

Secretaries Talent Council – Terms of Reference

Objective

The Talent Council's objective is to build a strong pipeline of leaders with the potential for roles at the most senior levels to ensure the ongoing institutional strength of the APS. The Council will nurture future leaders with the strategic capacity and collaborative style needed to provide stewardship and who demonstrate the agility, resilience and adaptability to lead the APS into the future. This will be for roles across the areas of policy, programme and service delivery, and regulatory functions.

Over time, the pipeline will contribute to an APS whose most senior leaders represent the diversity of the broader Australian community, including gender and other diversity groups.

The Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Public Service Commissioner will draw on, but not be limited by, the work of the Council in discharging their duties under section 58 of the *Public Service Act 1999* to advise the Prime Minister on Secretary appointments.

Scope

The Council's initial work will focus on a small number of Band 3s with high potential from Portfolio Departments and major agencies, and a small number of Band 2s with outstanding potential.

The Talent Council's work plan will include a second phase of work, which will see the Council play a role in the systematic development of the wider Band 3 cohort.

The Deputy Secretaries Talent Council will operate as a sub-Committee of the Talent Council. It will focus on Band 1s and Band 2s with high potential for Band 3 roles.

Key activities and deliverables

1. Oversee a rigorous, objective and consistent approach for identifying Band 3s and 2s with high potential for roles at the most senior levels of the APS. This will include:
 - Identifying the requirements for success in the most senior APS roles
 - Using objective assessment data to determine potential for more senior roles based on agreed criteria
 - Managing unconscious bias and meeting diversity expectations in assessment processes.
2. Support the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in managing the pipeline for roles at the most senior levels of the APS. This will include:
 - Identifying the most senior APS roles with succession risks and recommending remediation actions, including options for attracting exceptional individuals from outside the APS
 - Identifying career development opportunities and roles across the APS that will prepare high-potential Band 3s and 2s for more senior roles
 - Regularly monitoring the career development and engagement of individuals in the pipeline.

Official

3. Engage Secretaries in the Council's work to ensure whole-of-system support for talent management. This will include:
 - Providing visibility of talent in the pipeline, including high level summaries of high potential individuals, succession-readiness, systemic development needs, gaps and risks
 - Engaging with individual Secretaries on actions to strengthen the succession-readiness of individuals
 - Regularly reporting to the Secretaries Board through a standing item on the Secretaries Board agenda.
4. Establish milestones and key performance indicators to guide the Talent Council's work.

Membership

The Talent Council is a sub-committee of the Secretaries Board, the stewards of the APS as an institution. The Council will have six members, including the Chair. The membership will represent the diversity of the APS.

The Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Public Service Commissioner will be ex officio members of the Council.

Papers will be circulated to all Secretaries for their information and the Talent Council will be a standing item on the Secretaries Board agenda for updates as required.

Membership responsibilities

1. 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.
2. Actively support the Council's decisions, including at the Secretaries Board.
3. Maintain a strong focus on establishing a pipeline that will contribute to a 50/50 gender representation at the most senior levels of the APS.
4. Actively encourage and support diversity in the APS's leadership team.
5. Ensure assessment processes are consistent, rigorous, objective and transparent.
6. Treat each individual's detailed assessment results confidentially.
7. Manage risk to ensure the establishment and management of the pipeline does not:
 - a. Reduce the engagement of highly valued employees
 - b. Cause real or perceived harm to individuals or their careers.
8. Commit to sharing insights and learning from the Council's work to improve APS talent management practice.

Attachment A - Talent Management Principles and Underpinning Assumptions

Talent management principles

The APS Talent Management Guide and Toolkit identifies three guiding principles for APS talent management. They are:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Underpinning assumptions

A number of assumptions underpin the work of the Talent Council. They are:

- Assessment of potential will be professionally supported. Assessment results will be professionally interpreted.
- Agencies will fund assessments for their nominated Band 3s and 2s.
- Individuals who take part in the process agree to the Council having access to detailed assessment data and career information.
- Individuals may opt-out of participating.
- The Council's initial role is to identify Band 3s and Band 2s with high potential for the most senior APS roles and manage the resulting pipeline. Individuals ultimately remain responsible for their own careers and development.