



# Inquiry into the current capability of the Australian Public Service – additional information

15 September 2021

*On 1 September 2021, The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee requested information on Gender analysis of the APS, the APS Hierarchy and Classification Review, and the Graduate Program.*

## Gender analysis of the APS

### Data collection and reporting

There are several ways the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) routinely captures, analyses and reports on diversity and inclusion metrics across the APS.

### Workforce data

Workforce data is drawn from APS agency human resources (HR) systems and reported to the Commission. It is managed in the APS Employment Database (APSED). This includes personal, employment, diversity and education information about all people employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*, all of which can be disaggregated by gender. APSED holds data back to 1966.

Workforce data, including diversity and gender metrics are reported in the biannual [APS Data Release](#). Data as at 30 June and 31 December are publically released on the Commission's website in September and April respectively. Statistics on the workforce, including diversity and gender metrics, are also reported annually in the [State of the Service Report](#), which is tabled in Parliament at the end of November each year.

### Employee Census

The Commission administers an annual APS Employee Census to capture employees' views and experiences at work. Results from the APS Employee Census are analysed and reported in the State of the Service Report. Census data can also be analysed to report on the perceptions of a range of diversity groups in the APS. This includes the perceptions of inclusion in the workplace. The Commission has published a range of [Insights Reports](#) on diversity groups which are publicly available on the Commission's website.

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## Remuneration data

The Commission also collects remuneration data from all APS agencies on an annual basis. This includes hours worked, type of work, salary including bonuses, allowances and superannuation paid to employees. A whole-of-APS [Remuneration Report](#) is published on the Commission's website each year around July. One of the measures reported is the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is the difference between the average full-time earnings of male and female employees. The calculation the Commission uses for the gender pay gap is based on the methodology used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. In 2020 the gender pay gap for the APS was 6.6 per cent, which is well below the current national figure of 14.2 per cent.

## Strategy evaluation

There are a number of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion in the APS, including:

- [Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24](#)
- [APS Disability Employment Strategy 2021-2025](#)
- APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021-25 (to be released in late 2021)

The Commission is required to report regularly to the Secretaries Board and the Chief Operating Officers Committee on APS diversity and inclusion, including progress against the Strategies' outcomes. A report will be provided to Secretaries Board in late 2021.

This reporting is informed by the data noted above, along with data from regular agency diversity and inclusion health checks, due to commence in October 2021. The health checks will assist in monitoring agency progress as well as identifying common issues across the APS and linking agencies working on similar actions or initiatives.

Strategy specific evaluations are conducted biennially.

## APS Hierarchy and Classification Review

### Review Progress

The APS Hierarchy and Classification Review is examining executive and non-executive classification levels and structures against best practice and emerging workforce needs, to identify opportunities to reduce hierarchy, improve decision-making and ensure the right APS expertise and resources to meet the expectations of the Government and citizens into the future.

The Review Panel presented emerging recommendations to the Secretaries Board for feedback in July. The Review Panel has also undertaken extensive engagement with APS employees, the private sector, union bodies, interstate and international public sectors and other interested parties throughout the review.

The Panel is now working through feedback and information received from extensive consultation activities, to prepare their final report.

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The Review Panel is on track to deliver the final report and supporting documents by the end of this year, as requested by the APS Commissioner.

## **Analysis of APS workforce requirements and resourcing requirements for IT administration**

The Review Panel has considered both current and future workforce requirements of the APS in developing the emerging recommendations. The aim is to best position the APS workforce for the next 25 years and ensure it is well equipped to deliver outcomes that meet the demands and expectations of the Australian Government and citizens into the future.

The Panel is looking at how the APS can simplify decision-making structures, uplift capability and reimagine culture to encourage faster decision-making, empower the workforce, foster innovation, and enable greater flexibility and mobility across the APS to deliver for government and citizens in an increasingly complex and digital world.

The Review Panel recognises the importance of an ongoing commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce, and notes it is vital to ensuring the APS is able to deliver the best possible policy advice and services for all Australians.

In line with the Commonwealth's APS reform agenda, strategies and specific actions to increase diversity representation at non-SES and SES levels will be delivered via the APS Workforce Strategy 2025.

The review's emerging recommendations will support broader APS reforms, such as those identified in the Workforce Strategy, to promote an environment that will attract, build and retain diverse skills, expertise and talent; embrace data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models; and strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership.

Issues of remuneration and resourcing are outside the scope of this review. As such, specific issues relating to the gender pay gap, IT resourcing and the remuneration of IT contractors have not been considered by the Panel.

More information on the [APS Hierarchy and Classification Review is available on the Australian Public Service Commission website \(apsc.gov.au\)](https://apsc.gov.au).

## **The Australian Government Graduate Program**

The Australian Government Graduate Program (AGGP) brings APS agencies together to attract and recruit graduates, and provide graduates with opportunities to be considered for roles in multiple agencies through a single application process.

- The AGGP is embedding a One-APS operating model for graduates from the outset – one which values diverse skills and experiences, mobility and collaboration across agencies and policy domains – contributing to a future APS workforce delivering for Government, and the communities we serve.
- The APSC in partnership with agencies has stood up a generalist, economist, data and STEM streams building on the success of the existing digital and HR streams and their respective professions.

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- Actions to date include:
    - An update to the online graduate portal to bring together information on all Australian Government graduate opportunities in one place. An updated format and coordinated marketing campaign attracted more than 170,000 website views, an increase from 10,000 in the previous year.
    - 15 of 19 participating agencies coordinated their program launches to be released at the same time to help reduce confusion for candidates.
    - The first virtual APS Graduate Career fair, with 35 exhibitors and 918 students attending —a collaborative event across the APS, with agencies further supporting a unified approach to graduate recruitment and continued engagement with candidates during COVID-19 restrictions and impacts
  - These actions have resulted in 8,187 applications across all streams – a 33% increase on the previous year, indicating a broader reach for the APS Graduate Streams and increased AGGP brand awareness.
  - We continue to see growth in key capability areas identified in the APS Workforce Strategy including digital, data and HR, demonstrating that the AGGP is helping to deliver the required capability in these areas.

## Intake numbers

Over the last 5 years, the number of APS Departments and agencies that recruit graduates has been consistent, with up to **39 agencies regularly recruiting graduates**. Together they represent an **average annual intake of approximately 1,300 Graduates** across the APS. Numbers have been fairly consistent over the last 20 years, with the lowest intake being 722 in 2003/4 and the highest 1551 in 2010/11. Graduate recruitment is increasingly important as a source of new APS employees. The share of new recruits who are graduates has increased to 15 per cent in 2019–20 from around 6 per cent in 2000–01

In 2021, work has been underway to consider how the success of AGGP might be expanded to consider entry level programs, to support the APS to meet workforce needs now and into the future, as well as the needs and expectations of candidates. This includes:

- *expanded coordination* for entry level programs
- *rebranding* ELPs to align with industry trends, ensuring that branding captures/considers all pathways, not just those at school leaver age and would include a diverse cohort such as mature workers and veterans;
- *consolidated marketing* (building on the AGGP approach);
- a *centre of excellence* to drive best practice including consistency in terminology, processes and timing for all agencies running ELPs; and develop tool kits and resources for supervisors;
- establishing a *whole of government internship program*, by building upon existing internship programs across government, with focused effort on regional representation and accessible locations to increase participation;

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- Focused effort on *building the data, digital and cyber workforce*.

These entry level pathways will build on the successful Career Starters program for school leavers run by the Department of Finance, and the HR School Leavers program being launched by the HR profession this year.

## **Changes to the placement streams**

The most common stream is 'Generalist', followed by 'Finance/Accounting' and 'HR'. Data, ICT/Digital and STEM are all emerging capabilities required by the APS and identified in the APS Workforce Strategy and have therefore been implemented as streams under the AGGP providing an APS wide approach to recruiting these capabilities. As workforce requirements change, graduate streams will be implemented, scaled down or retired in line with the evolving workforce strategy and the capabilities that are required in agencies.

## **Graduate tasks**

Graduate programs have continued to grow and evolve over time. The majority of programs now include an induction, graduate develop program (GDP) and several rotations. This is being strengthened with graduate events and other initiatives such as service delivery rotations. The APS Academy has been evolving the GDP to a more virtual and flexible delivery model allowing it to be scaled and utilised by more and more agencies.

## **Diversity and inclusion**

Gender and diversity numbers are tracked across the graduate streams. Indigenous and Disability Affirmative Measures recruitment processes are run for most graduate programs, and the successful Indigenous Graduate Pathway program has been running for a number of years with very high uptake from agencies. This year the AGGP will be focusing on improving the support offered through graduate programs looking at information provided, RecruitAbility, reasonable adjustments across the entire assessment and onboarding process and ensuring graduates have the best possible experience.