



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Public Service Commission**

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

Senator Tim Ayres  
Chair, Finance and Public Administration References Committee  
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PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Ayres,

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to the inquiry into the current capability of the Australian Public Service (APS). Please find the submission from the Australian Public Service Commission attached.

As you know, all APS Agency Heads have powers of an employer in respect of APS officers under the *Public Service Act 1999* and are responsible for investing in their employees and managing their agencies effectively. As Commissioner, I work with APS Agency Heads in order to support them to do this well with a particular focus on facilitating continuous improvement in workforce management. A key role is to drive reforms to workforce management to ensure the APS is fit for the future. This submission sets out key areas of work the Commission has been undertaking to deliver on this central responsibility.

There are two key Commission deliverables this year that will be of interest to the Committee in the context of this inquiry: the creation of an APS Academy mid-2021 and the Workforce Strategy. Both support the whole of the APS and are being developed and delivered in partnership with APS agencies.

The APS Academy will focus on lifting core APS skills and capabilities in areas unique to the APS craft: leadership, integrity, governance, policy, delivery and engagement. The transition to these new arrangements is underway. This submission sets out some initial ideas and the Commission will provide further details on the operation of the APS Academy once this is established.

The Workforce Strategy is being developed in consultation with agencies across the APS and is close to finalisation. This submission sets out expected areas of focus. It is anticipated the Workforce Strategy will be settled mid-March and it will be provided to the Committee as soon as it is published on the Commission's website.

Of interest, the Commission is also responsible for APS workforce data. Each year, the APS employee census survey is run to collect confidential attitude and opinion information from APS employees on important issues in the workplace. The census is managed by the Commission and the 2020 data will be released at the end of March. This will be made public on the Commission's website and will be able to be accessed here: [APS employee census 2020](#).

Thank you for your consideration of these details.

Yours sincerely

Peter Woolcott AO  
26 February 2021



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Public Service Commission**



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**Submission to the Finance and Public  
Administration References Committee  
Inquiry into the current capability of the  
Australian Public Service (APS)**

**February 2021**

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## 1. Scope of this Submission

The Australian Public Service Commission makes this submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee (the Committee) inquiry into the current capability of the APS.

The Committee invited a submission in correspondence to the Australian Public Service Commissioner, Peter Woolcott, on 3 December 2020.

This submission addresses the scope of the inquiry, with particular reference to:

- a. the digital and data capability of the workforce, including: workforce capability initiatives from the APS Reform agenda and APS Professional Stream strategies
- b. whether APS transformation and modernisation projects initiated since the 2014 Budget have achieved their objectives: implementation of the *Leading in a Digital Age program* are included, in response a program developed under the Building Digital Capability program, an initiative under the 2014 *Public Service Modernisation Fund*.
- c. the APS workforce, including: leadership and talent management, recruitment, graduate program, mobility and surge, integrity, diversity and inclusion and workplace relations/policy;

The looking forward section outlines initiatives underway, including the APS Workforce Strategy, APS Learning and Development Strategy, APS Academy, APS Professional Stream Strategies, diversity and inclusion, Australian Government Graduate Program (AGGP), mobility and surge.

The information detailed in this submission refers to capabilities of ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees engaged under the Public Service Act 1999.

## 2. Background

### Roles and Functions

#### The remit of the Australian Public Service Commissioner

Section 41(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act) establishes the functions as Commissioner. These include:

- a) to strengthen the professionalism of the APS and facilitate continuous improvement in workforce management in the APS;
- b) to uphold high standards of integrity and conduct in the APS; and
- c) to monitor, review and report on APS capabilities within and between agencies to promote high standards of accountability, effectiveness and performance.

Section 41(2) of the PS Act elaborates on these broad areas, and relevantly includes the requirement:

- d) to develop, review and evaluate APS workforce management policies and practices and maintain appropriate databases.

## The role of the Australian Public Service Commission

The Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio. Our statutory responsibilities are detailed in the *Public Service Act 1999*. Our purpose is to position the APS workforce for the future to ensure it meets the demands and expectations of the Australian Government and people (Corporate Plan 2020-21).

The Commission supports two statutory office holders—the Australian Public Service Commissioner who is the agency head, and the Merit Protection Commissioner. Their functions are set out in sections 41 and 50 of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The Australian Public Service Commissioner makes staff available to assist the Merit Protection Commissioner in performing the prescribed functions independently.

## Australian Public Service workforce datasets

Under Section 41 of the *Public Service Act 1999* the Commission collects a range of workforce demographic, employment and remuneration data from APS agencies. This dataset covers all employees hired under the *Public Service Act 1999*. This data is released twice-yearly, as at 30 June and 31 December snapshot dates in [data releases](#). A yearly [APS Remuneration Report](#) based on these datasets is also made publically available.

To complement demographic, employment and remuneration datasets, the Commission also manages the collection, analysis and reporting on employee perception data collected through the annual APS Employee Census. The confidential employee responses collected through an external service provider, are used to draw insights into APS workforce and organisational capability.

## State of the Service Report

Section 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999* stipulates that the Australian Public Service Commissioner is to report each year to the agency's Minister and the Australian Parliament on the state of the APS during the past year. This report details the year-to-year trends in workforce participation and capability across the APS.

The most recent [State of the Service Report](#), for 2019-20, was tabled in both houses of Parliament on 30 November 2020.

## APS Reform

The Commission works with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, APS Reform Office, to support implementation of the Government's response to the [Independent Review of the Australian Public Service](#). The Government accepted the majority of the Review's recommendations and released its response and reform agenda [Delivering for Australians](#) in December 2019.

The Commission is leading the delivery of 14 Reform initiatives to strengthen the capability of the APS workforce, including:

- Delivering an APS Workforce Strategy
- Delivering an APS Mobility Framework

- Developing an APS professions model
- Building a pro-integrity culture within the APS through better guidance, processes and tools
- Enhancing APS recruitment and induction including streamlining graduate recruitment.

While the Secretaries Board agreed to focus reform implementation in April 2020 on the response to COVID-19, the Commission worked across the Service to help equip the APS to address the crisis. The mobilisation and collaboration experienced across the APS during the initial COVID-19 response has seen years of reform realised in just months. The Commission is building on this to embed change across the Service in line with the Government's expectations for a dynamic, capable and responsive APS. As outlined in the [Open Letter to the APS](#) (4 September 2020), the Secretaries Board agreed to prioritise a set of initiatives to build on and embed the best of the APS during crisis, including:

- Continuing to support Australia's response to, and recovery from, the pandemic
- Accelerating APS digital transformation, and
- Investing in the skills we need now and in the future.

### 3. Response to the Terms of Reference

#### a. Digital and data capability of the workforce

The need for data and digital capabilities will only grow as the world, and responses to policy challenges, get more complex. As reflected in the APS review, the APS has relied on contractors and consultants over a number of years. This is particularly true in the ICT space, where we understand from engagement with agencies that some agencies have significant numbers of their workforce engaged as contractors. The Commission is mindful that there are a number of circumstances where contractors and consultants are used to supplement employee capability. These circumstances include when specific skills are required for a short time, or to meet a surge in demand, and to bring new perspective to service delivery and policy solutions.

The use of contractors remains a legitimate workforce tool for Agency Heads to draw on when managing their resources. The Commission recognises that we need to ensure that we are; firstly, developing our own capabilities for the future, and secondly, transferring knowledge and knowhow to the APS to the fullest extent possible. Building the capability and expertise in the data and digital space are priorities for the Commission.

Continuing contributions of the Commission to digital and data capability include the implementation of relevant workforce capability initiatives from the APS Reform agenda, APS Professional Stream strategies and APS digital governance.

As the APS transforms towards digital government in a digital economy, the Commission is contributing to accelerating data and digital transformation by:

- Building key workforce capabilities through the data, digital and strategic human resources APS Professional Stream Strategies
- Building data literacy across the APS



- Effective digital governance

This work will build capability in the public service workforce so that we are well placed to meet the increasing demands for services and the changing needs and expectations of the community.

### **The APS Professional Stream Strategies**

The APS Professions Stream Strategies (Professions) are workforce initiatives established to increase the capability of APS employees working in critical disciplines (or critical functional areas) in the APS. The Professions were established to address identified, critical workforce capability gaps.

The Australian Public Service Commissioner is the Head of Professions. The role of the Head of Professions is to provide overarching leadership and stewardship for Heads of Professional Streams.

A Head of Profession leads the implementation of each Professional Stream.

- The [Human Resources Professional Stream](#) commenced in October 2019, led by Jacqui Curtis, Chief Operating Officer of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).
- The [Digital Professional Stream](#) commenced in April 2020, led by Randall Brugeaud, Chief Executive Officer of the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA)
- The [Data Professional Stream](#) commenced in September 2020, led by Dr David Gruen, Australian Statistician and head of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The role of each of the Heads of Professional Streams is to:

- Set direction and provide guidance for Professional Stream work program in accordance with expectations set by Head of Professions
- Provide leadership and stewardship of Professional Stream
- Represent and promote Professional Streams in various forums to ensure that each Professional Stream is recognised and valued across the APS.

Heads of Profession were consulted in the preparation of this submission.

### **APS Human Resources Professional Stream Strategy**

The [Human Resources Professional Stream Strategy](#) is a structured way to build and uplift strategic HR skills across the APS by identifying core, long-term capability needs, standards and career pathways. Progress has been made, particularly in the areas identified for priority focus, such as:

- The establishment of a strong HR Professional Network that shares expertise and demonstrates investment in continuous learning - in 2020 the network delivered eight events that were recognised by the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) as continuing professional development to its network of over 2000 members
- Responding to common human resource challenges, for example through the launch of a Mental Health Hotline to support APS HR professionals during COVID-19



- An HR workforce strategy and the inclusion of HR strategists on selection panels for key senior HR positions
- Streamlined HR graduate recruitment and development as part of the AGGP
- The development – by partnering agencies – of training and development addressing key capability gaps for graduates and the network more broadly, and
- Providing guidance on identification and development of priority HR standards and capabilities.

### **APS Digital Professional Stream Strategy**

The [Digital Professional Stream Strategy](#) is a structured approach to build and uplift the core digital expertise of leadership and the workforce, and specialist expertise in digital roles. This is delivered collaboratively across the APS to ensure we have a cross-agency approach to delivering government services. It is a deliberate approach to setting professional standards, implementing digital career pathways and addressing digital skills gaps. It will build networks and ways to strategically recruit, develop, grow and retain talent in digital leadership and the digital capability of our workforce.

The Digital Profession will continue to leverage and enhance existing digital capability programs and implement new activities to build and uplift the digital capability of the APS workforce. The DTA and the Commission have partnered to deliver whole-of-government digital capability programs that have led to:

- A career pathways framework, that maps the skills needed to succeed in 150 digital roles.
- The Australian Government's first Digital Summit, with over 700 attendees from across government, industry and academia.
- Emerging Talent Programs that attract graduates, cadets and apprentices into the APS. There have been almost 1,400 participants since the program commenced in 2007.
- The Women in IT Executive Mentoring program (including coaching circles) to lift representation of women in digital leadership roles. There have been 730 participants since the program commenced in 2007.
- A new capability development model that is creating a cycle of continuous learning, based on career pathways, on-the-job coaching, and leading change.

### **APS Data Professional Stream Strategy**

The [Data Professional Stream Strategy](#) is a structured approach to lift the data capability of the APS workforce to generate deeper insights to inform decision-making in policy development, program management and service delivery. Initiatives will focus on raising the data literacy of all APS employees, as well as building deeper sophisticated and specialised capabilities for data professionals.

A two-year program of work has been developed by the Senior Working Group (SES Band 1s and 2s) in collaboration with supporting agencies, and endorsed by the Deputy Secretary level Senior Reference Group. A Data Professional Stream network has been established with over 1200 members and a streamlined data graduate recruitment campaign under the AGGP has been piloted for the 2021 intake.

## Data Literacy Skills

The Commission has delivered a suite of resources to lift APS data literacy. The suite includes comprehensive eLearning modules and workshops. These introductory resources have been delivered to APS employees at all levels who are not data specialists.

## b. Whether APS transformation and modernisation projects initiated since 2014 have achieved their objectives

### Leading in a Digital Age Program

The Leading in a Digital Age program was developed under the Building Digital Capability program which was an initiative under the Modernisation Fund. The Commission and Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) designed the Leading in a Digital Age program to be an immersive experience for SES leaders. The program supports SES participants to recognise the challenges and opportunities of leading in the digital age to meet the expectations of citizens, business and other users of government services.

The Leading in a Digital Age program has trained almost 300 senior executives to lead change through digital ways of thinking and working.

## c. The APS workforce

A continuing contribution of the Commission to effective workforce management is the support we provide to agencies through policy advice, whole-of-APS strategies and various initiatives to lift capabilities across the enterprise.

### Leadership and Talent Management

The Commission works with Secretaries and Agency Heads to shape an APS workforce with stronger leadership capabilities and a more diverse pipeline for the future. The Commission provides support to the Secretaries Talent Council and Deputy Secretaries Talent Council through strategic advice, design and management of assessment and development processes for high potential Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, working in partnership with external experts, and secretariat support.

The Commission also manages capability and talent assessments for Senior Executive Service (SES) employees. Around 50% of SES Band 3 employees, and 8% of SES Band 1 and 2 employees have already been assessed against whole of service leadership behaviours through talent management and capability assessment processes.

The APS Commissioner is the Deputy Chair of the Secretaries Talent Council. Mirroring this, the APS Deputy Commissioner is the Deputy Chair of the Deputy Secretaries Talent Council. The Councils work in partnership with the Secretaries Board to shape a strong and diverse leadership pipeline. They do this by recognising and nurturing capabilities most critical for future success, and by enabling teams and individuals to perform at their best.

Since 2014 the Commission has delivered a range of leadership development initiatives to increase participants' leadership capability. Each year over 500 SES and EL staff from across the APS participate in Commission leadership development activities through longitudinal programs that include workshops, coaching, peer learning, and on-the-job activities, or secondments. Evaluation data indicates strong shifts in capability as a result of participation in these activities.

- We support best practice in leadership through whole-of-APS talent management and leadership development for SES
- The Centre for Leadership and Learning has worked across agencies to develop leadership capabilities required for the APS to meet its current and future challenges. The Centre for Leadership and Learning collaborated with agencies to deliver:
  - [SES orientation program](#)
  - [Leadership programs](#) including programs for SES Band 1s, SES Band 2s, SES Band 3s , EL2s and [Women in Leadership](#)
  - The [Sir Roland Wilson Foundation Scholarships](#) which fund PhD study and;
  - [The Jawun Program](#), a program of Indigenous community secondments for high-performing, high-potential EL staff.

In 2017 the Secretaries Board endorsed a set of [leadership capabilities](#) to reflect what is needed from our senior leaders. These are key to shaping long-term organisational strategy, developing high-performing workforces, and harnessing the benefits of diverse thinking and perspectives to find new ways of delivering outcomes. In serving government and citizens, leaders need to build the capability of their teams and organisations, provide vision and direction, be influential and collaborative and look for new ways of doing things that add public value.

### **Recruiting the best talent**

In a competitive labour market, the APS needs to utilise best-practice approaches to recruitment, leverage technology and innovation to attract and recruit high-performing, skilled employees from a diverse range of backgrounds. The Commission provides advice and guidance in relation to:

- The *Public Service Act 1999*, the Public Service Regulations 1999 (the Regulations) and the Public Service Commissioner's Directions 1999
- Streamlining recruitment practices to ensure they are as efficient and effective as they can be
- Attracting talented staff from diverse backgrounds
- Actively partnering with Human Resources practitioners to provide tailored advice and build capabilities in agencies.

We are continuing to improve the way we attract candidates, through enterprise-wide entry programs, such as the AGGP, and strategic approaches to attract skilled individuals at all stages of their career.

### Australian Government Graduate Program

One of the key strategies to attract talent with a diverse mix of skills and experiences into the APS is Graduate Programs. Since 2014, 9,113 graduates have been recruited into the APS.

In 2020, informed by user and stakeholder research with graduates and APS graduate recruiters, and a review of models in other jurisdictions, the Commission and partner agencies came together in new ways to recruit graduates. A new graduate portal on the APSjobs platform was delivered alongside a new generalist recruitment stream and new professional and specialist recruitment streams, complementing the existing HR, Digital and Indigenous pathways. As a result, in 2020 graduates had more opportunities to apply once and be considered for roles in multiple departments and agencies. Enhanced partnerships across the service helped to strengthen APS graduate recruitment, further establish the APS as a graduate employer of choice and attract graduates with diverse skills and capabilities needed for the future.

### Workforce Mobility and Surge

The Commission has delivered a number of initiatives to facilitate moves within and across agencies, trial new ways of supporting mobility, and enhance the value of mobility as a strategic tool, these include the:

- The Jawun Program, 2011 - ongoing
- Workforce Management Taskforce, 2020-ongoing.

The current state of mobility within the 2020 APS Employee Census shows that 22.3 per cent of employees moved temporarily in the 12 months prior to the Census. Just under half of all APS employees (45.9 per cent) reported having ever taken a temporary move. Transfer rates between APS agencies have more than doubled from 1.8 per cent of employees in 2001 to 3.7 per cent in 2020. These movements include permanent transfers, promotions and temporary transfers to another agency, but do not include secondments.

The mobilisation of the APS was critical to addressing major events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, wide-spread bushfires and significant weather events in 2020. The APS mobilised en masse to support the response to COVID-19. More than 2,000 employees came from across the APS to help Services Australia respond to requests for help from the public. Responses from the 2020 APS Employee Census indicated that more than 11,000 employees worked in a different team and over 2,500 employees worked in a different agency to support the COVID-19 response.

The Commission played a central role in supporting the APS workforce response throughout the pandemic. This included the deployment of capacity and specialist capabilities to critical COVID-19 efforts, rapid agency-level digital capability deployment and the upskilling of wider staff cohorts to enable working from home arrangements. These efforts were found to be effective by the Australian National Audit Office in their Report, [\*Management of the Australian Public Service's Workforce Response to COVID-19\*](#). The Commission has since established a taskforce to build the Surge Reserve as an ongoing function to continue to rapidly respond to future crises.

## Review of the APSC Centre for Leadership and Learning

In July 2020 the Commission initiated a review to consider the future role of the Centre for Leadership and Learning (CLL) in supporting learning and development initiatives in the APS. Dr Subho Banerjee led a review of the Commission's role in learning and development across the APS. The review included consultation with CLL staff within the Commission, many Departmental Secretaries and Agency Heads, Chief Operating Officers, and senior APS staff responsible for agency learning and development programs.

The [recommendations from the review](#) reflect ideas from extensive consultation on how we can continue to uplift capability across the APS. Key themes which emerged from the review include:

- The need for greater collaboration and engagement by the Commission with agencies on learning and development directions and initiatives
- Recognition that the Commission has a unique role at the centre of APS learning and development, and therefore has authority and ability to endorse standards and guidelines for learning content, and methods for evaluation and review
- There is high demand for support for the Professional Streams and the Heads of Professional Streams, including through coordination and facilitation of learning approaches across the Professional Streams
- The need for the Commission to provide high quality talent and leadership programs and to enable more co-design of learning products with agencies, including building fundamental capabilities of public service craft.

A key outcome of the review is the establishment of the APS Academy, which will commence operating from July 2021.

## Integrity

A focus on integrity in the APS is not new as this is fundamental to how we work. All APS employees are bound by the same set of values and a single Code of Conduct set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*. Together, these underpin our work and how we serve the Australian people and the government of the day.

The APS is committed to developing and implementing solutions to integrity challenges faced by APS employees through best practice advice and a contemporary approach to embedding integrity and living the APS Values.

Integrity is a key driver of public trust. For the first time in decades, trust in Australian public services, is rising. Another key indicator of integrity in the APS is the levels of corruption witnessed by employees. APS Census information consistently indicates low levels of corruption in the APS. In 2019, 4.4 per cent of respondents to the APS Employee Census reported observing corruption which was a very slight drop from 2018. In 2020, however, only 3.5 per cent of respondents have indicated they have witnessed corruption. It should be noted that the definition of corruption in the APS Census is broad. It includes cheating on flex time sheets and misuse of leave. Data shows APS employees are confident in reporting corruption.

The APS Review recommended the APS reinforce its institutional integrity to sustain the highest standards of ethics. The Government supported this recommendation and extended this to include mandatory integrity

training. The Commission will be delivering this recommendation through an e-module for new starters in the APS in March 2021. This course sets out the foundational integrity aspects in the APS to ensure all employees who are new to the APS have the best start in this space.

Following the APS Review, the Commission asked former APS Commissioner, Mr Stephen Sedgwick AO to look into the Australian Public Service's approach to institutional integrity. The [report's findings](#) highlighted that APS employees are dedicated, and driven to deliver for all Australians. This is underpinned by robust integrity frameworks that ensure staff are able to make decisions that uphold integrity. The Commission accepted all ten recommendations of the report which are designed to:

- Reinforce the APS's strong integrity culture
- Drive a pro-integrity approach, and
- Ensure the APS remains vigilant in maintaining its integrity.

### Diversity and Inclusion

The Commission leads a range of actions to encourage increased workforce diversity and promote more inclusive workplaces across the APS.

The main way the Commission does this is through dedicated diversity and inclusion strategies, which have actions that agencies then apply to their specific operating context. Since 2014 the following strategies have delivered increased diversity in the workforce and inclusive workplace cultures:

- [As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19](#)
- [Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015-2018](#)
- [Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24](#)
- [Balancing the Future: Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-19](#)
- Realising the Benefits for All: Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2026 (currently being finalised)

Setting targets has been a key mechanism used to increase the diversity of the APS. There are now targets for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability. Additionally, a significant amount of effort has resulted in the proportion of female SES employees increasing over the past 4 years, from 40% in 2014 to 48% in 2020.

Each Strategy is evaluated to identify outcomes achieved and to inform further initiatives to increase diversity in the APS. Evaluations of previous strategies identified that they were the catalyst for many changes in practice and culture but that more needs to be done to maintain momentum and sustain the gains we have achieved. The evaluations have informed the development of the new strategies and have identified the following common elements that agencies need to pursue to enact inclusion in a meaningful and impactful way:

- Visible and committed senior leadership on the issue of diversity and inclusion and more specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, disability and gender;
- Corporate teams and employee networks must ensure internal policies and initiatives are fit for purpose and maximise employee engagement; and
- Inclusion is prioritised and seen as critical to driving high performance and a positive workplace culture.

### Workplace Relations and Employment Policy

The Commission works with APS agencies to develop, advise and share information on contemporary employment practices, as well as assisting agencies with implementation. This has been facilitated through direct engagement, updated guidance and development of streamlined mechanisms.

The Commission provides advice and guidance in relation to:

- The Government's Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2020, enterprise bargaining and determinations issued under Section 24(1) of the Public Service Act 1999 as well as determinations issued under agency specific legislation.
- Employment policy on workforce matters as it relates to the Commission, including SES employment matters and the SES Cap.
- Provision of advice regarding the recruitment and appointment of agency heads.

## 4. Looking Forward

In 2021 and beyond, the Commission will continue to deliver and implement initiatives to strengthen the capability of the APS. The Commission will continue to prioritise the delivery of initiatives set out in the *Delivering for Australians* response to the 2018-19 Independent Review of the APS, including continued focus on talent and leadership development.

### Key Initiatives

#### APS Workforce Strategy

The government reiterated the importance of an APS-wide Workforce Strategy in the response to the 2019 Independent Review of the APS. The APS Workforce Strategy will set a whole-of-enterprise direction for managing the APS workforce and shaping the way the APS, as a large and diverse enterprise, attracts, develops, retains and utilises its people.

The APS Workforce Strategy is being finalised. It is an action plan to ensure the whole APS enterprise is positioned to deliver effectively and efficiently for the Government, Parliament and the Australian public. As a strategy for the whole enterprise, it is likely to focus on the following action areas:

- Recruiting and developing people with the expertise and skills we need, ensuring we can deliver high-quality outcomes.



- Embracing data and technology, and employing flexible workforce models – to better understand the needs of Australians, inform policy and implementation, and deploying capability where and when it is needed. And;
- Continuing to instil integrity and purpose-driven leadership – essential for building trust through coordinated, seamless services that are aligned to needs, and to steer this institution forward.

### **APS Learning and Development Strategy**

We will deliver and implement an APS Learning and Development Strategy to underpin a highly capable and future ready service. The Strategy, which is currently under development, will support the APS workforce to develop the critical skills needed to deliver services to the Australian public and Government both now, and to meet future goals. It will support APS employees to take greater responsibility for their ongoing development and recommend the settings that will enable improved access to quality learning and development at the point of need.

### **APS Academy**

The Commission will support One-APS capability development through the establishment of an [APS Academy](#) from 1 July 2021 to lead the transformation of APS learning and development practice. This was [announced](#) by The Hon Ben Morton MP on 3 February 2021 and detailed further in the [Speech to the APS, State of the Service Roadshow](#) on 19 February 2021.

The Academy will operate as a national, networked model in partnership with APS agencies. It will connect with existing APS centres of excellence, as well as extend networks with ANZSOG, academic institutions, and other specialist providers.

The Academy's development focus will be on building capabilities central to the 'APS craft': in short, leadership, integrity, governance, policy, delivery and engagement. It will emphasise the importance of a broad suite of learning approaches, including experiential learning, on-the-job training, mobility and secondments, as well as some intensive face-to-face course offerings.

### **Diversity and Inclusion Strategies**

The Commission leads a broad commitment to building a diverse workforce and inclusive workplaces. We will continue to strengthen the diversity and inclusion of the APS workforce through the implementation of diversity strategies across the APS. We are working closely with agencies to consider specific initiatives as part of their workforce strategies. Agencies will use the flexibility built into the Strategies and consider their current level of maturity with respect to inclusion to inform how they approach the implementation of actions. The Commission will facilitate the sharing of good practice resources and guidance.

The Commission is currently developing the new APS Gender Equality Strategy for release in 2021. The refresh is in partnership with the Office for Women and the project team included secondees from a number of APS agencies.

The Commission will develop and outline a monitoring and evaluation framework to continue to capture APS wide progress on diversity and inclusion. This will include what is expected of agencies and will streamline reporting requirements.

### **Graduate Programs**

In 2021 the APS is collaborating under the umbrella of the AGGP to attract and recruit graduates. The AGGP includes individual APS department/agency graduate recruitment and programs, as well as professional and specialist streams (e.g. HR and digital). It will also include a strengthened APS marketing campaign under the AGGP banner, including an enhanced graduate employment value proposition, an APS virtual career fair, social media and marketing activities.

As it matures, the AGGP will embed a one-APS operating model 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.

### **APS Mobility Framework**

The experience and lessons learned from mobility initiatives are informing the development of an APS Mobility Framework. The Framework will support the APS to make strategic use of employee mobility, particularly for three high value uses: to address surges in demand for existing services or new priorities; to solve complex policy, program or service delivery problems; and to develop employees and create a pipeline of talent.

We are also building upon mobility experiences to create an APS Surge Reserve to assist with large-scale responses to unforeseen workloads in the future. To meet the challenges of coming years, we will continue to share and deploy resources rapidly, increase efficiencies and deliver effectively against government priorities.

### **APS Surge Reserve**

APS agencies are working together to strengthen the readiness of the APS to respond to future crises with an APS Surge Reserve (the Surge Reserve). The Surge Reserve will provide the capacity to rapidly mobilise APS members in large numbers in response to a crisis. As at February 2021, more than 2100 staff had nominated for the Surge Reserve.

### **Pro Integrity Culture**

Strengthening the pro-integrity culture in the APS is critical to maintaining and fostering integrity, so that APS employees are driven by a genuine commitment to upholding and championing integrity as a core component of a professional public service.

Integrity is a core craft capability and the Commission will be building on foundational training to strengthen institutional integrity across the APS. The Commission is currently developing targeted training to support APS employees at each stage of their career. This is in recognition that as people progress through the ranks, their exposure to integrity challenges, and their responsibility for driving a culture of integrity becomes more acute.

These courses will be delivered through the APS Academy. The Commission is partnering with key agencies in the development of these more targeted integrity offerings to ensure they are practical and equip APS employees to navigate more complex integrity issues that arise throughout their career.