

Deputy Secretaries Talent Council - Terms of Reference

Objective

The Deputy Secretaries Talent Council (DSTC) operates as a sub-committee of the Secretaries Talent Council (STC). It supports the creation of a strong and diverse pipeline of leaders with the potential to fill senior leadership role across policy, program and service delivery, and regulatory functions. The DSTC contributes to an APS whose senior leaders represent the diversity of the broader Australian community.

Scope

The Council focuses on the assessment and development of exceptional Band 1s and 2s who may have potential for the most senior roles in the future. The Council:

- Offers objective advice and guidance on the systematic management of talent for the benefit of the whole APS;
- Ensures its activities are aligned with current and future APS needs and objectives;
- Adopts cross-APS approaches for development of talented Band 1s and 2s; and
- Increases the exposure of talented Band 1s and 2s to relevant senior leaders and strategic issues.

In ensuring a targeted focus on those with the highest potential for more senior roles in the future, the Council establishes and manages a talent pool, with varying levels of support for individuals depending on their needs and stage of career development. The *Talent Pool Approach* (**Attachment A**) recognises that individuals are likely to move towards realising their potential at different rates, requiring different levels of Council support over time.

Key activities and deliverables

The Deputy Secretaries Talent Council works in alignment with the STC, in support of an annual systematic approach to SES talent management across the APS. This includes:

1. Overseeing rigorous and objective talent identification of Band 1s and 2s

- Provide support to Secretaries and agencies to manage high potential nomination processes;
- Determine the approach and target areas for formal assessment of potential in Band 1s and 2s;
- Establish a talent pool of Band 1s and 2s based on objective data; and
- Manage unconscious bias and meet diversity expectations in assessment processes.

2. Supporting Band 1 and 2 talent development

- Provide guidance on development plans to prepare talented Band 1s and 2s for more complex, senior roles;
- Ensure development is aligned with APS needs and objectives, and talented Band 1s and 2s are encouraged to broaden their experience in areas the STC consider critical to success at the most senior levels; and
- Identify mobility and mentoring opportunities for talented Band 1s and 2s.

3. Managing talent engagement

- Support engagement activities for the Talent Pool.

4. Overseeing talent referral and deployment

- Identify opportunities to deploy talented Band 1s and 2s into acting arrangements or critical roles at level, aligned with their development and ambition;
- Refer Band 2s with general or specific potential for Secretary or Agency Head roles to the STC to support the annual update of the APS Talent Compendium; and
- Support the APS Commissioner and other senior APS leaders to identify individuals that may be suitable for critical roles either to meet business needs or for development, while protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the individual.

Talent management principles and assumptions underpinning key activities and deliverables are at **Attachment B**.

Membership and terms

Membership of the Council comprises of:

- A Chair;
- A Deputy Chair;
- The Deputy Australian Public Service Commissioner (ex officio member);
- At least five Band 3s with varied experience across the APS, including an agency head; and
- An external member with C-suite experience in leadership and talent able to bring different perspectives to the work.

Ideally, Council membership will represent (as much as possible) the diversity of the APS, including a gender balance and representation of other diversity groups. From time to time, the Council will nominate at least one member to fulfil the role of Diversity Champion. The Diversity Champion will promote the value and benefits of diversity and inclusion in Council meetings. They will play a role in advocating for improving decision making and placing a diversity lens over Council decisions.

There is no set term for membership of the Council. The Chair and Deputy Australian Public Service Commissioner hold continuing roles. Other members may leave the Council at any time. It is expected that former members (**Attachment C**) would champion the work of the Council, mentor pool members and support their development.

The Council recognises the value in refreshing membership to allow new voices and perspectives and support engagement across the system. New members will be invited to join the Council as existing members indicate a desire to transition from active membership

Responsibilities of members

- Contribute to talent management and act as stewards of the APS institution;
- Ensure talent identification processes are rigorous, objective and transparent;
- Treat each individual's detailed assessment results confidentially;
- Manage risk to ensure the Council activities and broader talent management does not:
 - Reduce the engagement of highly valued employees.
 - Cause real or perceived harm to individuals and their careers.
- Maintain a strong focus on improving the readiness of talented Band 1s and 2s for critical roles across the APS;
- Actively encourage and support diversity in the APS leadership;
- Attend Talent Council meetings. The Chair and/or the Council Secretariat will brief members who are unable to attend meetings. Proxies will not be able to attend;
- Mentor at least one member of the Talent Pool with a view to providing career advice and support for ongoing development;
- Commit to sharing insights and learning to improve APS talent management practices, guidance and tools;
- Actively support the Council's decisions and communicate these to agency colleagues where appropriate.

Support for the Council - Secretariat

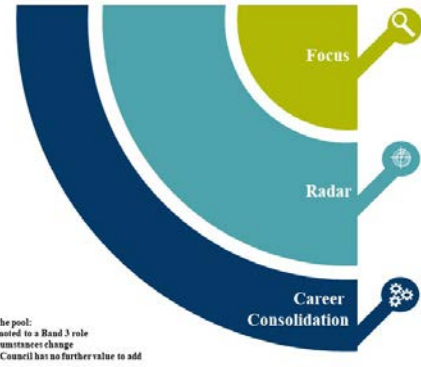
The Talent Strategy team at the Australian Public Service Commission provide support for the DSTC. The Talent Strategy team:

- **Provides strategic advice and design services to the Council**, in partnership with external experts;
- **Manages DSTC talent assessment and development processes**, and provides support for individuals completing the assessment;
- **Support the management of the Talent pool** including:
 - Providing pastoral care for individuals in the pool (for example, preparing individuals for regular Council check-ins);
 - Keeping records of Council engagement with pool members;
 - Managing activities that support Talent Pool development and engagement.
- **Provide Council Secretariat services** including:
 - Drafting papers for Talent Council meetings, for Chair clearance before distributing to Council members;
 - Preparing minutes and action items following each meeting; and
 - Supporting the Chair in monitoring agreed actions.

Attachment A – Talent Pool Approach

The approach recognises that individuals are likely to move towards realizing their potential at different rates, requiring different levels of Council support over time.

The approach provides the flexibility to offer support depending on the needs of each individual, while also managing demands on Council members. Individuals in the talent pool may spend periods in all three groups to suit their development needs, across multiple years.



Focus “Under the microscope”

Upon joining the talent pool for an initial 2 year period, and at Council discretion based on individual needs

Intensive development and Council focus to accelerate growth and test potential. Regular Council check-ins and exposure to critical experiences and perspectives to accelerate development.

- 6 monthly check-ins with Council members
 - 6 monthly pastoral care check-ins
 - Regular professional coaching
 - Strategic broadening of experience through role moves, shadowing, secondments, engagements and immersives.
 - Targeted mentoring for specific skills and experiences (may mean several mentors over the period)
 - Investment in formal learning if needed (e.g. leadership)
 - Engagement events (3 per year)
 - Sponsor relationship
 - Reassessment at 2 years
- Every DSTC meeting, review group and individual progress. Agree any actions to support accelerated development

Radar “On the radar”

Beyond two years in the pool, or at Council discretion based on individual

For pool members who have undertaken accelerated development and are considered to now be on a pathway to more senior or complex roles (growth mindset, willingness to try new things, clear aspiration)

- 12 monthly check-ins with Council members
 - 12 monthly pastoral care check-ins
 - Expectation of greater self-directed development
 - Longer term mentoring relationships with suggestions from Council if required
 - Engagement events (3 per year)
 - Sponsor relationship
- Following check-ins or movements DSTC reviews and agrees any actions

Career Consolidation “In our peripheral vision”

Beyond two years in the talent pool

For pool members who are now entering a period of consolidation so they can consider their aspiration, require lighter touch Council support and/or have reached their potential.

- Periodic (at least 12 monthly) check-in with a Council member
- 12 monthly pastoral care check-ins
- Expectation of greater self-directed development
- Longer term mentoring relationships with suggestions from Council if required.
- Engagement events (3 per year)
- Sponsor relationship

For discussion at DSTC meetings where a Council member proposes they need to be back ‘on the radar’. Agree any actions

Attachment B - Talent management principles and assumptions

Talent management principles

As part of endorsing the roll-out of talent management at the SES level, the Secretaries Board agreed to a set of principles that would guide talent practices:

- 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, have a particular leadership role to play in driving effective talent management in their agency and across the APS;
- The identification of talent is based on valid and objective assessment, ensuring the right people are receiving the right development and focus at specific times in their career. This is consistent with the notion of merit; and
- Talent management is systematic and dynamic:
 - The process involves regular and active identification, planning and monitoring of high potential individuals: who they are, how they are being developed, the career 'next steps' that will best help them realise their potential.
 - The process also recognises that an assessment of potential may change over time depending on an individual's circumstances or career stage. As such, potential is regularly monitored and reassessed.

An additional principle has also been adopted:

- Talent management processes recognise that talent exists outside of people already known, and actively seeks to build a leadership cadre with a diversity of perspectives, skills, experiences and background.

Underpinning assumptions

The assumptions underpinning the work of the Council are:

1. Assessment of potential is professionally supported, and assessment results are professionally interpreted;
2. Agencies fund assessments and reassessments for their nominated high-performing staff;
3. Band 1s and 2s may opt-out of participating in the assessment and development planning process.
4. Band 1s and 2s who take part in the assessment and development planning process own their personal information and it is collected and disclosed only as detailed in the *Deputy Secretaries Talent Council – APP 5 Notice* to which they agree.

Attachment C - Deputy Secretaries Talent Council Members

Former members:

Name	Agency (at time of participation)	From	To	Name	Agency (at time of participation)	From	To
Geoff Leeper	ATO	2015	2016	Sue Weston	Industry	2016	2017
Rhondda Dickson	Environment	2015	2016	Jacqui Curtis	ATO	2016	2019
Liz Cosson	Health	2015	2017	Roxanne Kelly	Defence	2017	2017
Tony Cook	Education	2015	2017	Dean Knudson	Environment	2017	2017
David Fredericks	Finance	2015	2017	Kerri Hartland	Finance	2017	2018
Steven Kennedy	Industry	2015	2017	Jenet Connell	APSC	2017	2018
Sandra Parker	Employment	2015	2017	John Murphy	DHS	2017	2019
Lyn O'Connell	Agriculture	2015	2017	Simon Atkinson	Treasury	2018	2019
John Lonsdale	Treasury	2015	2018	David Williamson	Industry	2020	2021
Stephanie Foster	PM&C and Home Affairs	2015	2023	Jenny Wilkinson	Treasury	2020	2022
Iain Anderson	AG's	2016	2017	Andrew Tongue	DAWE	2020	2022
Rebecca Skinner	Defence	2016	2017	Rob Heferen	Aus. Institute of Health & Welfare	2020	2024
Alison Larkins	Health	2016	2017	Helen Wilson	APSC	2023	2023
Barry Jackson	DHS	2016	2017				