piloting a new model of bespoke client service to maximise our impact on Australian exporters' outcomes. This is about client needs and outcomes, which directly contribute to the prosperity of our nation.'

Dr Stephanie Fahey, Chief Executive Officer, Austrade

In August 2019, the APSC finalised its own organisational capability review. The review's findings provide a robust assessment of current organisational capabilities and operational challenges. They also highlight key strategic initiatives to strengthen internal processes and systems and improve organisational outcomes. The review process initiated a valuable conversation across the APSC about what the Commission needs to do to prepare for the future. Implementation of the review's recommendations will progress throughout 2019–20.

Future considerations

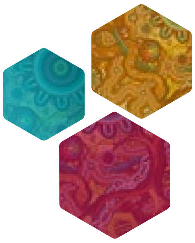
As the Secretaries Board leads the APS through change over the years ahead, a whole-of-service perspective on organisational capability will become increasingly important. Organisational capability reviews, based on a common evaluation framework, are a useful mechanism for highlighting organisational strengths and challenges at system level. These reviews also enable identification and sharing of innovative and successful agency-level reform initiatives that have the potential to be scaled up to drive improvement across the APS.

As outlined in Chapter 5, the APS-wide workforce strategy that is under development will play an important part in driving a system-wide approach to a number of individual and organisational capability areas. The workforce strategy represents a step towards a more holistic approach to APS workforce management and shared ownership of the strategy, along with shared accountability for implementation, will be essential to its success.

The APS is grappling with increasingly complex and inter-related policy, regulatory and service delivery issues that require system-wide perspectives, and this trend will continue. In this environment, a robust engagement with organisational capability across the service will be a critical factor in the ability of the APS to fulfil its serving responsibilities to the Government and the people of Australia.

State of the Service Report 2018–19

APPENDIXES



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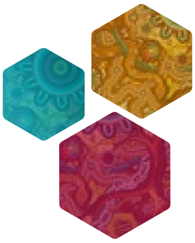

Appendix 1

APS WORKFORCE DATA

APS Employment Database

The Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) contains employment, diversity and education details for all people employed in the APS under the authority of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth).

Information on staffing, including trends in the size, structure and composition of the APS, contributes to research and evaluation work on the changing nature of the APS. This, in turn, assists agencies to formulate their people management policies and practices.

APSED is the definitive source of APS employment data, supporting strong evidence-based APS workforce policy, people management and advice.

APSED scope and collection methodology

APSED stores the employment data of all current and former APS employees. The database was established in 1999 but contains data on APS employees from 1966. The most recent snapshot, conducted on 30 June 2019, contains records relating to 147,237 employees.

APSED is maintained by the APSC and the data is supplied to APSED from the HR systems of APS agencies.

Two types of data files are used to update and maintain APSED—movement files and snapshot files. In general, both file types contain the same data items, but they differ in purpose.

1. Movement files are provided to the APSC from each agency every month. They are used to document changes in employment history (for example, engagements, promotions and maternity leave) for all people employed under the PS Act on a monthly basis.

   Changes in employment characteristics every month are recorded using movement codes. Movement files contain a record for every movement relevant to updating and maintaining employee records in APSED that has been processed in an agency's HR system during the month. Therefore, if an employee undertakes multiple movements within a reference period, the corresponding movement files will contain multiple records for that employee. Conversely, if an employee has no movements during the reference period, they will not appear in the movement file.

2. Snapshot files are provided to the APSC from each agency on a six-monthly basis. They are used to verify that the information stored in APSED, as provided by each agency in the monthly movement files, is correct and current at 31 December and 30 June each year. Snapshot files contain a single record for every APS employee employed by a particular agency on 31 December and 30 June.

APSED items

Agency HR systems supply APSED with unit records containing this personal information:

- personal particulars—Australian Government Staff number, name, and date of birth
- diversity data—gender, Indigenous identification, country of birth, year of arrival, first and main languages spoken, parents' first languages, disability status
- employment data—classification, email address, date of engagement, employment status, standard hours, workplace postcode, movement codes and dates, operative status, previous employment, job family code, agency
- educational qualifications and main fields of study.

Under Section 50 of the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016*, an agency head must ensure measures are in place to collect information from each employee and give collected information to the Australian Public Service Commissioner. While individuals do not explicitly consent to the collection of their movement and employment data, they can choose to supply or withhold all diversity data except gender and data relating to their educational qualifications. In relation to these items, Section 50 states that an agency head must allow APS employees to provide a response of 'choose not to give this information'.

Management and administration

Agency HR systems collect relevant data items through movement and snapshot files, and supply these to the APSC through secure or encrypted means. Agencies are responsible for the collection, security, quality, storage, access, use, and disclosure of their HR data as well as compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles. While agency HR systems capture detailed information on each APS employee's pay, leave history and entitlements, these are out of scope for APSED. Only data fields supplied to the APSC are in scope.

Upon receipt, each data file is corrected in an iterative process. Once validated and transferred to the APSC, error checks on the new files are performed by the APSC against the extant data in APSED. The APSC and agency work together to resolve these differences. Once resolved, cleaned data is incorporated.

APSED data is stored on a secure information technology system that is password protected and accessible only by a small team in the APSC who have been granted access by team supervisors and trained in protecting and using these collections. Standard operating procedures dictate when personal information can be added or changed. All changes to the database are logged in an audit file.

Privacy and confidentiality

APSED is fully compliant with the APSC's privacy policy, which sets out the kinds of information collected and held, how this information is collected and held, its purposes, and authority for its collection. The full APSC privacy policy, which includes specific information related to APSED collection, is available at www.apsc.gov.au/apsc-complete-privacy-policy. The APSC has undertaken a detailed privacy impact assessment in relation to APSED, concluding that it complies with all relevant Australian Privacy Principles.

Data protections within APSED include secure transfer of information between agencies and the APSC, storage of data on APSC servers requiring individual logins to access, restriction of access to a small number of authorised users, and ensuring public release of data is undertaken in aggregate format only.

APS employee census

The APS employee census is an annual employee perception survey of the APS workforce. All eligible personnel employed under the PS Act are invited to participate. The census has been conducted since 2012 and collects APS employee opinions and perspectives on important issues, including employee engagement, wellbeing, performance management, leadership, and general impressions of the APS.

Data from the APS employee census help target strategies to build APS workplace capability now and in the future.

APS employee census collection methodology

The 2019 APS employee census was administered to eligible APS employees during the period 6 May to 7 June 2019. This timing was consistent with the timing of the past eight annual employee census administrations.

Although participation is encouraged, the APS employee census is voluntary. If a respondent chooses to participate, only a limited number of demographic-type questions must be answered. The remaining questions do not require a response.

APS employee census design

Questions from previous years were used as the basis for the 2019 APS employee census. Some questions were included for the first time to address topical issues or to improve the quality of the data collected following a thorough evaluation of the content of the 2018 APS employee census. To maintain a reliable longitudinal dataset, changes to questions are kept to a minimum. While a standardised questionnaire is employed, agencies can ask their employees a limited number of agency-specific questions.

APS employee census development

The 2019 APS employee census included 267 individual questions grouped into 17 sections. Each section addressed a key aspect of working for an APS agency.

Each year the content of the APS employee census is reviewed to ensure each question has value and meets a specific purpose. The APSC researches and consults broadly to develop and select questions for inclusion. In 2019, the APSC:

- considered strategic-level priorities coming from the Secretaries Board and other senior-level committees to ensure the employee census would capture appropriate information to inform these priorities
- consulted with subject matter experts from within the APSC and other APS agencies to seek their input to question design and information requirements for supporting APS-level policies and programs
- researched contemporary understanding of issues and options for questionnaire content
- provided participating agencies with an opportunity to give feedback and input to questionnaire design.

The resulting questionnaire covered numerous themes and measures. Central to these are three indices addressing employee engagement, innovation and wellbeing.

APS employee census delivery

The 2019 APS employee census was administered using these collection methods:

- online, through a unique link provided to each employee by email from Engine (previously ORC International), the contracted census administrators
- telephone surveys with employees who did not have available supportive information technology to provide reasonable adjustment for their disability
- paper-based surveys for employees who did not have access to an individual email account or did not have suitable access to the Internet.

Sampling and coverage

The 2019 APS employee census covered eligible ongoing and non-ongoing employees from 102 APS agencies. One APS agency elected not to participate. The initial population for the APS employee census comprised all APS employees from the 102 participating agencies recorded in APSED as at 28 February 2019. This population was then provided to each participating agency for confirmation. It is up to individual agencies to set their eligibility criteria. For example, some agencies removed employees on long-term leave, while others contact employees on long-term leave to check if they would like to participate.

Invitations to participate in the census were sent to employees from 6 May 2019. The number of invitations was adjusted as new employees were added, separations processed, and incorrect email addresses corrected. The deadline for survey completion was 7 June 2019.

The final sample size for the census was 136,527. Overall, 104,471 employees responded, giving a response rate of 77 per cent, the highest response rate in the history of the annual APS employee census. This response rate is encouraging given the size of the APS workforce, the number of participating agencies, and that the APS employee census has been administered annually since 2012.

Management and administration

The APS employee census is managed and coordinated by the APSC's Strategic Policy and Research Group. The APSC contracts an external service provider to support survey administration and reporting activities. Engine was this service provider in 2019.

Public release

This year, for the first time, many APS agencies have decided to publicly release their APS employee census results.

This initiative aligns with other activities across the APS to make data more open and transparent. It also supports the Australian Government's policy position on open data and follows the lead set by some state public service counterparts, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The public release of agency census data is aggregated and de-identified to protect individual's privacy. The release complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth), and the principles and codes under the Act.

Agency APS employee census results for participating agencies will be made available on their respective websites after this report is tabled, and can be centrally accessed on the APSC website.

Privacy

The APSC employs specific rules around how results are reported. Such rules protect the privacy of respondents and individual agency results.

De-identification of data is undertaken in accordance with guidance provided by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Further information about how privacy is maintained can be found on the APSC website:

- privacy policy
- APS employee census collection notice.

Employee engagement index

The APS employee census uses a model of employee engagement developed by Engine. This model addresses three attributes associated with employee engagement and measures the emotional connection and commitment employees have to working for their organisation. In this model, an engaged employee will:

- **Say**—the employee is a positive advocate of the organisation
- **Stay**—the employee is committed to the organisation and wants to stay as an employee
- **Strive**—the employee is willing to put in discretionary effort to excel in their job and help their organisation succeed

First introduced in 2017, the Say, Stay, Strive employee engagement model is flexible and the APSC has tailored the questions for the APS context.

The results for the individual elements of the employee engagement index are presented in Appendix 4.

Innovation index

In part, the 2019 APS employee census addressed innovation through a set of dedicated questions that contribute to an index score. This innovation index score assesses both whether employees feel willing and able to be innovative, and whether their agency has a culture that enables them to be so.

The results for the individual elements of the innovation index are presented in Appendix 4.

Wellbeing index

The wellbeing index in the APS employee census measures both the practical and cultural elements that allow for a sustainable and healthy working environment. The APS has long been focused on the wellbeing of its employees. As employers, APS agencies have obligations under work health and safety legislation. Together with these obligations is an acknowledgement that high performance of employees and organisations cannot be sustained without adequate levels of employee wellbeing.

The results for the individual elements of the wellbeing index are presented in Appendix 4.

Calculating and interpreting index scores

The questions comprising the employee engagement, innovation and wellbeing indices are asked on a five-point agreement scale. To calculate the index score, each respondent's answers to the set of questions are recoded to fall on a scale of between 0 and 100 per cent. The recoded responses are then averaged across the five or more index questions to provide the index score for that respondent. An individual only receives an index score if they have responded to all questions comprising that index.

Table A1.1: Example table used to calculate index scores (for one APS employee)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Weighted Score
	100%	**75%**	**50%**	**25%**	**0%**	**%**
Example question 1		✓				75
Example question 2		✓				75
Example question 3			✓			50
Example question 4				✓		25
Example question 5		✓				100
Total weighted percentage for this employee						**325**
Index score for this example respondent (325/5)						**65**

Index scores for groups of respondents are calculated by averaging the respondent scores that comprise that group.

An index score on its own can provide information about the group to which it relates. Index scores, however, have the most use when compared with scores over time or between work units, organisations and demographic groups.

Treatment of responses of ‘don’t know’ and ‘not applicable’

Specific questions included within the 2019 APS employee census enabled respondents to provide responses of ‘don’t know’, ‘not applicable’ or similar. Responses of this nature were typically excluded from the calculation of results for inclusion within this report. This was so that results reflected respondents who expressed an informed opinion to the relevant question.

Depending upon the intent, other products generated from the 2019 APS employee census may not apply these same rules. The method in analysis and reporting will be made clear within these products.

APS agency survey

The APS agency survey is conducted annually from late June to mid-August. It collects information on a range of workforce initiatives, strategies and compliance matters, including the number and type of APS Code of Conduct breaches, workplace diversity strategies and agency collaboration challenges. APS agencies with at least 20 APS employees complete the survey. The information collected through the agency survey is used to inform workforce strategies and for other research and evaluation purposes.

Since 2002, the agency survey has been administered to APS agencies with employees employed under the PS Act. The annual survey assists the Australian Public Service Commissioner to fulfil a range of duties as specified in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- informing the annual State of the Service Report
- strengthening the professionalism of the APS and facilitating continuous improvement in its workforce management
- monitoring, reviewing and reporting on APS capabilities.

APS agency survey collection methodology

In 2019, the APS agency survey was administered to 97 agencies during 25 June to 9 August 2019. The response rate for 2019 was 100 per cent, which is typical for the agency survey.

Each year the APS agency survey is sent to the contact officers nominated for each agency. These contact officers are responsible for coordinating the input from relevant areas and uploading responses to an agency survey portal managed by ORIMA Research. The survey requires each agency head to verify the agency's submission for completeness and accuracy of responses.

APS agency survey design

Before fieldwork each year, the content of the APS agency survey questionnaire is reviewed so each question has value and meets a specific purpose and, where possible, aligns with the APS employee census. The APSC researches and consults broadly to develop and select questions to include in the questionnaire.

APS agency survey management and administration

The APSC's Strategic Policy and Research Group manages and coordinates the APS agency survey. The APSC contracts an external service provider to support survey administration. ORIMA Research was this service provider in 2019.

Privacy

All APS agency survey data are stored in a secure password-protected environment. Where results are included in reporting, agency results are de-identified or aggregated.

Appendix 2

APS AGENCIES

This appendix covers a range of data about APS agencies.

Table A2.1 lists all APS agencies and employee numbers and reflects data in APSED as at 30 June 2019. These are headcount numbers and include ongoing, non-ongoing and casual (intermittently engaged) employees.

APS agencies are grouped into 'functional clusters' to allow comparisons to be made between agencies with similar primary functions. The functional clusters applied to APS agencies are:

- **Policy**—agencies involved in the development of public policy.
- **Smaller operational**—agencies with fewer than 1,000 employees involved in the implementation of public policy.
- **Larger operational**—agencies with 1,000 employees or more involved in the implementation of public policy.
- **Regulatory**—agencies involved in regulation and inspection.
- **Specialist—**agencies providing specialist support to government.

Table A2.1: List of APS agencies by portfolio

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Agriculture	**Larger operational**	**5 003**
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	Regulatory	179
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	Regulatory	209
Murray Darling Basin Authority	Policy	309
Attorney-General's	**Policy**	**851**
Australian Government Solicitor	Policy	593
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	Smaller operational	671
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency	Policy	16
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	Specialist	50
Australian Building and Construction Commission	Regulatory	148
Australian Financial Security Authority	Smaller Operational	477
Australian Human Rights Commission	Specialist	143
Australian Law Reform Commission	Policy	10
Comcare	Smaller operational	610

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Commonwealth Ombudsman	Specialist	234
Fair Work Commission	Smaller operational	305
Federal Court Statutory Agency	Larger operational	1 202
National Archives of Australia	Specialist	363
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	Regulatory	96
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Smaller operational	397
Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman	Regulatory	847
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	Specialist	32
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	Specialist	103
Safe Work Australia	Policy	104
Communications and the Arts	**Policy**	**561**
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Regulatory	448
Australian National Maritime Museum	Specialist	125
National Film and Sound Archive	Specialist	171
National Library of Australia	Specialist	399
National Museum of Australia	Specialist	274
National Portrait Gallery	Specialist	56
Old Parliament House	Specialist	117
Screen Australia	Specialist	7
Defence	**Larger operational**	**16 879**
Defence Housing Australia	Smaller operational	685
Education	**Policy**	**1 902**
Australian Research Council	Specialist	134
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	Regulatory	77
Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business	**Policy**	**2 120**
Australian Skills Quality Authority	Regulatory	211
Environment and Energy	**Policy**	**2 717**
Bureau of Meteorology	Larger operational	1 607
Clean Energy Regulator	Regulatory	322
Climate Change Authority	Specialist	8
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Specialist	257

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Finance	**Policy**	**1 579**
Australian Electoral Commission	Smaller operational	2 558
Future Fund Management Agency	Specialist	154
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	Specialist	55
Foreign Affairs and Trade	**Policy**	**3 781**
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	Specialist	60
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	Specialist	594
Health	**Policy**	**3 428**
Therapeutic Goods Administration	Policy	723
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	Policy	134
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	Regulatory	470
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	Specialist	87
Australian Digital Health Agency	Smaller operational	52
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Specialist	376
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	Specialist	137
Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority	Regulatory	338
Cancer Australia	Specialist	77
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	Regulatory	103
National Blood Authority	Specialist	59
National Health and Medical Research Council	Specialist	217
National Health Funding Body	Specialist	22
National Mental Health Commission	Specialist	28
Organ and Tissue Authority	Specialist	26
Professional Services Review	Specialist	23
Home Affairs	**Larger operational**	**14 070**
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	Specialist	764
AUSTRAC	Regulatory	385
Industry, Innovation and Science	**Policy**	**2 318**
Geoscience Australia	Specialist	622
Questacon	Policy	271
IP AUSTRALIA	Larger operational	1 144
National Offshore Petroleum Safety And Environmental Management Authority	Regulatory	125
Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development	**Policy**	**990**
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	Smaller operational	107

Agency name	Functional cluster	Headcount
Infrastructure and Project Financing Agency	Specialist	13
National Capital Authority	Specialist	71
Prime Minister and Cabinet	**Policy**	**2 156**
Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	Smaller operational	451
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	Specialist	123
Australian National Audit Office	Specialist	359
Australian Public Service Commission	Policy	264
Office of National Intelligence	Specialist	240
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Specialist	173
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	Specialist	28
Services Australia (Social Services portfolio)	**Larger operational**	**30 572**
Digital Transformation Agency	Smaller operational	245
Social Services	**Policy**	**2 545**
Australian Institute of Family Studies	Specialist	109
National Disability Insurance Agency	Larger operational	3 491
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	Regulatory	194
Treasury	**Policy**	**970**
Royal Australian Mint	Specialist	249
Commonwealth Grants Commission	Specialist	28
Australian Office Of Financial Management	Specialist	40
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Specialist	2 739
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	Regulatory	1 180
Australian Securities and Investments Commission	Regulatory	1 981
Australian Taxation Office	Larger operational	18 900
Office of the Inspector-General of Taxation	Specialist	31
Productivity Commission	Specialist	174
Veterans' Affairs (Defence portfolio)	**Larger operational**	**1 674**
Australian War Memorial	Specialist	331

Source: APSED, 30 June 2019

Appendix 3

APS WORKFORCE TRENDS

This appendix summarises some overall trends in APS employment for 2018–19, and over the past 10 years. The primary source of data is the APSED.

While this appendix briefly summarises APS workforce trends, the June 2019 APS employment data release[109] provides detailed data. Each published report provides current data and data from the previous years. The historical data is often adjusted at this time to pick up information that affects previously reported data. For this reason, the current publication is always the most accurate data source for APS employment data, including for historical data.

APS employment trends

As at 30 June 2019, there were 147,237 employees in the APS, comprising:

- 132,192 ongoing employees, down by 2.9 per cent from 136,158 ongoing employees in June 2018
- 15,045 non-ongoing employees, up by 5.7 per cent from 14,237 non-ongoing employees in June 2018.

During 2018–19:

- 8,564 ongoing employees were engaged, down by 4.9 per cent from 9,005 ongoing engagements in 2018
- 12,100 ongoing employees separated from the APS, up by 17.4 per cent from 10,307 separations of ongoing employees in 2018.

Engagements and separations

Engagement numbers have fluctuated over the last 10 years, ranging from 2,366 in 2014–15 to 12,828 in 2010–11. Tables A3.1 and A3.2 cover ongoing APS engagements by classification and by age group. Table A3.3 covers ongoing APS separations by classification.

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[109] Australian Public Service Commission. (2019). *APS employment data release*. Retrieved 10 October 2019 from https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-data-30-june-2019-release

Table A3.1: Ongoing APS engagements by classification, 2009–10 to 2018–19

Classification	2009 –10	2010 –11	2011 –12	2012 –13	2013 –14	2014 –15	2015 –16	2016 –17	2017 –18	2018 –19
Trainee	196	278	299	283	251	130	584	557	628	415
Graduate	1 225	1 494	1 398	1 237	1 152	1 037	1 434	1 483	1 238	1 175
APS 1	194	369	160	130	181	36	47	57	44	60
APS 2	429	707	458	271	281	151	486	457	182	177
APS 3	2 341	3 048	2 019	1 297	533	247	2 494	1 630	2 091	796
APS 4	1 322	1 767	1 768	1 222	462	141	2 019	1 544	1 518	1 573
APS 5	1 258	1 545	1 600	879	427	157	1 315	1 059	1 080	1 522
APS 6	1 665	1 875	1 832	1 148	673	241	1 320	1 302	1 205	1 633
EL 1	1 153	1 237	1 215	777	467	140	783	683	669	800
EL 2	466	441	437	346	185	57	358	294	271	324
SES 1	46	47	51	44	24	17	157	48	47	59
SES 2	25	16	26	13	12	10	31	17	26	19
SES 3	3	4	9	1	1	2	9	6	6	11
Total	**10 323**	**12 828**	**11 272**	**7 648**	**4 649**	**2 366**	**11 037**	**9 137**	**9 005**	**8 564**

Source: APSED

Table A3.2: Ongoing APS engagements by age group, 2009–10 to 2018–19

Age group (years)	2009 –10	2010 –11	2011 –12	2012 –13	2013 –14	2014 –15	2015 –16	2016 –17	2017 –18	2018 –19
Under 20	187	231	232	152	108	74	158	169	126	150
20–24	2 229	2 781	2 368	1 689	1 095	702	2 019	1 809	1 749	1 475
25–29	2 398	2 889	2 481	1 716	1 034	632	2 529	2 100	1 935	1 832
30–34	1 489	1 873	1 624	1 148	674	317	1 796	1 356	1 429	1 289
35–39	1 164	1 378	1 276	838	470	166	1 294	1 000	1 097	1 041
40–44	946	1 205	1 134	732	380	163	1 061	871	878	862
45–49	793	1 069	896	553	339	130	892	716	741	779
50–54	566	751	660	419	254	102	684	592	536	565
55–59	418	458	411	278	187	55	424	380	340	375
60 and over	133	193	190	123	108	25	180	144	174	196
Total	**10 323**	**12 828**	**11 272**	**7 648**	**4 649**	**2 366**	**11 037**	**9 137**	**9 005**	**8 564**

Source: APSED

In 2018–19 there were 12,100 ongoing separations (Table A3.3). The number of separations increased from 9,756 at 30 June 2017. Unlike engagements, separations have remained relatively steady over time.

Table A3.3: Ongoing APS separations by classification, 2009–10 to 2018–19

Classification	2009 –10	2010 –11	2011 –12	2012 –13	2013 –14	2014 –15	2015 –16	2016 –17	2017 –18	2018 –19
Trainee	26	36	52	40	44	38	59	61	75	119
Graduate	67	85	76	55	60	38	42	60	59	92
APS 1	137	143	135	123	100	85	59	61	69	51
APS 2	366	375	363	315	328	331	279	241	306	246
APS 3	1 837	1 575	1 452	1 235	1 273	1 139	991	1 190	1 219	1 047
APS 4	1 805	2 074	1 768	1 627	1 800	1 748	1 554	1 689	1 887	2 219
APS 5	1 259	1 465	1 436	1 354	1 422	1 391	1 285	1 434	1 479	1 785
APS 6	1 818	2 167	2 161	2 052	2 272	2 302	1 911	2 123	2 318	2 885
EL 1	1 467	1 588	1 842	1 736	2 375	2 191	2 275	1 756	1 733	2 224
EL 2	821	843	951	931	1 363	1 147	1 082	882	920	1 172
SES 1	129	119	130	142	188	170	178	174	159	179
SES 2	33	44	57	47	78	72	71	65	65	66
SES 3	11	14	15	15	13	13	14	20	18	15
Total	**9 776**	**10 528**	**10 438**	**9 672**	**11 316**	**10 665**	**9 800**	**9 756**	**10 307**	**12 100**

Source: APSED

Classification structures

At 30 June 2019, almost one-quarter of all APS employees were engaged at the APS 6 level. This continues a trend that began in 2011 after a lengthy period of the APS 4 level being the most common (Table A3.4).

Table A3.4: Number of APS employees by base classification at 30 June 2010 to 2019

Class	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Trainee	267	311	367	356	346	221	581	617	752	547
Grad	1 294	1 595	1 528	1 413	1 318	1 196	1 570	1 683	1 480	1 430
APS 1	2 944	2 692	4 010	5 262	4 945	4 351	3 899	2 907	2 795	3 203
APS 2	6 497	6 282	5 994	5 224	5 071	4 671	5 002	4 605	4 713	4 464
APS 3	24 115	22 477	20 909	20 468	19 204	19 401	20 767	18 426	17 223	15 433
APS 4	32 742	32 211	32 010	31 856	30 706	30 638	30 578	29 496	29 491	28 099
APS 5	21 571	22 181	22 547	22 243	21 241	20 671	20 932	21 231	20 845	20 584
APS 6	31 955	33 149	33 904	33 678	32 405	31 246	32 668	33 118	32 970	32 963
EL 1	26 846	28 443	29 539	29 308	27 568	25 852	25 485	25 546	25 661	26 009
EL 2	12 859	13 367	13 702	13 552	12 543	11 523	11 488	11 669	11 760	11 725
SES 1	1 986	2 033	2 096	2 055	1 919	1 822	1 964	1 977	2 023	2 051
SES 2	576	586	592	598	552	532	544	560	557	587
SES 3	137	144	140	132	121	116	125	119	125	142
Total	**163 789**	**165 471**	**167 338**	**166 145**	**157 939**	**152 240**	**155 603**	**151 954**	**150 395**	**147 237**

Source: APSED

Age profile

The average age of APS employees has increased steadily in the last decade. This mirrors the trend seen across the general Australian population and its workforce.

The proportion of the APS population aged 50 years of age or over has slightly increased, while the proportion of employees under the age of 30 has declined (Table A3.5).

Table A3.5: Number of APS employees by age group at 30 June 2010 to 2019

Age group (years)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Under 20	718	635	659	726	470	457	578	407	456	433
20–24	8 618	8 208	7 730	7 041	5 642	5 239	5 885	5 507	5 530	5 332
25–29	19 245	19 318	18 888	18 050	15 834	14 392	14 318	13 648	12 947	12 619
30–34	20 754	21 408	21 893	21 983	21 029	20 148	20 265	19 181	18 440	17 241
35–39	22 914	22 336	22 223	21 899	21 145	20 588	21 303	21 255	21 126	20 708
40–44	22 091	22 558	23 090	23 136	22 438	22 086	21 979	21 283	20 857	20 791
45–49	24 318	23 972	23 459	22 839	21 837	21 061	21 708	21 789	21 908	21 731
50–54	22 682	23 245	23 860	24 036	23 184	22 352	22 172	21 261	20 640	20 014
55–59	14 125	14 758	15 329	15 664	15 582	15 410	16 168	16 362	16 723	16 479
60 and over	8 324	9 033	10 207	10 771	10 778	10 507	11 227	11 261	11 768	11 889
Total	**163 789**	**165 471**	**167 338**	**166 145**	**157 939**	**152 240**	**155 603**	**151 954**	**150 395**	**147 237**

Source: APSED

Gender

The gender profile of the APS has been skewed towards females since 1999, when they became the majority of employees. However, in the last 10 years the proportion of female employees has grown from 57.8 per cent to 59.6 per cent (Table A3.6).

Table A3.6: Gender representation in the APS at 30 June 2010 to 2019

Gender	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Men	69 079	70 029	70 797	69 865	66 221	63 231	63 709	62 297	61 560	59 337
Women	94 694	95 426	96 523	96 258	91 694	88 984	91 867	89 630	88 787	87 826
Gender X	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	27	48	74

Source: APSED

Gender profile by classification

There remains a lower proportion of women at EL 2 and SES levels compared to men. However, the numbers at both levels continue to rise (Table A3.7).

Table A3.7: Gender representation by classification at 30 June 2010 to 2019

Class	Gender	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Trainee	Men	126	139	187	146	153	113	275	320	401	250
	Women	141	172	180	210	193	108	306	297	348	296
Grad	Men	616	793	778	657	678	628	791	830	748	739
	Women	678	802	750	754	640	568	779	852	731	688
APS 1	Men	970	989	1 332	1 833	1 728	1 453	1 220	967	944	1 003
	Women	1 974	1 703	2 678	3 429	3 217	2 898	2 679	1 940	1 851	2 199
APS 2	Men	2 186	2 127	2 226	1 948	1 930	1 802	1 977	1 837	1 875	1 774
	Women	4 309	4 153	3 767	3 275	3 141	2 869	3 025	2 768	2 836	2 686
APS 3	Men	8 347	7 834	7 079	6 908	6 442	6 506	7 002	6 239	5 832	5 300
	Women	15 767	14 642	13 828	13 557	12 757	12 890	13 760	12 181	11 377	10 103
APS 4	Men	9 994	9 717	9 780	9 920	9 553	9 576	9 389	9 059	9 192	8 737
	Women	22 742	22 489	22 223	21 930	21 145	21 053	21 181	20 429	20 283	19 348
APS 5	Men	8 988	9 195	9 254	9 060	8 605	8 321	8 342	8 382	8 169	7 905
	Women	12 582	12 984	13 292	13 181	12 634	12 348	12 588	12 849	12 674	1 2671
APS 6	Men	14 447	14 884	15 259	15 041	14 461	13 825	14 268	14 243	14 089	13 714
	Women	17 504	18 261	18 640	18 632	17 939	17 416	18 394	18 869	18 876	19 241
EL 1	Men	13 833	14 597	15 023	14 735	13 857	12 905	12 518	12 472	12 434	12 286
	Women	13 011	13 844	14 514	14 570	13 707	12 943	12 962	13 069	13 222	13 718
EL 2	Men	7 858	8 033	8 155	7 930	7 259	6 637	6 419	6 437	6 381	6 136
	Women	5 001	5 334	5 547	5 622	5 284	4 886	5 068	5 231	5 379	5 589
SES 1	Men	1 231	1 239	1 253	1 213	1 119	1 054	1 089	1 100	1 080	1 058
	Women	755	794	843	842	800	768	875	877	943	993
SES 2	Men	380	379	371	381	352	337	339	342	342	355
	Women	196	207	221	217	200	195	205	218	215	232
SES 3	Men	103	103	100	93	84	74	80	69	73	80
	Women	34	41	40	39	37	42	45	50	52	62

Source: APSED

Note: Data for employees identifying as Gender X was collected, however numbers are too small to be reported.

Appendix 4

SUPPORTING STATISTICS TO THE REPORT

This appendix presents additional data that supports the content included in the main chapters of this report.

Chapter 1: Institutional stewardship

Table A4.1 presents APS employee census results for a selection of items measuring APS employee perceptions about supervisor involvement in performance management processes in the past 12 months.

Table A4.1: APS employee perceptions of supervisor involvement in performance management processes

Question	Response	% of total
Received regular and timely feedback from your supervisor	Yes	82.5
	No	17.5
Received constructive feedback from your supervisor	Yes	83.9
	No	16.1
Your supervisor has checked in regularly with you to see how you are progressing	Yes	82.1
	No	17.9

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.2 presents APS employee census results for a selection of items measuring APS employee perceptions of performance management in the past 12 months.

Table A4.2: APS employee perceptions of performance management processes

Question	Response	% of total
To what extent do you agree that in the past 12 months, the performance expectations of your job were clear and unambiguous?	Agree	60.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	23.2
	Disagree	16.1
To what extent do you agree that the support by your supervisor has helped to improve your performance?	Agree	59.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	27.5
	Disagree	12.8
My overall experience of performance management in my agency has been useful for my development	Agree	47.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	31.5
	Disagree	20.6

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Chapter 2: Adapting to change

Table A4.3 presents APS employee census results for a selection of items measuring APS employee perceptions of change management in their agencies.

Table A4.3: APS employee perceptions of change management

Question	Response	% of total
Change is managed well in my agency	Agree	39.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	29.2
	Disagree	31.8
I generally find organisational change to be a positive process	Agree	50.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	33.3
	Disagree	15.7
People in my team are happy to implement change when required	Agree	62.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	26.4
	Disagree	11.2
Organisational change tends to improve our agency's efficiency	Agree	37.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	43.8
	Disagree	19.1

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.4 presents the 2019 APS employee census results for the individual elements of the innovation index.

Table A4.4: Results for individual elements of the innovation index

Question	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
I believe that one of my responsibilities is to continually look for new ways to improve the way we work	30.4	55.8	10.0	3.0	0.8
My immediate supervisor encourages me to come up with new or better ways of doing things	22.6	49.4	18.8	6.8	2.5
People are recognised for coming up with new and innovative ways of working	15.6	46.0	25.0	10.1	3.4
My agency inspires me to come up with new or better ways of doing things	11.4	37.3	33.3	13.6	4.5
My agency recognises and supports the notion that failure is a part of innovation	7.6	30.9	39.9	15.4	6.1

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.5 presents APS employee perceptions of the risk culture in their agencies.

Table A4.5: APS employee perceptions of risk culture in agencies

Question	Response	% of total
My agency supports employees to escalate risk-related issues with managers	Agree	70.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	23.1
	Disagree	6.9
Risk management concerns are discussed openly and honestly in my agency	Agree	59.5
	Neither agree nor disagree	28.5
	Disagree	12.1
My agency provides me with opportunities to develop and enhance my skills to manage risk effectively	Agree	52.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	34.0
	Disagree	13.9
Employees in my agency are encouraged to consider opportunities when managing risk	Agree	51.6
	Neither agree nor disagree	35.9
	Disagree	12.5
Appropriate risk taking is rewarded in my agency	Agree	25.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	49.2
	Disagree	25.7
In my agency, the benefits of risk management match the time required to complete risk management activities	Agree	29.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	52.2
	Disagree	18.6
SES in my agency demonstrate the importance of managing risk appropriately	Agree	42.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	41.0
	Disagree	16.1
When things go wrong, my agency uses this as an opportunity to learn	Agree	46.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	35.4
	Disagree	18.2
When appropriate risk taking results in failure, my immediate supervisor does not reprimand employees	Agree	46.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	45.4
	Disagree	8.7

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Chapter 3: A values-driven culture

Collaboration

In the 2019 APS employee census, EL and SES respondents were asked questions about engaging in collaboration. The results are presented in Table A4.6.

Table A4.6: EL and SES employees engaging in collaboration

Question	Response	% of EL	% of SES	% total
During the last 12 months, did you collaborate with people from other workgroups within your agency?	Yes	93.5	98.5	93.9
	No	6.5	1.5	6.1
During the last 12 months, did you collaborate with people from other APS or Commonwealth government agencies?	Yes	63.3	91.4	65.5
	No	36.7	8.6	34.5
During the last 12 months, did you collaborate with people from other levels of government or other external stakeholders?	Yes	60.4	84.8	62.3
	No	39.6	15.2	37.7

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Breaches of the APS Code of Conduct

Table A4.7 presents the number of APS employees investigated by agencies for suspected breaches of individual elements of the APS Code of Conduct and the number of breach findings in 2018–19. One employee can be investigated for multiple elements of the Code of Conduct of the PS Act.

Table A4.7: Number of APS employees investigated and found in breach of elements of the APS Code of Conduct

Element of Code of Conduct	Investigated	Breached
Behave honestly and with integrity in connection with APS employment (s. 13(1))	242	214
Act with care and diligence in connection with APS employment (s. 13(2))	174	149
When acting in connection with APS employment, treat everyone with respect and courtesy and without harassment (s. 13(3))	136	103
When acting in connection with APS employment comply with all applicable Australian laws (s. 13(4))	18	10
Comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the employee's agency who has authority to give the direction (s. 13(5))	161	140
Maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that the employee has with any minister or minister's member of staff (s. 13(6))	0	0
Take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) and disclose details of any material personal interest of the employee in connection with the employee's APS employment (s. 13(7))	47	41
Use Commonwealth resources in a proper manner and for a proper purpose (s. 13(8))	108	95
Not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes in connection with the employee's APS employment (s. 13(9))	46	40
Not make improper use of: inside information, or the employee's duties, status, power or authority in order to: a) gain or seek to gain a benefit or advantage for the employee or any other person or b) cause or seek to cause a detriment to the employee's agency, the Commonwealth or any other person (s. 13(10))	53	45
At all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and APS Employment Principles and the integrity and good reputation of the employee's agency and the APS (s. 13(11))	410	363
While on duty overseas at all times behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of Australia (s. 13(12))	5	4
Comply with any other conduct that is prescribed by the regulations (s. 13(13))	2	1

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Sources of reports

Table A4.8 presents the number of APS employees investigated for suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct during 2018–19 that resulted from each type of report.

Table A4.8: Type of reports leading to finalised APS Code of Conduct investigations

Type of report	Number of employees investigated
A report made to a central conduct or ethics unit or nominated person in a human resources area	224
A report generated by a compliance/monitoring system (for example, audit)	193
A report made to a fraud prevention and control unit or hotline	34
A report made to an email reporting address	21
A report made to another hotline	23
A Public Interest Disclosure	15
A report made to an employee advice or counselling unit	15
Other	11

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Outcomes of reports

Table A4.9 presents the outcomes for APS employees investigated for suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct during 2018–19.

Table A4.9: Outcome of investigations into suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct

Outcome	Number of employees investigated
Breach found and sanction applied	315
Breach found but no sanction applied—employee resigned prior to sanction decision	82
Breach found but no sanction applied—other reason	70
No breach found (for any element of the Code)	38
Investigation discontinued—employee resigned	14
Investigation discontinued—other reason	16

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Table A4.10 presents the sanctions applied to APS employees found to have breached the APS Code of Conduct during 2018–19.

Table A4.10: Sanctions imposed for breaches of the APS Code of Conduct

Sanction	Number of APS employees found to have breached the Code
Reprimand	197
Reduction in salary	98
Deduction from salary by way of a fine	89
Termination of employment	80
Reduction in classification	21
Re-assignment of duties	10

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Harassment and bullying

In the 2019 APS employee census, 13 per cent of respondents indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS employee census.

Table A4.11 presents the types of behaviour perceived by respondents.

Table A4.11: Type of harassment or bullying perceived by respondents

Type of behaviour	% of those who indicated that they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the census
Verbal abuse	49.1
Interference with work tasks	40.8
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules	37.5
Cyberbullying	7.4
Interference with your personal property or work equipment	5.6
Physical behaviour	5.3
Sexual harassment	3.7
Initiations or pranks	3.3
Other	20.9

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace. As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Table A4.12 presents the perceived source of the harassment or bullying indicated by respondents.

Table A4.12: Perceived source of harassment or bullying

Perceived source	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their workplace in the previous 12 months preceding the census
Co-worker	38.5
Someone more senior (other than your supervisor)	33.4
A previous supervisor	26.2
Your current supervisor	19.4
Someone more junior than you	9.6
Client, customer or stakeholder	3.7
Contractor	3.0
Consultant/service provider	1.1
Representative of another APS agency	0.7
Minister or ministerial adviser	0.4
Unknown	1.9

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Percentages are based on respondents who said they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace. As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Table A4.13 presents the reporting behaviour of respondents who had perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace in the 12 months preceding the APS employee census.

Table A4.13: Reporting behaviour of harassment or bullying

Reporting behaviour	% who perceived harassment or bullying in their workplace during the 12 months preceding the census
I reported the behaviour in accordance with my agency's policies and procedures	36.2
It was reported by someone else	8.5
I did not report the behaviour	55.3

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.14 presents the number of recorded complaints of harassment and bullying made by APS employees within APS agencies during 2018–19.

Table A4.14: Complaints to agencies about harassment and bullying

Type of harassment or bullying	Number of complaints
Verbal abuse	152
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules	93
Interference with work tasks	74
Sexual harassment	31
Cyberbullying	20
Physical behaviour	11
Interference with your personal property or work equipment	10
Initiations or pranks	1
Other	50

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Discrimination

In the 2019 APS employee census, 12.2 per cent of respondents indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the census and in the course of their employment.

Table A4.15 presents the types of the discrimination perceived by respondents during the 12 months preceding the census and in the course of their employment.

Table A4.15: Type of discrimination perceived by respondents

Category	% of those who indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the census and in the course of their employment
Gender	31.7
Age	26.8
Carer responsibilities	24.2
Race	19.7
Disability	13.9
Religion	5.5
LGBTI+ (for example, sexual orientation)	4.5
Identification as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person	3.7
Other	18.5

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Percentages are based on respondents who said they had perceived discrimination during the 12 months preceding the census and in the course of their employment. As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Corruption

Table A4.16 presents the proportion of respondents who, during the previous 12 months, had witnessed another APS employee within their agency engaging in behaviour they considered may be serious enough to be viewed as corruption.

Table A4.16: APS employee perceptions of corruption

Potential corruption witnessed	%
Yes	4.4
No	88.0
Not sure	5.0
Would prefer not to answer	2.6

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Of those who had witnessed potential corruption, the types of corruption are presented in Table A4.17.

Table A4.17: Type of potential corruption witnessed

Type of potential corruption witnessed	% who had witnessed potential corruption
Cronyism—preferential treatment of friends	69.3
Nepotism—preferential treatment of family members	25.1
Acting (or failing to act) in the presence of an undisclosed conflict of interest	22.8
Fraud, forgery or embezzlement	14.9
Green-lighting	9.5
Theft or misappropriation of official assets	7.1
Unlawful disclosure of government information	5.0
Perverting the course of justice	2.8
Bribery, domestic and foreign—obtaining, offering or soliciting secret commissions, kickbacks or gratuities	2.2
Blackmail	1.2
Insider trading	1.2
Colluding, conspiring with or harbouring, criminals	1.1
Other	12.1

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Percentages are based on respondents who said they witnessed potential corruption. As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Table A4.18 presents APS employee perceptions of workplace corruption risk.

Table A4.18: APS employee perceptions of workplace corruption risk

Type of workplace corruption risk	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
My workplace operates in a high corruption-risk environment (for example, it holds information, assets or decision-making powers of value to others)	67.2	18.4	14.4
My agency has procedures in place to manage corruption	84.3	13.4	2.3
It would be hard to get away with corruption in my workplace	70.5	20.9	8.6
I have a good understanding of the policies and procedures my agency has in place to deal with corruption	77.2	16.4	6.4
I am confident that colleagues in my workplace would report corruption	80.8	14.4	4.8
I feel confident that I would know what to do if I identified corruption in my workplace	83.0	12.1	4.9

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Chapter 4: Diversity and inclusion

Table A4.19 presents the proportion of APS employees belonging to each diversity group.

Table A4.19: Proportion of APS employees by diversity group, 2010 to 2019

Diversity group	2010 (%)	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)	2017 (%)	2018 (%)	2019 (%)
Women	57.8	57.7	57.7	57.9	58.1	58.4	59	59	59	59.6
Indigenous	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
People with disability	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7
Non-English speaking background	13.6	14.1	14.4	14.5	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.6	14.6	14.5

Source: APSED

In the 2019 APS agency survey, agencies were asked to rate the implementation of initiatives in three Australian Government diversity strategies (tables A4.20, A4.21 and A4.22). They were asked to do so against five levels of practice, defined here:

- Level 1—Practices are applied inconsistently and/or unskilfully and have a poor level of acceptance.
- Level 2—Practices are performed and managed with some skill and consistency, and a focus on compliance.
- Level 3—Practices are defined, familiar, shared and skilfully performed.
- Level 4—Practices are embedded and seen as a part of daily work and as adding real value to work.
- Level 5—Practices are continuously improved and leveraged for organisational outcomes.

Table A4.20: Percentage of agency self-reporting—implementation of initiatives in *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19*

Initiative	Level 1 (%)	Level 2 (%)	Level 3 (%)	Level 4 (%)	Level 5 (%)	Average rating
Driving a supportive and enabling culture	5.2	15.5	28.9	35.1	15.5	3.40
Gender equality in APS leadership	4.1	16.5	25.8	38.1	15.5	3.44
Innovation to embed gender equality in employment practices	10.3	15.5	36.1	32.0	6.2	3.08
Increased take-up of flexible work arrangements by men and women	3.1	15.5	34.0	34.0	13.4	3.39
Measurement and evaluation	12.4	23.7	32.0	22.7	9.3	2.93

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Table A4.21: Percentage of agency self-reporting—implementation of initiatives in the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015–18*

Initiative	Level 1 (%)	Level 2 (%)	Level 3 (%)	Level 4 (%)	Level 5 (%)	Average rating
Expand the range of Indigenous employment opportunities	15.5	39.2	25.8	13.4	6.2	2.56
Invest in developing the capability of Indigenous employees	24.7	23.7	24.7	23.7	3.1	2.57
Increase the representation of Indigenous employees in senior roles	37.1	34.0	18.6	7.2	3.1	2.05
Foster the awareness of Indigenous culture in the workplace	9.3	22.7	23.7	30.9	13.4	3.16

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Table A4.22: Percentage of agency self-reporting—implementation of initiatives in the *As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016–19*

Initiative	Level 1 (%)	Level 2 (%)	Level 3 (%)	Level 4 (%)	Level 5 (%)	Average rating
Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability	23.7	28.9	26.8	18.6	2.1	2.46
Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability	25.8	30.9	26.8	14.4	2.1	2.36
Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles	38.1	33.0	19.6	8.2	1.0	2.01
Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace	7.2	22.7	34.0	26.8	9.3	3.08

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Table A4.23 presents the percentage of APS agencies with plans, strategies and/or policies in place during 2018–19.

Table A4.23: Percentage of agency self-reporting—action plans, strategies and/or policies

Action plan, strategy and/or policy	% of agencies with plan in place
Flexible working arrangements	94.8
Return to work	82.5
Disability/reasonable adjustment	73.2
Reconciliation Action Plan	64.9
Domestic and family violence	64.9
Gender equality	58.8
Overarching inclusion	57.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	56.7
Carer responsibilities	54.6
Breastfeeding in the workplace/lactation break guidance	54.6
Mental health (if not included in disability)	49.5
LGBTI+	40.2
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)	37.1
Multigenerational/specific age groups	18.6
Other	21.6
None	1.0

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

Chapter 5: Enabling the current and future workforce

Attraction and retention

2019 APS employee census respondents who reported that their total length of service in the APS was less than one year were asked what attracted them to work in the APS. Table A4.24 presents the reported reasons.

Table A4.24: Reasons for joining the APS

Reason	%
Employment conditions	62.8
The work aligned with my job skills and/or experience	59.8
Type of work offered	59.7
Long-term career progression	58.4
Security and stability	58.2
Service to the general public	51.5
Geographical location	33.6
Remuneration	28.7
Other	4.8

Source: 2019 APS employee census

As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Table A4.25 presents the proportion of respondents who indicated they had applied for a job during the 12 months preceding the APS employee census.

Table A4.25: Applications for another job during the 12 months preceding the 2019 APS employee census

Response	%
Had not applied for a job	48.2
Had applied for a job in their agency	38.0
Had applied for a job in another APS agency	18.2
Had applied for a job outside the APS	12.2

Source: 2019 APS employee census

As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Table A4.26 presents respondents' intention to leave their agency.

Table A4.26: Intention to leave

Response	%
I want to leave my agency as soon as possible	5.9
I want to leave my agency within the next 12 months	9.0
I want to leave my agency within the next 12 months but feel it will be unlikely in the current environment	9.6
I want to stay working for my agency for the next one to two years	25.0
I want to stay working for my agency for at least the next three years	50.5

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.27 presents the reasons provided by respondents for wanting to leave their agency as soon as possible or within the next 12 months.

Table A4.27: Primary reason for wanting to leave current agency

Reason	% of respondents who wanted to leave their agency as soon as possible or within the next 12 months
There is a lack of future career opportunities in my agency	24.5
I want to try a different type of work or I'm seeking a career change	12.5
Senior leadership is of a poor quality	8.2
I am in an unpleasant working environment	7.6
I am not satisfied with the work	6.1
I am intending to retire	5.6
I am looking to further my skills in another area	5.3
I can receive a higher salary elsewhere	4.9
My agency lacks respect for employees	4.8
My expectations for work in my agency have not been met	3.2
I want to live elsewhere—within Australia or overseas	2.6
I have achieved all I can in my agency	1.9
I am not able to access the flexible working arrangements that I require	1.9
My personal values do not align with that of my agency	1.6
Other	9.2

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Data capability

Table A4.28 presents the actions taken by APS agencies to improve APS employee data literacy capability.

Table A4.28: Agency actions to improve APS employee data literacy capability

Action	% of agencies
Ensured employee access to on-the-job learning and development opportunities	84.5
Ensured employee access to formal training	77.3
Establishment/ongoing involvement of data community of practice networks	53.6
Establishment/ongoing involvement of data management committees	48.5
Access to a data champion within the agency	48.5
Other	17.5
No action	5.2

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

As agencies could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Table A4.29 presents the barriers to agency use of data reported by APS agencies.

Table A4.29: Agency barriers to the use of data

Barriers	% of agencies
Legacy systems/data storage methods	77.3
Skills/capability	73.2
Funding	53.6
Organisational maturity	53.6
Privacy-related issues	38.1
Insufficient access to relevant data	37.1
Other	15.5
No barriers	5.2

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

As agencies could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Flexible work

Table A4.30 presents the percentage of 2019 APS employee census respondents using flexible working arrangements, by classification.

Table A4.30: Percentage of APS employees using flexible working arrangements, by classification

Response	APS 1–6 (%)	EL (%)	SES (%)	Other (%)
Yes	52.7	52.0	40.1	43.4
No	47.3	48.0	59.9	56.6

Source: 2019 APS employee census.

'Other' includes APS trainees and graduates.

Table A4.31 presents the reasons for respondents not using flexible working arrangements.

Table A4.31: Reasons for not using flexible working arrangements, by classification

Reason	APS 1–6 (%)	EL (%)	SES (%)	Other (%)
My agency does not have a flexible working arrangement policy	4.8	1.5	0.6	0.9
My agency's culture is not conducive to flexible working arrangements	11.5	12.4	7.2	3.6
Lack of technical support (for example, remote access)	5.0	4.8	1.0	3.9
Absence of necessary hardware (for example, phone, computer, internet)	4.8	4.1	0.8	6.4
The operational requirements of my role (for example, rostered or otherwise scheduled work environment such as shift work)	14.7	14.4	18.7	9.1
Management discretion	15.0	12.4	4.2	8.8
Resources and staffing limits	15.2	20.3	14.4	4.5
Potential impact on my career	9.6	13.4	8.5	11.2
Personal and/or financial reasons	9.9	7.2	4.1	4.1
I would be letting my workgroup down	10.2	16.7	14.3	7.4
I do not need to	61.3	60.4	68.9	82.4

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Percentages are based on respondents who said they were not using flexible working arrangements. As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total to 100 per cent. 'Other' includes APS trainees and graduates.

Table A4.32 presents the types of work arrangements used by respondents.

Table A4.32: Types of work arrangements being used, by classification

Type	APS 1–6 (%)	EL (%)	SES (%)	Other (%)
Part time	19.1	14.2	5.0	5.2
Flexible hours of work	40.3	35.5	23.5	50.0
Compressed work week	1.9	3.8	2.1	1.2
Job sharing	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.9
Working remotely and/or virtual team	5.3	10.3	11.3	3.2
Working away from the office and/or working from home	14.8	37.1	37.0	8.3
Purchasing additional leave	7.2	7.0	4.0	3.7
Breastfeeding facilities and/or paid lactation breaks	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.7
Return to work arrangements	1.8	1.2	1.0	1.3
None of the above	38.6	37.2	49.6	43.3

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Percentages are based on respondents who said they were using flexible working arrangements.
As respondents could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent. 'Other' includes APS trainees and graduates.

Table A4.33 presents 2019 APS employee census results for questions on support for using flexible working arrangements.

Table A4.33: Support for using flexible working arrangements, by classification

Question	Response	APS 1–6 (%)	EL (%)	SES (%)	Other (%)
My supervisor actively supports the use of flexible work arrangements by all staff, regardless of gender	Agree	81.6	85.0	89.1	91.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	11.6	10.1	8.8	5.7
	Disagree	6.8	4.9	2.0	2.6
My SES manager actively supports the use of flexible work arrangements by all staff, regardless of gender	Agree	57.5	71.6	88.4	76.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	34.3	22.6	9.5	21.5
	Disagree	8.2	5.8	2.1	1.6

Source: 2019 APS employee census

'Other' includes APS trainees and graduates.

Table A4.34 presents the percentage of APS agencies that made each type of flexible work available to their employees.

Table A4.34: Agency availability of flexible working arrangements, by type

Type	% of agencies offering flexible working arrangements
Part-time work agreements	100
Work from home/remote work arrangements	99.0
Individual flexibility arrangements	96.9
Purchased leave schemes	96.9
Flex leave	96.9
Non-standard working hours	92.8
Breastfeeding/lactation breaks	79.4
Job-share arrangements	77.3
Career break or sabbatical schemes	60.8
Other	25.8

Source: 2019 APS agency survey

As agencies could select more than one option, percentages may not total 100 per cent.

Employee engagement

Table A4.35 presents the 2019 APS employee census results for the components of the Say, Stay, Strive employee engagement model.

Table A4.35: APS employee engagement—components of the Say, Stay, Strive employee engagement model

Component	Question	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
Say	Considering everything, I am satisfied with my job	16.8	53.7	16.9	9.2	3.3
	I am proud to work in my agency	24.6	49.6	17.9	5.7	2.2
	I would recommend my agency as a good place to work	16.6	47.5	22.1	8.9	4.8
	I believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of my agency	27.6	54.8	13.9	2.8	1.0
Stay	I feel a strong personal attachment to my agency	19.4	45.8	22.0	9.9	2.9
	I feel committed to my agency's goals	19.8	59.0	16.8	3.2	1.2
Strive	I suggest ideas to improve our way of doing things	22.4	61.6	13.0	2.5	0.6
	I am happy to go the 'extra mile' at work when required	37.1	54.2	6.1	1.8	0.8
	I work beyond what is required in my job to help my agency achieve its objectives	25.8	53.8	16.4	3.2	0.8
	My agency really inspires me to do my best work every day	12.3	40.4	31.3	11.6	4.4

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Wellbeing

Table A4.36 presents the 2019 APS employee census results for the individual elements of the wellbeing index.

Table A4.36: Wellbeing index items

Question	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
I am satisfied with the policies and/or practices in place to help me manage my health and wellbeing	14.4	55.1	20.0	7.8	2.6
My agency does a good job of communicating what it can offer me in terms of health and wellbeing	13.2	49.2	23.6	11.0	3.0
My agency does a good job of promoting health and wellbeing	13.6	47.7	24.7	10.8	3.2
I think my agency cares about my health and wellbeing	13.2	44.7	25.3	11.3	5.5
I believe my immediate supervisor cares about my health and wellbeing	34.0	48.2	11.8	3.7	2.4

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Chapter 6: Building leaders

Organisational leadership

The 2019 APS employee census provided respondents with an opportunity to share their perceptions of leadership in their agencies. This included perceptions of their immediate SES manager (Table A4.37), the broader SES leadership team in their agency (Table 4.38) and their immediate supervisor (Table A4.39).

Table A4.37: APS employee perceptions of immediate SES manager

Question	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
My SES manager is of a high quality	67.7	24.1	8.2
My SES manager is sufficiently visible (for example, can be seen in action)	65.4	19.7	14.8
My SES manager communicates effectively	65.7	21.9	12.5
My SES manager engages with staff on how to respond to future challenges	61.9	25.1	13.0
My SES manager gives their time to identify and develop talented people	47.7	36.2	16.4
My SES manager ensures that work effort contributes to the strategic direction of the agency and the APS	66.8	25.6	7.6
My SES manager effectively leads and manages change	59.6	27.9	12.5
My SES manager encourages innovation and creativity	61.8	29.1	9.1
My SES manager actively supports people of diverse backgrounds	68.1	28.0	3.9
My SES manager actively supports opportunities for women to access leadership roles	63.8	31.8	4.5
My SES manager actively supports the use of flexible work arrangements by all staff, regardless of gender	62.9	29.9	7.2
My SES manager clearly articulates the direction and priorities for our area	64.8	24.3	10.9
My SES manager regularly engages with staff about decisions and priorities of the workgroup	60.2	25.8	14.0

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.38: APS employee perceptions of agency SES leadership

Question	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
In my agency, the SES are sufficiently visible (for example, can be seen in action)	55.2	23.8	21.0
In my agency, communication between the SES and other employees is effective	48.9	29.6	21.6
In my agency, the SES actively contribute to the work of our agency	63.9	25.9	10.2
In my agency, the SES are of a high quality	56.2	31.2	12.6
In my agency, the SES supports and provides opportunities for new ways of working in a digital environment	54.1	32.4	13.5
In my agency, the SES work as a team	45.9	38.3	15.7
In my agency, the SES clearly articulate the direction and priorities for our agency	57.5	28.6	14.3

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.39: APS employee perceptions of immediate supervisors

Question	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
My supervisor actively supports people from diverse backgrounds	85.6	11.8	2.6
My supervisor treats people with respect	87.8	7.2	4.9
My supervisor communicates effectively	79.1	11.0	9.9
My supervisor encourages me to contribute ideas	83.7	10.0	6.3
My supervisor invites a range of views, including those different to their own	79.8	12.3	7.9
My supervisor displays resilience when faced with difficulties or failures	80.1	13.2	6.8
My supervisor maintains composure under pressure	80.2	12.6	7.2
I have a good immediate supervisor	82.3	10.7	7.0
My supervisor gives me responsibility and holds me to account for what I deliver	85.9	9.7	4.5
My supervisor challenges me to consider new ways of doing things	74.9	16.9	8.2
My supervisor actively supports the use of flexible work arrangements by all staff, regardless of gender	82.9	11.0	6.1

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Chapter 7: Assessing and developing capability

Degree of APS mobility

Table A4.40 presents 2019 APS employee census results for questions relating to employee mobility.

Table A4.40: Agency support for APS employee mobility

Question	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
My agency provides opportunities for mobility within my agency (for example, temporary transfers)	54.8	29.7	15.5
My agency provides opportunities for mobility outside my agency (for example, secondments and temporary transfers)	28.7	45.5	25.7
My immediate supervisor actively supports opportunities for mobility	47.4	40.4	12.1

Source: 2019 APS employee census

Table A4.41 presents the transfers of ongoing APS employees between types of APS agencies during 2018–19.

Table A4.41: Mobility by agency type

	Agency type moved to				
Agency type moved from	**Regulatory (%)**	**Larger operational (%)**	**Smaller operational (%)**	**Specialist (%)**	**Policy (%)**
Regulatory	22.6	26.5	2.2	10.6	38.1
Larger operational	8.6	37.7	5.1	7.7	41.0
Smaller operational	7.3	36.4	6.1	10.3	40.0
Specialist	9.7	29.4	3.9	14.1	42.9
Policy	5.4	27.6	2.9	8.8	55.2
Proportion of total employee movement	8.2	32.2	4.0	9.0	46.6

Source: APSED

Table A4.42 presents the number of ongoing APS employees who moved between locations during 2018–19.

Table A4.42: Mobility by location

Location moved from	Location moved to									Total
	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	Overseas	
Australian Capital Territory	.	625	629	361	215	103	52	45	459	2489
New South Wales	580	.	153	146	45	44	10	6	20	1004
Victoria	455	145	.	96	74	58	26	11	36	901
Queensland	286	117	102	.	17	43	16	32	12	625
South Australia	150	37	81	44	.	18	5	2	16	353
Western Australia	104	34	64	41	22	.	5	13	5	288
Tasmania	41	3	31	13	6	9	.	2	.	105
Northern Territory	66	10	20	45	11	14	2	.	1	169
Overseas	457	15	26	19	18	5	.	3	.	543
Total	**2139**	**986**	**1106**	**765**	**408**	**294**	**116**	**114**	**549**	**6477**

Source: APSED

Appendix 5

UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE

The APSC remains committed to managing workplace absence and collects data from APS agencies on personal and miscellaneous leave use. This appendix reports on unscheduled absence.

The unscheduled absence rate has remained relatively stable over the last five years (Table A5.1).

Table A5.1: Unscheduled absence, 2014–15 to 2018–19

Year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Rate (days)	11.6	11.5	11.4	11.4	11.4

Table A5.2 shows unscheduled absence rate by agency size 2018–19. The unscheduled absence rate by agency size has remained relatively stable from 2017–18.

Table A5.2: Unscheduled absence by agency size, 2017–18 and 2018–19

Agency size	Unscheduled absence 2017–18 (days)	Unscheduled absence 2018–19 (days)
Small agencies	10.5	10.7
Medium agencies	11.9	11.6
Large agencies	12.5	12.7
Overall APS	11.4	11.4

Table A5.3 provides personal and miscellaneous leave use and unscheduled absence data by individual agency.

Table A5.3: Sick leave, carer's leave, miscellanous leave and unscheduled absence rate by agency, 2017–18 and 2018–19 (expressed as average number of days)

Agency name	Sick leave 2018–19	Carer's leave 2018–19	Miscellaneous leave 2018–19	Total unscheduled absence rate 2018–19	Total unscheduled absence rate 2017–18
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	12.3	1.4	0.5	14.2	13.9
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	8.7	1.8	2.9	13.5	13.8
Agriculture	11.5	2.7	0.4	14.5	14.0
Attorney-General's	8.6	2.2	0.3	11.1	9.5
Australian Building and Construction Commission	9.1	1.8	0.2	11.1	10.4
Australian Bureau of Statistics	9.0	2.4	0.5	12.0	12.3
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	5.7	2.1	0.2	8.1	9.2
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission	4.8	1.9	0.0	6.8	10.2
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	9.2	1.6	0.3	11.2	8.4
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	9.9	3.2	0.7	13.8	12.8
Australian Communications and Media Authority	9.6	2.5	0.4	12.4	11.2
Australian Competition Consumer Commission	7.0	1.7	0.4	9.1	8.1
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	8.7	2.5	0.3	11.4	12.7
Australian Digital Health Agency	14.2	1.9	0.9	17.0	11.5
Australian Electoral Commission	8.2	2.0	0.4	10.6	14.9
Australian Financial Security Authority	9.6	2.2	0.3	12.1	12.5
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	8.2	2.9	0.4	11.6	15.7
Australian Human Rights Commission	5.5	2.2	0.4	8.0	7.3

Agency name	Sick leave 2018–19	Carer's leave 2018–19	Miscellaneous leave 2018–19	Total unscheduled absence rate 2018–19	Total unscheduled absence rate 2017–18
Australian Inst. of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies	9.0	2.7	0.6	12.3	13.4
Australian Institute of Family Studies	5.0	6.2	0.1	11.3	10.2
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	8.2	2.4	0.7	11.3	11.5
Australian National Audit Office	7.6	1.9	0.3	9.8	10.6
Australian National Maritime Museum	6.6	1.7	0.8	9.2	9.2
Australian Office of Financial Management	5.1	3.3	0.3	8.7	9.0
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	8.6	2.7	0.6	11.9	15.5
Australian Public Service Commission	7.6	3.0	0.3	10.9	10.8
Australian Radiation Protection & Nuclear Safety Agency	8.0	2.4	0.1	10.5	10.6
Australian Research Council	9.1	5.5	1.8	16.4	12.8
Australian Securities and Investments Commission	6.6	1.5	0.4	8.6	9.4
Australian Skills Quality Authority	9.2	1.3	0.2	10.7	12.5
Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority*	5.4	1.4	0.2	6.9	5.6
Australian Taxation Office	9.3	2.2	0.4	11.9	11.6
Australian Trade Commission	7.9	1.9	0.3	10.0	9.9
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	6.0	2.0	0.2	8.2	10
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	7.4	2.0	0.4	9.8	9.3
Australian War Memorial	7.9	2.2	0.3	10.5	10.4
Bureau of Meteorology	7.2	2.5	0.2	9.9	11
Cancer Australia*	7.7	1.2	0.3	9.2	6.6
Clean Energy Regulator	12.9	2.7	1.2	16.8	13.2
Comcare	13.7	2.3	0.7	16.7	15.6
Commonwealth Grants Commission	4.9	2.1	0.2	7.2	11.3

Agency name	**Sick leave 2018–19**	**Carer's leave 2018–19**	**Miscellaneous leave 2018–19**	**Total unscheduled absence rate 2018–19**	**Total unscheduled absence rate 2017–18**
Commonwealth Ombudsman	8.4	2.4	0.4	11.2	13.1
Communications and the Arts	9	2.5	0.4	11.9	11.4
Defence	10.7	2.3	0.3	13.3	12.9
Defence Housing Australia	8.1	2.3	0.3	10.7	11.5
Digital Transformation Agency	8.7	1.6	0.3	10.6	8.8
Director of Public Prosecutions	4.1	1.7	0.1	5.9	10.6
Education	10.6	3.0	0.4	14.1	13.6
Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business	10.3	3.0	0.3	13.6	13.7
Environment and Energy	9.5	2.0	0.4	12.0	12.1
Fair Work Commission*	7.1	1.3	0.7	9.2	9.9
Federal Court Statutory Agency	8.2	1.4	0.4	10.0	9.7
Finance	9.4	2.9	0.3	12.7	13.1
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	5.6	2.3	0.4	8.2	10.3
Foreign Affairs and Trade	7.8	2.4	0.2	10.3	10.1
Future Fund Management Agency	3.1	1.2	0.5	4.8	4.8
Geoscience Australia	7.5	2.4	0.2	10.1	11.0
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	8.3	3.0	4.3	15.6	11.5
Health	10.2	2.0	0.6	12.8	13.6
Home Affairs	11.9	3.2	0.6	15.7	15.0
IP Australia	9.7	2.8	0.2	12.7	12.1
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	12.1	2.7	0.1	14.9	13.6
Industry, Innovation and Science	9.0	1.8	0.2	11.0	10.9
Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development	9.2	2.3	0.3	11.8	13.1
Murray-Darling Basin Authority	8.6	3.2	0.3	12.1	11.9

Agency name	**Sick leave 2018–19**	**Carer's leave 2018–19**	**Miscellaneous leave 2018–19**	**Total unscheduled absence rate 2018–19**	**Total unscheduled absence rate 2017–18**
Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House	9.9	1.8	0.5	12.2	10.5
National Archives of Australia	12.4	3.1	0.2	15.7	17.1
National Blood Authority	7.6	1.4	0.3	9.3	10.4
National Capital Authority	7.2	2.5	1.9	11.6	12.2
National Disability Insurance Agency	10.6	2.0	0.7	13.3	12.8
National Film and Sound Archive	11.8	3.0	0.4	15.2	13.5
National Health Funding Body	7.5	1.9	0.4	9.8	9.9
National Health and Medical Research Council	8.7	2.2	0.2	11.1	10.9
National Library of Australia	11.0	2.7	0.4	14.2	14.1
National Museum of Australia	11.1	2.2	0.3	13.6	14.3
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	7.9	1.4	0.4	9.7	9.9
National Portrait Gallery	8.3	3.0	0.5	11.7	10.5
Office of National Intelligence	4.3	2.2	0.4	6.9	8.1
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	10.2	2.4	0.5	13.1	13.5
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	9.6	2.2	0.2	12.0	10.6
Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman	10.3	2.4	0.3	13.0	12.6
Office of the Inspector-General of Taxation	5.2	0.8	0.2	6.2	5.5
Organ and Tissue Authority	7.4	1.4	0.5	9.3	10.4
Prime Minister and Cabinet	10.6	2.5	0.4	13.4	13.6
Productivity Commission	7.5	2.2	0.7	10.3	8.9
Royal Australian Mint	11.7	2.4	0.4	14.5	8.0
Safe Work Australia	9.5	2.5	0.4	12.3	11.6
Services Australia	13.3	2.4	0.6	16.4	16.1
Social Services	10.8	2.5	0.3	13.6	13.4
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	4.7	1.1	0.3	6.1	8.7
Torres Strait Regional Authority	6.3	2.2	1.3	9.9	8.8

Agency name	**Sick leave 2018–19**	**Carer's leave 2018–19**	**Miscellaneous leave 2018–19**	**Total unscheduled absence rate 2018–19**	**Total unscheduled absence rate 2017–18**
Treasury	7.6	1.8	0.3	9.7	9.9
Veterans' Affairs	12.9	2.3	0.3	15.5	13.8
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	8.4	1.0	0.6	10.0	8.4

**Agency provided headcount (not full time equivilent) data to be used in calculating unscheduled absence rates.*

GLOSSARY

Term	Description
2019 APS agency survey	The 2019 APS agency survey, conducted from 24 June to 9 August 2019, collected human resources data and workforce metrics from APS agencies with more than 20 APS employees.
2019 APS employee census	The 2019 APS employee census conducted from 6 May to 7 June 2019 collected information on attitudes and opinions of APS employees.
Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration	This report was presented to the Australian Government in March 2010 and seeks to reform government administration through suggested improvements to services, programs and policies.
APS agency	An APS agency operates under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). This includes departments, statutory agencies and executive agencies. APS agencies are a subset of Commonwealth agencies. A list of APS agencies is available at https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-agency-listing-agencies-covered-public-service-act-1999
APS employee	An APS employee is an employee engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). Contractors are not considered employees.
APS Values	The APS Values are set out in Section 10 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). The APS Values articulate the Parliament's expectations of public servants in terms of their performance and standards of behaviour. The values are: impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.
APSED	The Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) stores the employment data of all current and former APS employees. It is maintained by the Australian Public Service Commission and the data is supplied to APSED from the human resources systems of APS agencies.
Capability Review Program	The Capability Review Program is a program of forward looking, whole-of-agency reviews that assessed the capability of agencies to meet future objectives and challenges. The reviews were conducted by the APSC between 2012 and 2015 and focused on leadership, strategy and delivery capabilities.
Code of Conduct	The Code of Conduct is set out in Section 13 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). It defines how APS employees are expected to act, for example, employees should behave honestly and with integrity, and employees should use Commonwealth resources in a proper manner and for proper purpose.
Commissioner's Directions	The *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016* are made under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth) and reflect recent reviews in public administration. The directions prescribe standards with which agency heads and APS employees must comply to meet their obligations under the Act. In 2019, the Commissioner updated parts of the directions.
Commonwealth agency	Commonwealth agencies include all agencies under the Commonwealth of Australia, including those not covered under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth).
Coombs Royal Commission	The Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, led by Herbert Coombs, released its final report in 1976. Many of its recommendations were implemented and it created large-scale transformation of the APS.
Employee engagement	Employee engagement is the extent to which employees are motivated, inspired and enabled to improve an organisation's outcomes. It is the emotional connection and commitment employees have to working for their organisation.
Employment Principles	The APS Employment Principles are set out in Section 10A in the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). These principles define how the APS should act as an employer, for example, engagement and promotion should happen as a result of merit and the workplace should be free from discrimination.

Term	Description
Engagement	An engagement refers to the engagement or re-engagement of staff under Section 22 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). Employees of agencies moving into coverage of the Act are counted as engagements.
Independent Review of the APS	In 2018, the then Prime Minister commissioned an independent review of the APS. It was led by David Thodey AO. An interim report was released in March 2019, entitled *Priorities for Change*. The Australian Government was presented with a final report in September 2019. At the time of writing the 2018–19 *State of the Service Report*, the Independent Review of the APS's final report has not been made public.
Learning from Failure: Why large government policy initiatives have gone so badly wrong in the past and how the chances of success in the future can be improved	Written by former Australian Public Service Commissioner, Peter Shergold, this report examines how the Government can learn from past failures and methods to reduce risk while still being innovative.
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex +. The '+' is used after the acronym 'LGBTI' to include people who identify having diverse sexualities and genders but who do not fit into the categories defined by 'LGBTI'. A longer acronym that defines more groups is available at diversityaustralia.com.au
Median	A measure of central tendency, found by arranging values in order and then selecting the one in the middle.
Non-ongoing	Non-ongoing employment is a generic term which refers to the engagement of APS employees for either a specified term or for the duration of a specified task or for duties that are irregular or intermittent as mentioned in sections 22(2)(b) and (c) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth).
Older worker	An employee aged 50 years or older. This classification, as recommended by the Australian Human Rights Commission, acknowledges that Australians can work as long as they want. This is aligned with the practices of other industrialised nations.
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development is an international organisation founded in 1961. It aims to find evidence-based solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges.
Ongoing	Ongoing employment refers to the employment of an APS employee as an ongoing employee as mentioned in Section 22(2) (a) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth).
Priorities for Change	*Priorities for Change* is the interim report published by the Independent Review of the APS in March 2019.
Roadmap for reform	The Government's roadmap for reform, as outlined in the 2018–19 Budget Paper No. 4.
Secretaries Board	The Secretaries Board was established by the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth) to set the direction for the APS, drive collaboration and draw together advice from senior government leaders, business and the community. It is made up of secretaries from each APS department and the Australian Public Service Commissioner. Currently the Director-General of the Office of National Intelligence also sits on the board.
Separation	A separation occurs when an employee ceases to be employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth). It does not refer to employees moving from one APS agency to another.

ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANZSOG	Australia and New Zealand School of Government
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
APSED	Australian Public Service Employment Database
ARC	APS Reform Committee
ASADA	Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority
Austrade	Australian Trade and Investment Commission
AWEI	Australian Workplace Equality Index
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
Commissioner	Australian Public Service Commissioner
DTA	Digital Transformation Agency
EL	Executive Level
FDV	Family and Domestic Violence
GENIE	Gender Equality Network, Inclusion for Everyone
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
InCiSE	International Civil Service Effectiveness Index
IPEA	Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
L&D	Learning and Development
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGPA Act	*Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cwlth)
PS Act	*Public Service Act 1999* (Cwlth)

Term	Description
Qld	Queensland
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
SA	South Australia
SES	Senior Executive Service
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
The Code	The APS Code of Conduct
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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