



Ways of Working: Decision Making

Guidance for teams

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.

This resource includes some practical suggestions that teams can do to support decision making at the lowest appropriate level.

Considerations for team members

- Know your patch
 - Be clear on the purpose of your role and what you need to achieve
 - Understand how your work fits into the broader organisational goals
 - Weigh up risks and uncertainties – what could go wrong, who needs visibility, and how can you make a positive outcome more likely? Can you use a test and learn approach?
 - Know your work area's procedures and processes on day to day tasks
 - Know your escalation points and when decisions expand beyond your scope
 - Know and understand formal delegations, relevant legislation and policy settings.
- Own the decisions that are yours to make
 - Talk to your manager about expectations – what decisions are they happy for you to make yourself and when do they need visibility?
 - Come with solutions – recommend a way forward, when you escalate an issue or risk
 - Be curious about how other people weigh up choices. What do they consider?
 - When new work arises, be clear on the intent – ask questions and test assumptions
 - Make choices you're happy to stand behind. If things don't go as planned, what can we learn?

Ways of Working: Decision Making – Guidance for teams

- Keep communication open about the decisions you've made so others can learn
- Keep records related to your decisions including information that you have taken into account and consultations that have been made as part of your consideration of issues.
- Involve the right people
 - Get to know people in other teams and agencies and how their work connects with yours
 - Encourage more experienced staff to mentor those who may not have experience in decision making
 - Think about who can assist you to get the best outcome. Are colleagues working on similar things? Can you coordinate and share learnings? Are you seeking diverse viewpoints?
 - Consider who this choice affects. Do we know enough about the impact on people/business? Are there any unwanted consequences?
 - Involve people with lived experience, those from underrepresented groups and/or those who will be directly impacted by the decision
 - Seek guidance from specialists including from central enabling areas such as financial, legal, HR, governance areas as appropriate.

Further information

Additional materials, including team activities as well as further background on the Public Service Act amendments are available on the APSC website at www.apsc.gov.au.