



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

# Australian Public Service Employee Census

## Australian Public Service Commission 2024 Action Plan

November 2024



# Commissioner's Foreword

It was great to see that we had a very high participation rate of 95 per cent in this year's Employee Engagement Census, setting an impressive new standard for the Commission. Your responses are vital in assisting us to be a model employer. The Commission uses the Census results to assess and monitor employee engagement and understand what is important to you, what we are doing well and what we can focus on improving. A high participation rate gives us a solid foundation to assess our performance on important areas that affect you.

Our Census results point to some of our achievements. You feel the Commission facilitates a strong culture of integrity and stewardship. You receive respect from colleagues at work and believe the agency supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture and flexible work practices. You feel a sense of pride working at the Commission, are committed to agency goals and, most importantly, would recommend the Commission as a good place to work. I am delighted to see an increase in the number of people who want to stay longer, improving from our 2023 results.

Although there are many areas to celebrate, there are things we need to do better. How we encourage innovation, do change management, manage and communicate priorities, and maintain a good balance between workload and wellbeing across the Commission are challenging and we need to do better. This plan aims to address that.

Our 2024 census action plan strives to build on the Commission's high levels of engagement, commitment and satisfaction, and identifies Commission-wide initiatives to strengthen our performance, while managing the challenges we face daily and ensuring our staff are both physically and psychologically safe in the workplace.

I would like to thank you for your honesty in responding to the Census, and for being an integral part of the Commission. Together, we can continue to grow and succeed.

**Dr Gordon de Brouwer**  
**APS Commissioner**



# Progress against our 2023 Census Action Plan

The APSC's 2023 Capability Review and our census results identified similar strengths and opportunities for improvement.

In 2023 our strengths were in the following areas:

- engagement and commitment to the APS
- relationships and supervisors
- wellbeing and support
- inclusive and respectful workplaces.

Our *2023 Census Action Plan* reflected actions to align improvement opportunities from census and Capability Review information sources to propose actions in the following areas.

<b>Staff expressed the need to be rewarded and recognised for doing a good job</b>	The Commission developed a Reward and Recognition Program to recognise individuals or teams who have made an exceptional contribution or achievement to the Commission's work and culture. The program was launched in May 2024.
<b>Maintaining focus on the prioritisation of work was a challenge for staff</b>	A strategic vision and agenda has been developed and incorporated into our 2024-2028 Corporate Plan, including a refreshed purpose statement and strategic priorities that align with the interests and needs of our stakeholders. Tools to assist business areas with prioritising programs of work were also developed, together with improved internal budgeting practices and a refreshed approach to Branch business planning.
<b>Limited career opportunities and seeking alternative career paths are reasons why staff consider leaving the Commission</b>	The development of a new strategic workforce plan is ongoing. This work is informed through factors internal and external to the Commission's operating context and will demonstrate our stewardship of our workforce.
<b>Having the right IT tools, systems, policies and processes to support the delivery of work was a high priority for staff</b>	The Commission is investing in an IT Strategy, and exploring options to improve our systems and tools through the TransformIT Program of work. A number of changes continue to be delivered in policy, frameworks and the Commission's ICT operations.



# The Commission's 2024 Census Results

The Commission achieved a strong participation rate, with **95% of staff** responding to the Census survey.

## Our Strengths

Staff believe we are performing well in many areas. Across the 6 key indices that aggregate Census responses into themes, the Commission's index scores increased and continue to track above the APS-wide, other policy agencies and medium-sized agencies.

Our staff indicated they:

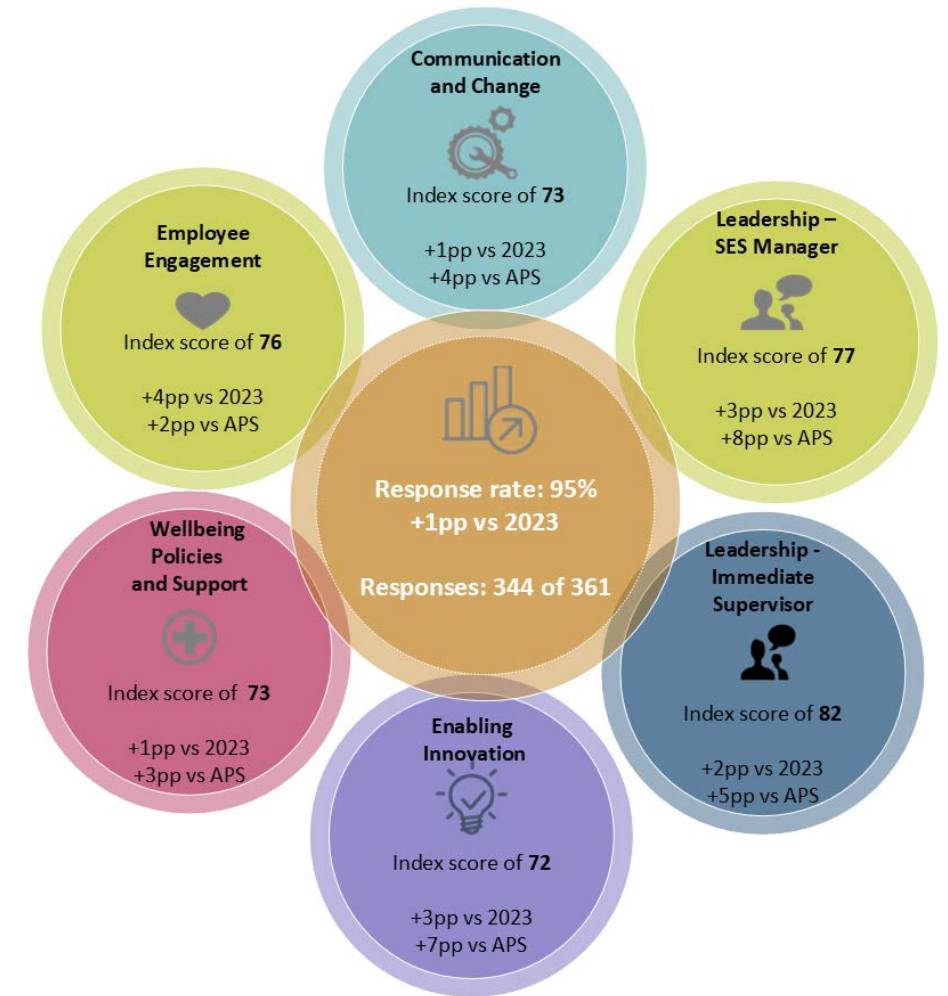
- are a highly engaged workforce
- felt supported to work flexibly
- felt the Commission supported and actively promotes an inclusive work culture
- are satisfied with their immediate supervisors and SES managers.

## Opportunities for improvement

Staff were generous in their feedback, sharing their views on areas for improvement.

In particular:

- The Commission experienced an overall increase in the Wellbeing Policies and Support index; however, a small decrease in the number of staff who feel that the Commission cares about their health and wellbeing.
- The largest barrier to optimal performance is an increase in our staff feeling that their current workload is too high and they have too many competing priorities.
- The need for tools and resources, including improved technology and a more digitally-enabled environment, remain a priority for staff to support them to do their job well.



# 2024 Census Results – key highlights

## 1. Enhanced job satisfaction



Staff feel a sense of pride working at the Commission, are committed to agency goals and would recommend the Commission as a good place to work.

Staff believe that one of their responsibilities is to continually look for new ways to improve the way we work.

The APS-wide bargaining for common conditions has been a great driving factor in job satisfaction.

## 2. We have a **supportive and inclusive workplace**



Staff feel that the Commission supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture.

A high percentage of our staff believe they receive the respect they deserve from their colleagues at work.

Staff feel the Commission practices respectful and inclusive behaviours at all times.

## 3. Recognition and rewards



Staff feel recognised for coming up with new and innovative ways of working.

Staff felt satisfied with the recognition they receive for doing a good job.

## 4. Our **supervisors and SES** are **leading by example**



Staff feel well supported by their supervisors.

Supervisors encourage their staff and provide them with helpful feedback to improve their performance.

Our SES create a work environment that enables their branch to deliver its best outcomes.



# 2024 Census Results - priority areas for enhancements

1

Ensure effective communication and collaboration



2

Effectively manage competing priorities and workloads



3

Care for our wellbeing



4

Provide staff with the tools and resources they need



## Commitment to Action – Commission’s priority areas for the next 12 months

# 1

### Ensure effective communication and collaboration

#### Focus Areas

- Enhance collaboration and communication across business areas.
- Take the time to maintain connections and positive relationships between work areas.

#### *Building on our existing collaborative work practices we will:*

- Seek ideas from staff to co-design collaboration and communication tools to reach all staff, timely and regardless of location. *Led by the **Engagement and Communications team**, with input from **all staff**.*
- Regularly share information to staff, reinvigorate our staff networks, and contribute to and present at key forums (such as all-staff Town Halls). *Led by **all SES and EL staff**, with feedback from **all staff**.*

# 2

### Effectively manage competing priorities and workloads

#### Focus Areas

- Minimise competing priorities by embedding and applying our prioritisation and business planning frameworks.
- Provide staff with clarity regarding expectations on their roles and responsibilities.

#### *Learning from experiences of applying the new prioritisation and business planning frameworks, we will:*

- Develop branch plans and section plans, linked to the Corporate plan, to map out priority work areas, informing individual performance plans. *Led by **all branches**, with feedback from **all SES to the Governance team** on lessons learned to improve tool design.*
- Ensure all roles have position descriptions, in line with the ADDRESS model. *Led by **all staff**, supported by the **People team**.*



## Commitment to Action – Commission’s priority areas for the next 12 months

# 3

### Care for our wellbeing

#### Focus Areas

- Enhance the psychosocial and physical health and safety of our staff through the promotion of wellbeing initiatives.
- Support our leaders with development on wellbeing policies and support, including the effective management of hybrid working arrangements.

*Continuing to offer and promote wellbeing initiatives to our staff, **we will:***

- Make time to focus on our wellbeing, by participating in presentations and events promoting respectful and psychologically safe behaviours, practices and culture. *Led by **all staff**, supported by the **People team**.*
- Access resources such as *Resilience and Compassionate Foundations*, and the *ADDRESS model* to enhance our leadership and emotional intelligence skills. *Led by **all supervisors**, supported by the **People team**.*

# 4

### Provide staff with the tools and resources they need

#### Focus Areas

- Develop a long-term vision for technology and systems in the Commission.
- Ensure our staff are supported and have the training, tools and resources they need to be successful.

*Taking immediate priority action to address staff needs, **we will:***

- Develop and seek executive approval for a Technology Strategy, including initiatives under the TransformIT program, to identify and prioritise the tools, systems, policies and processes needed to enable staff to deliver the Commission’s work. *Led by the **IT Services team**, with feedback and support from **all staff**.*
- Take time to explore tools available to complete our work, complete training, and improve our digital literacy, including sharing knowledge with colleagues. *Led by **all staff**, supported by the **IT Services team**.*





## Keeping our staff in the loop

As in 2023, every branch across the Commission has developed their own Census action plan. Branches will be required to review action plans and progress against focus areas as part of team discussions and performance conversations.

The Commission's Executive Board will continue to monitor the progress of the Commission's overarching action plan.

The Commission plans to communicate progress of the Census action plan through:

- the Commission's intranet
- all staff emails
- Town Hall meetings.

The Commission will use the 2025 Census results as the primary means to measure progress against the agreed focus areas.

Other ways the Commission will evaluate progress includes:

- periodic pulse surveys
- agreed targets that outline our commitment to action strategies
- performance discussions and
- other feedback channels.

