



## Ways of Working: Decision Making

# Guidance for leaders and managers

*Supporting decisions to be made at the lowest appropriate level, with the right people, applying the right judgement to make the best use of our capability at all levels of the APS*

### Background

Recent changes to the Public Service Act 1999 support decision making at the lowest appropriate level. The amendments require agency heads to implement measures to create a work environment that enables decisions to be made by APS employees at the lowest appropriate classification. This change seeks to ensure decision making is not raised to a higher level than necessary, improving decision making processes to reduce duplication of work, empower staff, and foster professional development.

Decision making has also been raised in successive reviews including the Independent Review of the APS and the APS Hierarchy and Classification Review. With a goal of being a model employer, the APS must make best use of the capability that exists at all levels. Our people want opportunities to use their skills and knowledge more directly and visibly – it's time we tap into that.

This resource provides practical tips that leaders and managers can adopt to support decision making at the lowest appropriate level.

### Considerations for leaders and managers

- Role modelling
  - Model the Charter of Leadership Behaviours
  - Enable, coach, mentor and remove blockers for your staff. Help them 'do' and 'decide' themselves
  - Encourage the use of descriptive titles and focus on people's expertise rather than their classification
  - Be open to change and encourage ideas of what can be done differently.
- Nurture good judgement
  - Share context when tasking new work, including any risks and government considerations. Be conscious of including staff working remotely as well
  - Tell staff the outcome you want and how you like to be kept in the loop
  - Where decisions have a legislative basis, ensure teams understand their responsibilities
  - Be open when things don't go to plan. Help people learn from missteps. Setting up a regular team retrospective is a great way to embed this way of thinking.

## **Ways of Working: Decision Making** – Guidance for leaders and managers

- Trust and empower
  - Set vision and guardrails, without dictating how problems should be solved
  - Encourage staff to rethink who approves routine decisions in their work teams
  - Look at work that can be delegated as a responsibility rather than tasks
  - Don't overcorrect errors with extra controls—address capability instead.
- Encourage collaboration
  - Role model good collaboration by communicating with people at different levels and in other work groups
  - Help staff to build their networks, both inside and outside to the organisation, and find others working on similar things
  - Advocate for mobility, so people get exposure to different parts of the agency and APS.

### **Further information**

Additional materials, including guidance for teams plus team activities, as well as further background on the Public Service Act amendments and reviews referred to in this document are available on the APSC website at [www.apsc.gov.au](http://www.apsc.gov.au).