



Australian Government  
Australian Public Service Commission



Australian Public Service Reform

# Annual Progress Report 2024



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# Executive Summary

This Progress Report is the second annual update on progress towards the Government's public sector reform agenda. APS Reform strengthens the public service, enabling it to adapt to changes in public needs and expectations of government. The transformation effort outlined in the following pages builds on previous reform efforts to create a public service prepared for our present and future.

Enduring transformation of the APS's increasingly diverse workforce of over 185,000, spread across Australia and more than 100 agencies and government entities, requires sustained and iterative effort. The areas of future focus considered in this report consolidate reform progress over the past 2 years and outline the public service's approach to a culture of continuous improvement.

This report notes the public sector's progress across all reform outcomes, including through the landmark passage of the *Public Service Amendment Act 2024* in June 2024. The Australian Public Service Commission is working with 9 lead agencies and departments to progress and embed 59 reform initiatives across the service. These initiatives span the breadth of the public service's diverse range of responsibilities. The government's 4 priority pillars, announced in October 2022, continue to provide the framework for further strengthening the public service.

The first phase of APS Reform sets the foundations for transformation of the public sector, including to support an initial portfolio of 44 reform initiatives. The case studies included in [Appendix A](#) of this report outline the positive effect these initiatives are already having for the community and in the service.

From November 2023, APS Reform transitioned to a second phase. This next phase reinforces and embeds early reform achievements, with a further 15 initiatives to build lasting capabilities that empower all public servants to do what is right, and to do it well.

The second phase of APS Reform builds on the learnings of previous efforts, with a continued emphasis on the strategic use of governance mechanisms to drive coordinated and effective implementation of reforms, and on collaborative efforts to manage implementation risks and challenges. Underpinning these efforts is the APSC's continued support for whole-of-service investment in key capabilities that enable reform outcomes, including change management, partnerships and engagement skills.

Of the program's 59 initiatives, around one-third are substantively complete and the remaining are progressing through design, planning and delivery stages. Together they are helping create a future where public servants are champions of integrity, conscious of community and business needs, practise inclusion and are highly capable. As reform initiatives have progressed through the design, planning and delivery stages, the APS has continued to improve its program delivery model, including maturing the governance framework through the specialised APS Reform Program Board, a new emphasis on evaluation, and a change management approach to enabling APS-wide change.

To maintain momentum, the APSC has embedded a cascading system of evaluation to monitor and report on progress across 4 levels: initiative-level delivery and risk; outcome-level performance; program-level success; and impact-level research based on lived experience. There are 51 metrics underpinning 16 overarching performance measures that enable objective monitoring of success over time. The system of evaluation aligns with the structured approach to manage risk, to ensure that risks are identified, continuously assessed, actively managed and reviewed against developments in a dynamic delivery environment. Over the past year, the service identified and successfully managed 4 primary whole-of-reform strategic risks.

## Progress Report sections

The first 3 sections provide an overarching understanding of the APS Reform agenda and its impact on the public service and the Australian public:

- **Section 1: Overview of APS Reform** discusses the ongoing commitment to service excellence, the overall approach to delivering service-wide reform and the transition into a phase of reinforcement, embedding and targeting. It also covers Australia's role as an international leader in public sector reform.
- **Section 2: Progress of APS Reform initiatives** discusses the implementation and progress achieved during the second year of APS Reform, contextualised according to the overarching objectives for the reform agenda. Of the 59 initiatives, 22 are complete, 20 are in the delivery stage, 8 are in the planning stage, 8 are in the design stage and one is on-hold for future consideration. Progress has been made against every reform outcome.
- **Section 3: Impact** discusses the impact of APS Reform on the community and the service, with case studies demonstrating impacts against each pillar of reform.

The final 4 sections provide a detailed account of how the agenda has been built, supported and used to drive whole-of-service improvement, and areas of future focus:

- **Section 4: Program delivery model** discusses the key components in governance and decision-making, program delivery, reporting and engagement. It also covers the importance of change management to secure lasting results, and the ongoing efforts to boost capability across the service to enable change.
- **Section 5: Performance framework** discusses the framework used to measure performance, including metrics, data sources and how we are planning on reporting on the progress of reform over time.
- **Section 6: Program risks** discusses the approach to proactively identifying and managing risks. It also discusses the greatest overarching risks identified through regular reporting over the second year of reform, and how combined, centralised and project-led mitigations have successfully managed these risks.
- **Section 7: Areas of future focus** considers the importance of embedding enduring outcomes through the second phase of reform (and beyond), and discusses how the APS can be 'future-ready' in giving effect to a range of cross-cutting national priorities, ensuring that the APS continues to work for Australia, both now and into the future.

# Section 1: Overview of APS Reform

4 pillars	8 outcomes	
The APS embodies integrity in everything it does	Public sector employees act with and champion integrity	<p style="font-size: 48px; text-align: center;">59</p> <p style="text-align: center;">initiatives with potential for additional reforms based on an incremental and adaptive approach</p>
	Public service employees are stewards of the public service	
The APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and services	The APS delivers human and user-centred policy and service excellence	
	The APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples	
The APS is a model employer	The APS's employee value proposition is attractive	
	The APS sets the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity	
	The APS sets the standard for First Nations employment and cultural competency	
The APS has the capability to do its job well	The APS continuously improves its capabilities	

## Sources of APS Reform

The Thodey Review	International best practice	National Agreement on Closing the Gap	Independent reviews and government inquiries	COVID-19 lessons learned
				

{Figure 1: APS Reform on a page}

## The APS is working for Australia

The Australian Public Service has a steadfast role in supporting the prosperity of our communities and industries. Australians want to feel safe and have a good standard of living and financial well-being. They want access to affordable healthcare and schools, their data secure and borders safe. A strong public service is essential to the health, wealth, and livelihood of Australians, and to serve the community through every stage of life.

The APS is doing more than ever to deliver services across the country, to provide Australians with easy access to government services where and when they need them, in a way that suits them best. The APS is boosting numbers of essential frontline staff, expanding its service delivery footprint, and modernising online service delivery.

The APS works to keep Australians safe at home and overseas, to safeguard the future prosperity and security of the nation, and to protect Australia's natural resources and natural wonders. It is not enough for the APS to simply keep up with our changing world, it needs to be at the forefront to support the government to ensure Australia remains safe and prosperous.

The APS is building trust and putting people first. Each public servant has an important role in maintaining and improving the APS for the Australian community, in deepening the public's faith in the integrity of the service, and in ensuring the APS is a trusted and reliable partner to Australian people and businesses. The APS is listening to Australians and looking to the future. Across the nation, the APS is working for Australia.

## APS Reform combines support from the centre with the power of the service

In December 2023, responsibility for coordinating delivery of the APS Reform program moved from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Australian Public Service Commission. While still under the direction of Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for the Public Service, this move leveraged the APSC's natural role in supporting improvements across the service, and ensures that reform and continuous improvement are embedded as business-as-usual activities across the public service.

APS Reform has been a priority for Secretaries Board over the course of 2023 and 2024, consistent with the Board's legislated function 'to take responsibility for the stewardship of the APS and for developing and implementing strategies to improve the APS' as set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*. Secretaries Board provides strategic oversight of the reform agenda, with a particular focus on shaping and guiding significant cross-portfolio initiatives, or initiatives that may have flow-on impacts across the service. APS Reform work that is more operational in nature is then considered through the Board's supporting governance structures, including the Chief Operating Officers Committee.

The APSC is an institutional steward of the APS and its legislated mandate includes public service integrity, workforce management and capability. It supports a trusted and contemporary APS through setting the standards and expectations on integrity, behaviour and stewardship, uplifting the capability and capacity of the public sector workforce, and fostering engagement and partnership with people, communities and businesses. The APSC partners with agencies across the APS to strengthen the public service through the APS Reform agenda, giving effect to the strategic direction agreed by Secretaries Board and the Government.

The APSC is enabling, supporting and stewarding whole-of-government delivery of the Reform agenda, aligned with the 4 pillars of APS Reform:

1. An APS that embodies integrity in everything it does.
2. An APS that puts people and business at the centre of policy and services.
3. An APS that is a model employer.
4. An APS that has the capability to do its job well.

The APSC partners with agencies and departments leading and implementing reforms across the service, supporting improvements in over 100 agencies and government entities. From the centre of government, the APSC uses its broad perspective to identify and prioritise reform implementation opportunities across the public service. Experience throughout the APS provides the APSC with key insights on what is working and what needs more attention.

## APS Reform is strengthening the public service and building trust in public institutions

Public sector reform is a recurring feature of public administration, although the degree of investment and ambition has varied over time. The current APS Reform agenda builds on a range of reform efforts to date, and is positioning the APS to be future fit and capable of adapting and evolving to meet changing and rising expectations.

The APS Reform agenda is primarily focused on delivering transformations that benefit multiple teams or agencies at the same time. It is designed to deliver the changes that can help bolster public trust in our key institutions.

The APS has a unique whole-of-nation perspective and responsibility to deliver for all Australians. Reform initiatives acknowledge the APS as a critical national asset in effective, coordinated, and whole-of-nation responses to current and emerging economic, social and environmental national priorities.

Reform initiatives that enhance trust in the public service will strengthen the APS's role as a national asset. International case studies from the UK, New Zealand, Singapore and Canada, and others, draw a clear line between strengthening public sector reform and bolstering trust in government, thereby reinforcing national security and democratic stability. Key to this is uplifting the capability of the public sector to genuinely connect with and serve Australians.

APS Reform needs to be both top-down and bottom-up in its delivery to achieve whole-of-program outcomes. Some reforms, such as a unified workplace bargaining approach, are most effective when they are simultaneously embedded across the service. Other reforms, such as building specialist workforce capabilities, can spread more organically from one agency to another. These complementary approaches support both consistent implementation of APS-wide reforms, and the creation of an environment in which agency-specific reform insights and successes can be shared and replicated.



## The APS is reinforcing and embedding a program of work to deliver lasting and effective change

The APS Reform agenda outlines the government's plan for a stronger APS. The Reform agenda comprises 59 initiatives led by 9 agencies, provided in Figure 2. Progress varies from early development to full completion.

Aligned with the 4 pillars of reform outlined by the government, delivery of APS Reform initiatives have been prioritised towards areas satisfying one or more of the following criteria:

- Addresses an identified and clear immediate gap or need – for instance, reducing reliance on contractors and consultants, and building specialised expertise within the service.
- Targets areas of current pressure, where the pressure is expected to continue or grow – for instance, strengthening the pro-integrity culture of the APS to address failures in decision-making or leadership.
- Creates foundational change that is necessary for further future improvements – for instance, establishing structures that help oversee, guide or inform the service, such as the National Anti-Corruption Commission or the Charter of Partnerships and Engagement.

The prioritisation of reform initiatives considers the capacity of the service to develop and implement reform. Embedding multiple reforms simultaneously risks overwhelming work areas, exceeding their capacity to effectively implement the reforms, and jeopardising business-as-usual operations. To this end, APS Reform initiatives are developed on a staggered timeline, with clear guidance of expectations delivered to agencies to support their efforts.

## The Reform agenda has entered a phase of reinforcement, embedding and targeting

In its second year, the government's APS Reform agenda has moved to a new phase of reform. Over the course of the first year, the APSC established an implementation approach for reform to support a multi-year effort. This first phase included a portfolio of an initial 44 initiatives. In this foundational phase, the focus was on developing a clear program logic and delivery model, and launching initiatives that would meaningfully contribute to all 4 of the government's reform pillars. An APS-wide transformation strategy was defined to guide efforts across the service and deliver outcomes in the dynamic and decentralised context of the APS.

The second phase of reform focuses on reinforcing and embedding early achievements. Additional targeted reforms emphasise integrity, partnerships and engagement, and capability. The delivery platform for reform is maturing, including through the strategic use of governance mechanisms to drive coordinated and effective implementation of reforms. Implementation risks and challenges are more robustly managed, and change management approaches underpin the path to achieving outcomes.

The current phase highlights the need and benefit of working closely together. Agencies are working closer than ever to support implementation, through networked sharing of insights, capability uplift programs and improved guidance on how to embed reform initiatives across the service.

## The government remains committed to investing in APS Reform

In October 2022, the government announced \$72.9 million in funding for the APS Reform agenda over 3 years including:

- \$40.8 million over 3 years to deliver immediate benefits for the public sector and broader Australian public
- \$25 million to establish an APS Capability Reinvestment Fund
- \$7.1 million reprioritised from existing resources, to establish the APS Net Zero Unit in the Department of Finance.

In the 2023–24 Budget, funding to support APS Reform included:

- \$8.4 million from the Contingency Reserve to build capability under the first round of the Capability Reinvestment Fund
- \$10.9 million to establish an in-house consulting function
- \$3.4 million to boost First Nations employment in the APS.

This commitment ensures current work on the cultural, structural and legislative changes to strengthen the APS will have continuing impact, and support further reform.

## Australia as an international leader in public sector reform

Public services across the world are facing common challenges in trust, capability and workforce sustainability. Governments can, should and do learn from each other's experience and approaches to meet these challenges. The Australian public sector's focus on delivering the best for the community and the government is of interest to other countries, with regular international interest in the substance and approach of Australia's public sector reform. Likewise, the APS looks to like-minded countries and the OECD for positive reform efforts that could be adapted for the Australian context.

Building and maintaining a world-class public service has positioned Australia well by global standards. Australia ranked 5th in the OECD's 2023 Digital Government Index. It was one of only 3 countries that improved across all 5 drivers of public trust from 2021 to 2023 (fairness, reliability, openness, responsiveness and integrity).<sup>1</sup>

This improvement in public trust demonstrates the emphasis the APS has placed on improving integrity outcomes. Australians' trust in the Federal Government increased significantly from 38% in 2021 to 46% in 2023, exceeding the OECD average of 39%.

Australia performed above the OECD average on a range of indicators, including:

- 68% are satisfied with the administrative services they used, an important driver of trust in the civil service, compared to a 66% OECD average.
- Australians find it more likely than the OECD average that their application for government benefits would be treated fairly: 64% of people in Australia find this likely, compared to the OECD average of 52%.

<sup>1</sup> OECD Survey of Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions, 2024

{Figure 2: Reform program logic and summary of program}

4 pillars	8 outcomes	59 initiatives led by 9 departments and agencies					
The APS embodies integrity in everything it does	(1) Public sector employees act with and champion integrity	Behaviour & outcomes-based performance management			National Anti-Corruption Commission		
		Modernise the review of workplace decisions			Improving protections for whistleblowers		
		Strengthen pro-integrity systems and culture			PGPA Fraud Rule anti-corruption provisions		
		Set the Standard Report implementation			Review public sector board appointments		
		Merit-based appointments and performance of Senior APS Executives			Own motion powers for APS Commissioner		
		Public Service Integrity Maturity Model			Post-employment conflicts of interest for Agency Heads and SES		
		SES integrity capability			Limitation on Ministerial directions to Agency Heads		
	(2) Public service employees are stewards of the public service	APS Purpose Statement			Extension of APS Values		
		Increase transparency of Secretaries Board			Stewardship as APS Value		
		Annual Ministerial statement on progress of reform					
The APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and services	(3) The APS delivers human and user-centred policy and service excellence	Long-Term Insights Briefings			Charter of Partnerships and Engagement		
		Expand Survey of Trust in Australian public services			Data and Digital Government Strategy		
		Vision for user centred service excellence			Improve quality of digital and ICT investment		
		Outcomes based contracting			myGov User Audit		
		Embed the Partnerships Priorities subcommittee			Engagement and service excellence guidance		
	Quality external engagement			Strengthening transparency of agency customer feedback			
(4) The APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples	Actions to support genuine partnerships with First Nations people			National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform One			
The APS is a model employer	(5) The APS' employee value proposition is attractive	Publish APS Census and action plans			New Workplace Relations Policy		
		Net Zero APS 2030			Principles of flexible work in the APS		
		Maternity Leave Act review implementation			Embed Secretaries Board Sub-Committee on Future of Work		
		Innovative hiring practices					
	(6) The APS sets the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity	Reduce gender pay gap and report publicly on progress			Ambitious diversity commitments		
		(7) The APS sets the standard for First Nations employment and cultural competency	APS First Nations cultural capability and boosting First Nations employment			Monitoring & accountability to embed Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3	

The APS has the capability to do its job well	(8) The APS continuously improves its capabilities	Mobility across the service			APS Digital Workforce Plan						
		Capability reviews			Strategic commissioning framework						
		In-house consulting model			Strengthen APS partnerships with Ministers						
		Embed a culture of evaluation			Strategic foresight capability						
		Optimal Management Structures			Establish Asia and the Pacific capability						
		Audit of employment			Delivering Great Policy						
		APS Capability Reinvestment Fund Round 1 & Round 2			Leadership at all levels and at scale						
		Lead agency	APSC	PM&C	NIAA	AGD	Treasury	DTA	DSS	Services Australia	Finance

# Section 2: Progress of APS Reform initiatives

With the second phase of the government's APS Reform agenda underway, the number of APS Reform initiatives has grown by 15, to a total portfolio of 59 initiatives. Completed, ongoing and additional initiatives continue to incrementally and adaptively build on each other. The most significant milestone over the past year was the passage of the *Public Service Amendment Act 2024*. To strengthen integrity across the APS, the Act added a new APS Value of Stewardship and further clarified the responsibilities of Ministers and Agency Heads. To put citizens and business at the centre, it established an ongoing series of Long-term Insights Briefings on topics that matter to the Australian community. The Act also requires agencies to publish their APS Employee Census results, building transparency and positioning the APS as a model employer that listens to and addresses employees' issues. To enable a strong and capable workforce, the Act requires large departments and agencies to regularly undertake independent and transparent capability reviews, and publish action plans responding to findings.

## The APS is tracking delivery and progress across all outcomes

All APS Reform initiatives go through a project lifecycle, progressing from an initial concept to an outcome in the workplace or Australian community. The APSC tracks projects according to 4 phases: design, planning, delivery and completion.

- Of the 15 second phase initiatives, 8 are in the design phase. Scope, scale or resource questions remain to be resolved before they progress further, including identifying relevant stakeholders for consultation.
- Eight initiatives are in the planning phase, with major milestones identified and projects underway.
- Twenty initiatives are in the delivery phase, having met most milestones. They are being implemented across relevant agencies, or their respective operations or services are being provided.
- Twenty-two initiatives are complete, an increase of 13 over the past year. Project teams have completed all relevant milestones, and will continue to assess impacts against intended outcomes. Completion refers specifically to the progress of the project team. Full implementation across the service, and associated impacts on workplaces and communities, may occur over longer timeframes.

The following graphic (Figure 3) summarises initiatives according to their current delivery status, as reported by project teams as at November 2024.

Design	Planning	Delivery	Complete						
14%	14%	34%	38%						
of initiatives ( 8 of 59 )	of initiatives ( 8 of 59 )	of initiatives ( 20 of 59 )	of initiatives ( 22 of 59 )						
Extension of APS Values	Review public sector board appointments	Behaviour & outcomes-based performance management	Annual Ministerial statement on progress of reform						
Merit-based appointments and performance of Senior APS Executives	Improving protections for whistleblowers	Limitation on Ministerial directions to Agency Heads	Increase transparency of Secretaries Board						
APS Integrity Dashboard	Own motion powers for APS Commissioner	Strengthen pro-integrity systems and culture	National Anti-Corruption Commission						
Post-employment conflicts of interest for Agency Heads and SES	Modernise the review of workplace decisions	Data and Digital Government Strategy	Stewardship as APS Value						
Strengthening transparency of agency customer feedback	Outcomes Based Contracting	Long-term Insights Briefings	PGPA Fraud Rule anti-corruption provisions						
Engagement and service excellence guidance	Actions to support genuine partnerships with First Nations people	National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform One	SES integrity capability						
Mobility across the service	Monitoring and Accountability to embed Closing the Gap Priority Three	myGov User Audit	Set the Standard Report implementation						
Innovative Hiring Practices	APS Data, Digital and Cyber Workforce Plan	Quality external engagement	Charter of Partnerships and Engagement						
		Improve quality of digital and ICT investment	Embed the Partnerships Priorities Sub-committee						
		APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Employment Strategy	Expand Survey of Trust in Australian public services						
		APS First Nations cultural capability & boosting First Nations employment	Vision for user centred service excellence						
		APS Net Zero 2030	Embed Secretaries Board Sub-Committee on Future of Work						
		Maternity Leave Act review implementation	New Workplace Relations Policy						
		Embed a culture of evaluation	Publish APS Census and action plans						
		Establish Asia and the Pacific capability	Reduce gender pay gap and report publicly on progress						
		In-house consulting model (Australian Government Consulting)	Principle of flexible work in the APS						
		Strategic Commissioning Framework	Capability reviews						
		Leadership at all levels and at scale	Audit of employment						
		APS Capability Reinvestment Fund Round 1	Delivering Great Policy						
		APS Capability Reinvestment Fund Round 2	Strategic foresight capability						
			Strengthening APS partnerships with Ministers						
			Optimal Management Structures guidance						
<p>APS Purpose Statement</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Stage 2 initiative</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Initiative currently on hold</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The APS embodies integrity in everything it does</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The APS is a model employer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The APS has the capability to do its job well</td> </tr> </table>		Stage 2 initiative	Initiative currently on hold	The APS embodies integrity in everything it does	The APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and services	The APS is a model employer	The APS has the capability to do its job well		
Stage 2 initiative									
Initiative currently on hold									
The APS embodies integrity in everything it does									
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The APS is a model employer									
The APS has the capability to do its job well									

{Figure 3: Summary of initiatives by stage of project lifecycle}

## Pillar 1: The APS embodies integrity in everything it does

**The ambition:** The APS acts with integrity and fairness, and is accountable and transparent in what it does. This provides better and more enduring support for government and helps build public trust.

### Outcome 1: Public sector employees act with and champion integrity

**Outcome in summary:** Ensuring public sector employees act with and champion integrity is key to achieving outcomes for government, the parliament, and the public. Understanding the Commonwealth integrity architecture ensures a strategic and effective approach to APS staff doing the right thing at the right time, and builds their capability to navigate 'shades of grey'. This increases trust and confidence in the APS and government, and reinforces ongoing reforms led by Secretaries Board, including through the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours.

Four initiatives under this outcome are complete and are strengthening integrity across the public sector.

- The **National Anti-Corruption Commission** was established on 1 July 2023. It provides deterrence, detection and prevention operations through education, monitoring, investigation and referral. In the 12 months since its establishment, the NACC received over 3,000 referrals. As at 30 October 2024, it was conducting 26 corruption investigations, and overseeing or monitoring 19 investigations by other agencies.
- The **Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Fraud and Corruption Rule** came into effect on 1 July 2024. The amendments to the PGPA Rule are part of the new Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework. They require accountable authorities of non-corporate and corporate Commonwealth entities to take all reasonable measures to prevent, detect and deal with corruption and fraud.
- The **SES Integrity Masterclass** has been developed to support SES staff to strengthen integrity culture within their organisation. Delivered by the APS Academy, this ongoing course empowers SES to fulfil their role as stewards of a pro-integrity culture, and supports them to create safe environments where integrity discussions are mainstream and staff can consistently and positively engage with integrity.
- Implementing the recommendations of the **Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces**, a shared responsibility of the Parliament.

Five initiatives under this outcome continue to progress from the first phase of reform.

- Legislative amendments to the *Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023* to establish the Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission received Royal Assent on 17 September 2024. The establishment of the Commission completes implementation of the report's government-led recommendations.
- The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce, established to oversee implementation of the recommendations from the **Set the Standard Report**, held its final meeting in September 2024. It has published implementation information on its website.

- Through the 2024–25 Budget, the government committed \$1.8 million over 2 years to review the implementation of the Set the Standard Report. The review is due to commence in April 2025.
- To **strengthen pro-integrity systems and culture**, Secretaries Board set up an APS Integrity Taskforce. The Taskforce presented its findings in the report *Louder than Words: An APS Integrity Action Plan*, published on 17 November 2023. Work is underway to implement the recommendations, including to ensure the APS has the right frameworks in place to recruit and recognise people whose behaviour is consistent with the APS Values.
- The *Public Service Amendment Act 2024* **clarifies limitations for Ministerial directions of Agency Heads**, making it explicit that Ministers must not direct Agency Heads on individual employment matters. This reinforces the apolitical role of the APS.

There are 5 new initiatives under this outcome for the second phase of reform.

- Improvements to **merit-based appointments and performance frameworks for Secretaries of Australian Government departments, Agency Heads and the APS Commissioner**. This will explore options to improve transparency and introduce additional merit considerations and safeguards into processes for appointing and monitoring performance of senior APS executives. This work is designed to boost public confidence that government institutions are merit-based, apolitical and managed in ways that uphold the principles of integrity and impartiality.
- The *Public Service Amendment Act (No. 2) 2024* received Royal Assent on 26 August 2024. It came into effect the following day. The Act amends the *Public Service Act 1999* to clarify the APS Commissioner's power to inquire into and determine whether current and former Agency Heads have breached the APS Code of Conduct.
- Additional work is underway to consider new legislative **own-motion powers for the APS Commissioner**. These would enable the Commissioner to instigate inquiries and investigations into current and former APS employees, without waiting for matters to be referred to them.
- Work is underway to address potential **post-employment conflicts of interest for Agency Heads**. To support the underlying system, the APSC is building an **APS Integrity Data Dashboard** to map pressures and assess integrity maturity levels in the APS. The Dashboard will collect core integrity indicators and metrics to assess what is and is not working in relation to government performing its role in upholding public integrity values.
- **Modernising the review of workplace decisions** provision in the *Public Service Regulations 2023*, to strengthen regulation of agency compliance with the merit principle for promotion reviews.

## Outcome 2: Public service employees are stewards of the public service

**Outcome in summary:** The APS Reform agenda seeks to provide greater transparency on the workings of the APS, to foster and maintain a greater degree of public trust in the public service. It seeks to ensure that APS employees understand their individual and collective roles and responsibilities. To be effective stewards of the public service, public servants must ensure the long-term interests of the Australian community, through fit for purpose and innovative policy advice, regulation and services to meet changing priorities and circumstances.

Three initiatives under this outcome are complete and are supporting public sector employees to be stewards of the public service.



- The Minister for the Public Service delivered the first **Annual Ministerial Statement on the progress of APS Reform** on 2 November 2023, outlining and reviewing transformation across the service.
- The service has embedded actions to **increase transparency of the Secretaries Board** through the ongoing publication of meeting communiques, including key outcomes from meetings.
- Following the passage of the *Public Service Amendment Act 2024*, **Stewardship has been added as an APS Value**. This change highlights the important and enduring role of public servants in supporting the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what it does. Further work is underway to embed the value of Stewardship across the service.

One initiative continues to progress through the second phase of reform.

- The **extension of the APS Values** to a broader set of public sector bodies covered by the PGPA Act. This work will improve consistency in how all Commonwealth government bodies uphold their values.

## Pillar 2: The APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and services

**The ambition:** The APS genuinely engages and partners with the community and other groups to solve problems and co-design the best solutions to improve the lives of Australians.

### Outcome 3: The APS delivers human and user-centred policy and service excellence

**Outcome in summary:** Genuine partnerships and engagement with Australia's people, communities, non-government sectors, academia, business and industry is key to developing government policies and services that reflect the needs and aspirations of the people they affect. By having clear principles for how it puts people and business at the centre of policy, implementation and delivery, the APS can deliver better outcomes. Ensuring policies and services are reliable and accessible helps too. By delivering human-centred services and harnessing digital and data systems, the APS can build community trust, confidence and satisfaction in public services.

Four initiatives under this outcome are complete and supporting the APS to deliver human and user-centred policy and service excellence.

- The **Charter of Partnerships and Engagement** was launched in November 2023. It sets out the behaviours and principles that underpin improved engagement and partnership capability, ensuring that the APS is better able to support people and deliver results on the ground.
- The APS shared **vision for user-centred service excellence** was launched in November 2023, outlining the public service's promise to the communities, businesses and people it serves. A diverse group of people from the Australian community helped Services Australia create the vision—*reliable and accessible services, when and how you need them*.
- The **Survey of Trust in Australian public services** has expanded to include monthly reports and greater transparency of survey results. The survey provides a regular, reliable and publicly accessible dataset on Australians' experiences with Australian public services.
- Supporting all initiatives under this outcome, the **Partnership Priorities Committee** of Secretaries Board supports enhanced and coordinated policy and delivery outcomes for Australians and businesses. The Committee further strengthens partnership culture and behaviour in the public service, to ensure a consistent, natural and early impulse to engage and co-design.

Three initiatives under this outcome continue to progress from the first phase of reform.

- Implementation of the **Data and Digital Government Strategy**, which sets the vision for how the Australian Government will deliver simple, secure and connected public services for people and businesses through world-class data and digital capabilities.
- The passage of the *Public Service Amendment Act 2024* established the Long-term Insights Briefings as an enduring function, providing an opportunity for the APS to consider significant, cross-cutting and complex policy issues, and how they may affect Australia in the medium and long-term. The second briefing explores the future of human services, with particular emphasis on how the Commonwealth works with Australian communities. The **Long-term Insights**

**Briefing** function aims to strengthen policy development and longer term stewardship in the APS, demonstrating the APS commitment to improvement and listening to the views of all Australians.

- Implementation of the government’s response to the **myGov User Audit**, published on 18 December 2023. The government’s response will address each audit recommendation, with the aim to build trust in government services and make interacting with government simple, connected, and secure.

There are 3 new initiatives under this outcome for the second phase of reform.

- Identify feasible options to **strengthen transparency of agency customer feedback**. This builds on the government’s commitment to publish findings from the *Survey of Trust in Australian public services*, and supports improved accountability and performance by the APS in putting people and business at the centre of policy and services.
- Following the introduction of the Charter of Partnerships and Engagement, the APSC and Services Australia are working to provide **engagement and service excellence guidance**. This will help operationalise the Charter and the Vision for user-centred service excellence. This could involve improved collaboration between policy, regulatory and service delivery agencies, improved capability to engage and partner on matters of importance, and ensuring policies, programs and services reflect the needs and realities of business and communities.
- To support **high-quality external engagement**, the APS is developing an approach to better integrate business perspectives and a market stewardship approach into the working of government, and strengthen APS partnerships with the Australian research system in the development of policies and services.

#### **Outcome 4: The APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples**

**Outcome in summary:** Supporting the APS to establish genuine partnerships with First Nations communities and organisations, based on mutual trust and respect, and underpinned by culturally-safe engagement. Genuine partnerships between the APS and First Nations people support the creation of an environment in which First Nations peoples and communities can enact self-determination.

Two initiatives under this outcome continue to progress from the first phase of reform.

- Ongoing commitment to **Priority Reform One of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap**. Priority Reform One commits to developing and strengthening structures to ensure the full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in shared decision-making, to accelerate progressing on Closing the Gap.
- Actions to support genuine partnerships with First Nations people, including the development of a **First Nations Partnership ‘playbook’ and action plan** to address non-legislative barriers to building and sustaining genuine partnerships.

## Pillar 3: The APS is a model employer

**The ambition:** Ensuring the APS is a great place to work, offering staff a quality employee experience and attracting and retaining the best and brightest public servants in a competitive labour market.

### Outcome 5: The APS employee value proposition is attractive

**Outcome in summary:** Ensuring the APS employee value proposition is attractive, in order to attract and retain the best and brightest public servants in a competitive labour market. The APS employee value proposition is a clear statement of what the APS can offer, and focuses on the attributes and benefits offered through APS employment. It also helps to build the diversity of the APS workforce to ensure that it is representative of the community it serves.

Four initiatives under this outcome are complete and contributing to maintaining an attractive APS employee value proposition.

- The **Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2023** came into effect in November 2023. It implements the government's intent to reduce fragmentation of pay and conditions across the APS over time. The Statement of Common Conditions 2023 reflects the outcome of negotiations on over 90 matters raised in APS-wide bargaining with employee bargaining representatives.
- The **principles of flexible work in the APS** were published in April 2023, as part of the APS commitment to creating flexible workplaces that embrace diversity and meet the expectations of the Australian community and the APS workforce. They provide a framework for considering flexibility at the individual, team and organisational level.
- All agencies who participated in the 2023 APS Employee Census **published their APS Census results and a responding action plan**, unless a limited exemption applied. This fosters a culture of transparency and accountability for continuous improvement within agencies.
- To drive and support changes under this outcome, **the Secretaries Capability and Workforce Committee, formerly known as the Future of Work Sub-committee**, has been embedded into the service's governance framework. This Secretary-level committee provides advice to Secretaries Board on workforce and capability matters to address emerging workforce pressures and demands.

Two initiatives under this outcome continue to progress from the first phase of reform.

- The government remains steadfast in its commitment to the APS reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to **net zero by 2030**. Ongoing work on policy, implementation, reporting and assurance is helping to reduce emissions from APS operations, including through energy efficiency, renewable energy and usage of offsets.
- In response to the **Maternity Leave Act review**, a common parental leave term was negotiated through APS-wide bargaining. At 10 May 2024, all 103 enterprise agreements covering APS agencies contain the common parental leave clause. Ongoing support is being provided to agencies to implement this clause.

There is one new initiative under this outcome for the second phase of reform.

- Exploring how **innovative hiring practices will** help attract, engage and retain the talent the APS needs to deliver services and policy outcomes. An innovative approach to recruitment will help ensure the APS is high-performing, embraces diversity, and is efficient in its recruitment processes.

## **Outcome 6: The APS sets the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity**

**Outcome in summary:** Being a model employer requires the APS to set the standard for diversity and inclusion. This includes greater accountability of gender pay inequality in the APS to inform actions to address the gender pay gap.

One initiative under this outcome is complete and supporting the APS to set the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity.

- In line with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's work to **reduce the gender pay gap, the APS publicly reports on remuneration by gender**. Further detail can be found in the 31 December 2023 Australian Public Service Remuneration Data, published on 7 August 2024.

One initiative under this outcome continues to progress from the first phase of reform.

- The **APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Employment Strategy** aims to ensure the APS reflects the community it serves, in accordance with the legislative function of the APS Commissioner to foster an APS workforce that reflects the diversity of the Australian population. The Strategy was released on 29 April 2024, and provides tangible actions across the areas of: cultural safety; cultural understanding; leadership and management cultural capability; inclusive recruitment and progression, and modern workforce processes; and senior leadership that reflects the diversity of the Australian community. These actions are being implemented across APS agencies.

## **Outcome 7: The APS sets the standard for First Nations employment and cultural competency**

**Outcome in summary:** Building the cultural capability of the APS and increasing the number of First Nations staff, particularly at senior levels, is critical to improving outcomes for First Nations communities. Retaining First Nations employees is equally important. These initiatives support the Government's commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. They aim to build cultural safety and eliminate racism in government institutions.

Two initiatives under this outcome continue to progress from the first phase of reform.

- This includes work to **boost APS First Nations cultural capability and First Nations employment**. This work contributes to Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three, which seeks to transform government institutions and organisations by identifying and eliminating racism and practising meaningful cultural safety. As part of this goal, this initiative is working to boost First Nations leadership by increasing First Nations SES to 100, growing a partnership and talent

pipeline by supporting Executive Level employees, and strengthening system-wide cultural capability and accountability.

- The APS is developing a **Commonwealth Monitoring and Accountability Framework** to help measure and drive cultural, systemic and structural transformation across Commonwealth agencies. The Framework will support progress against Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three: to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as feeling culturally safe in dealing with mainstream government institutions and agencies.

## Pillar 4: The APS has the capability to do its job well

**The ambition:** The APS builds a skilled and confident workforce, and is a trusted institution that delivers modern policy and service solutions for decades to come.

### Outcome 8: The APS continuously improves its capabilities

**Outcome in summary:** To support Australians now and into the future, the APS needs to continuously assess its strengths and weaknesses and take action to build capability over time, including through investment in innovative and scalable capability uplift initiatives. Ongoing work to bring core public service work back in-house further supports the organisational capability of the APS to deliver for government, strengthens the integrity of policy making and service development, and saves taxpayers money.

Six initiatives under this outcome are complete and have improved the capability of the APS.

- An initial **Audit of Employment** was conducted to estimate the use of external labour across the APS. A final report was published on 6 May 2023. A second audit is underway to measure and track how the public service is delivering on the government's commitment to reduce reliance on external labour.
- To support **strategic foresight capability**, the APS developed an Australian Government Futures Primer. Published on 15 August 2024, the Primer is a suite of practical approaches for using futures methodologies. It helps public servants think critically and strategically about the future, to ensure policy responses address longer term challenges faced by governments. Work continues to ensure capability uplift across the service.
- The **Delivering Great Policy** learning resources and workshops are now delivered by the APS Academy. They provide a strong foundation for continuing uplift of policy capability across the APS. Work is ongoing to ensure content is up to date and relevant for current and future policy challenges.
- A course to **strengthen APS partnerships with Ministers** has been delivered by the APS Academy since 2022. It aims to build mutual respect and understanding of the different, but complementary, roles of the APS and Ministers.
- The ongoing program of **capability reviews** included changes to the *Public Services Act 1999* with effect from 11 December 2024. This required that all departments of state, Services Australia, the Australian Taxation Office and the APSC participate in a capability review every 5 years. The reviews are independent, forward-looking and assess an agency's ability to meet future objectives and challenges.
- Guidance on **optimal management structures** was updated to help agencies modernise their structures and ways of working, widen spans of control and encourage decision-making at the lowest appropriate level.

There are 6 new initiatives under this outcome for the second phase of reform.

- A **second round of the Capability Reinvestment Fund** provided \$6.5 million in financial support for 24 agencies delivering 9 projects addressing critical skills gaps within the APS. This round focuses on the themes of enhancing data analytics and policy integration, ensuring cultural and psychological safety in physical and virtual workspaces, adapting to a green

economy workforce, building APS understanding of Artificial Intelligence application in the public sector, and enhancing APS capabilities for working in Asia and the Pacific.

- To support **leadership at all levels and at scale**, the APS Academy has developed and implemented an APS-wide leadership and management capability uplift initiative, beginning with the EL2 cohort. A pilot *APS Leadership Edge* program benefited 532 EL2s from 75 agencies in 2023–24. A second iteration has benefited a further 380 participants since June 2024. Further design work is underway for a third iteration in 2025.
- The APS is reviewing **mobility across the service** to better facilitate the transfer of employees to areas of workforce pressure, while continuing to uphold the merit principle as the primary consideration for employment decisions. This work includes improved mobility mechanisms between the APS and the Australian Federal Police.
- As part of the **APS Data, Digital and Cyber Workforce Plan**, the APS is exploring how best to ensure the APS has the capabilities it needs to deliver the government’s vision set out in the Data and Digital Government Strategy and the 2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy.
- An **in-house consulting model**, Australian Government Consulting, is delivering projects for APS clients. It continues to strengthen APS capability through transferring consulting practitioner skills and supporting agencies to achieve better value when engaging external consultants. Australian Government Consulting continues to invest in its own capabilities and service offerings.
- The **APS Strategic Commissioning Framework** is supporting agencies to bring their core public service work back in-house over time, to strengthen capability and reduce the risks to integrity and public trust posed by excessive outsourcing. In mid-2024, agencies reported to the APSC on their core work and set initial targets. A public update was released in October 2024, showing agencies plan to bring half a billion dollars of core work back in-house in 2024–25.



# Section 3: Impact

## APS Reform is delivering benefits for the community and across the service

The APS Reform agenda is a transformational, system-level change agenda to ensure the public service, as a critical national asset, has the capabilities it needs to meet the challenges of the 21st century with integrity and fairness, and has people and business at the centre of solutions to serve government and improve the lives of the Australian community.

Public sector reforms that result in whole-of-service outcomes require an integrated and phased approach, from initiation and design to implementation and sustainability. The case studies at [Appendix A](#) demonstrate how APS Reform is generating positive outcomes for Australians. They show how initiatives are working together to build a solid foundation for lasting whole-of-service transformation and tangible benefits for Australian communities.

# Section 4: Program delivery model

## A phased approach to implementation

The APS Reform agenda has entered its second phase of implementation. This next phase reinforces and embeds early reform achievements, with further initiatives to support an APS that is unwavering in its integrity and capability.

The reform agenda is being implemented through a service-wide delivery platform, supported by the APSC. Ideas for reform are scoped and defined within the APSC, and once further developed or implemented transition to an agency/agencies as business as usual activities. Other projects of similar intent are then commenced, and follow the same life-cycle. The delivery platform brings together the APSC, initiative leads, and implementing agencies to drive a coordinated approach to embedding enduring reforms.

- The APS Reform agenda has a clear implementation approach, built on concepts of committed and accountable leaders, clear purpose, outcomes and priorities, measuring and reporting on what matters, coordinated and tailored delivery plans, empowering agency-led work, and building engagement and buy-in for the process.
- Early reform initiatives provided the foundation for significant operational changes across the APS.
- Cultural change, particularly as it relates to leadership, capability and integrity, was targeted to ensure the APS delivers the best possible outcomes for Australians.
- Agencies invested in capability uplift to address immediate skills gaps.
- Lessons learned during phase one were documented to ensure an incremental and adaptive approach to future reform initiatives, underpinned by continuous improvement.

As phase one reform initiatives have progressed through the design, planning and delivery stages, the APSC has further improved its program delivery model, including through:

- enhanced governance and oversight, including through the establishment of the APS Reform Program Board
- a new emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives
- improved support and guidance for agencies implementing initiatives.

These improvements will strengthen delivery of the second phase of reform initiatives, which are targeted at:

- bolstering integrity through legislative amendments and non-legislative initiatives
- building an outwardly-engaged APS that understands and works with communities and businesses
- strengthening APS capability to support the delivery of modern policy and service solutions for decades to come.

## A maturing governance framework

Accountabilities for the APS Reform agenda are nested within an overarching APS Reform governance framework that enables shared responsibility for progressing reforms (see Figure 4 below). The **Secretaries Board** and its committees continue to hold overall accountability for delivering the APS Reform program, with development, delivery and reporting supported by a whole-of-government delivery platform.

This year, improvements in governance have been targeted towards building on the strong foundations of the APS Reform Program Board and the Program Management Office.

{Figure 4 APS Reform governance}

Governance body	Governance type	Decision-making role	Responsibilities
<b>Minister for the Public Service</b>	Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine overall ambition and strategic direction</li> <li>Agree priorities and sequencing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set / endorse priority initiatives</li> <li>Approve governance, timelines and sequencing</li> <li>Approve key final products and determine next steps</li> </ul>
<b>Secretaries Board</b>	Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree initiative-level ambition</li> <li>Determine initiative-level accountabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the authorising environment</li> <li>Problem-solve delivery risks</li> <li>Help shape and set direction on APS reform</li> </ul>
<b>Secretaries Board Sub-committees</b>	Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree implementation path for reforms within their areas of mandate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drive reform at an operational level across Government</li> <li>Provide advice and oversight within their areas of mandate</li> <li>Test early solutions and head off signalled implementation risks</li> </ul>
<b>Australian Public Service Commissioner</b>	Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine and advise Minister and Secretaries Board to delay, suspend or accelerate initiatives, in consultation with Secretary of Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure initiatives are delivered on-time and to the intended effect to achieve APS reform ambition</li> <li>Assure and sign-off on appropriate planning and optimise delivery agenda</li> </ul>
<b>APSC Executive Board</b>	Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree APSC initiative-level funding</li> <li>Determine APSC initiative-level accountabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drive reform at an operational level across the APSC</li> <li>Assure and sign-off on appropriate planning and optimise delivery agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Australian Public Service Reform Program Board</b>	Oversight	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program assurance and advice on interdependencies, focussing on governance framework and risk management</li> <li>Identify connections, and guide collaboration on reform work</li> </ul>
<b>APS Reform Management Committee</b>	Oversight	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide advice on proposed approaches to areas of work related to APS Reform</li> <li>provide a platform for communicating and sharing information about strategic operational matters</li> </ul>
<b>APSC Program Management Office</b>	Delivery	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage Secretaries Board sub-committee interfaces</li> <li>Lead APS-wide risk mitigation engagements</li> <li>Set and manage implementation strategy</li> <li>Track and report delivery of projects, outcomes and risk</li> </ul>
<b>Individual agencies</b>	Delivery	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and execute project plans to deliver initiatives</li> <li>Report on delivery progress, outcomes and risk</li> <li>Collaborate to active network of initiative leads across agencies</li> </ul>

## **The APS Reform Program Board**

The APS Reform Program Board comprises senior leaders at the Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer level. The Program Board oversees implementation of reform initiatives, and supports Secretaries Board and its sub-committees in relation to their overall accountability for the program.

Secretaries Board provides strategic oversight of the reform agenda, consistent with its stewardship function as set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*. Secretaries Board has a critical role in guiding how the APS gives effect to the government's ambitious reform agenda, including to endorse the whole-of-program outcomes that serve as the objectives for APS Reform, and to consider initiatives to be addressed through the second phase of the reform agenda.

The Program Board monitors and reports on progress, risks and opportunities. It focuses on good program governance and overseeing the systems, processes and progress of the overall Reform program, including interdependencies and shared risks across individual initiatives. It is designed to enhance, not replace, agency-specific governance mechanisms by providing a whole-of-program perspective. This whole-of-system perspective is essential to ensure that the reform initiatives developed by a small number of agencies are scalable and repeatable across the service, and to avoid the burden of excessive coordination on any one agency.

## **The APS Reform Program Management Office**

The APS Reform Program Management Office provides a whole-of-government delivery platform for the APS Reform agenda. It coordinates and works with key governance bodies and agencies across the APS to maximise the impact of APS Reform, monitors the progress of reform initiatives across the service, and supports agencies to make enduring changes.

## **A change management approach to reform**

The APS Reform change management approach has been strengthened over the past year, and is providing increased support and guidance to agencies implementing reform initiatives. The APSC is working across the service to ensure that the implementation of reform initiatives aligns with the overarching objectives of the reform agenda, including through the production of an APS Reform Handbook every 6 months. The Handbook provides advice for agencies on how to implement APS Reform initiatives in their own operating context, particularly through the development of their corporate plans. The Handbook clarifies APS-wide timelines and expectations for implementation. It empowers agencies to lead change efforts and reduces implementation risks, including through its provision of clear and consistent guidance regarding governance arrangements, timelines, and deliverables.

The APSC is partnering with the APS Centre of Excellence in Change Management at the Department of Home Affairs to increase change management training offerings, and to renew the focus on the importance of change management skills at every level across the APS.

This activity is part of the APS Reform Change Management Strategy. The Strategy supports agencies and initiative leads to implement and embed enduring reform, including by guiding agencies' consideration of the purpose and benefits of the initiative, implementation risks (such as resourcing and capability constraints), and to clarify responsibilities where multiple teams or agencies are leading and supporting delivery of the initiative. The Strategy is underpinned by collaboration and capability

uplift to ensure initiative leads and agencies have the collective expertise to deliver enduring service-wide changes.

## Building capability to deliver reform

Momentum for APS Reform is increasing and becoming self-sustaining across the service. As capability gaps have emerged, the APS Academy is leveraging its existing remit to build the capacity and performance of the APS workforce to drive whole-of-service investment in key capabilities that enable reform outcomes. This includes an increased focus on developing core skills underpinning effective change management, partnerships, and engagement.

# Section 5: Performance Framework

## Tracking progress with the APS Reform Performance Framework

The scope and scale of the APS Reform agenda requires a fit-for-purpose approach to tracking and reporting implementation, progress and impact. Progress is monitored through a cascading system of evaluation, known as the Performance Framework. It involves the following steps:

1. **Initiative level (quarterly).** Monitoring and reporting on individual initiative outcomes, captured through the APS Reform reporting model. Quarterly reports focus on delivery status, progress against milestones, and emerging and anticipated risks. They are used to assess shared impact and risk.
2. **Outcome level (annually).** Performance measures and metrics to determine progress against each of the 8 APS Reform outcomes. Current performance tables are provided at [Appendix B](#).
3. **Program level (2-3 years).** Formal whole-of-program reviews and evaluations as initiatives are completed (noting it can take some time before effects are visible).
4. **Impact level (3-5 years).** Deep-dive research into the lived experience of people and businesses affected by APS Reform outcomes, and continual review to ensure the program is targeting activities that will have the greatest impact. This work is under consideration and subject to agreement.

## Using metrics to measure performance

The performance of the APS Reform program reflects a collaborative whole-of-government effort, supported by 9 lead agencies who are leading the initiatives and responsible for managing existing whole-of-APS data collections.

The APS Reform Program Performance Framework includes 16 overarching performance measures across the 8 Reform outcomes. These are supported by 51 metrics, drawn from at least 2 different data sources.

Where possible, data sources include internal APS reporting and externally validated reporting such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. They predominantly derive from existing reliable sources, such as the APS Employee Census, Agency Survey, Remuneration Survey, APS Employment Database and Survey of Trust in Australian public services.

Additional data sources are being developed in collaboration with agencies to focus on partnerships, engagement and service excellence, and First Nations peoples' experiences working with government under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. These additional sources will include qualitative and quantitative data, as well as case studies. They will be used to measure the impact of reform initiatives and inform an evidenced-based and reliable approach to tracking APS Reform Outcomes 3 (the APS delivers human and user-centred policy and service excellence) and 4 (the APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples).

The performance measurement of APS Reform is not fixed, and may evolve as new datasets and insights become available. Outcomes reporting will strengthen and mature over time.

The performance tables are structured as follows:

- **Outcome.** The measurable, long-term program objectives describing the intended end-state.

- **Performance measure.** A broad statement describing a change, indicating that an outcome is being achieved. Each performance measure is supported by one or more metrics drawn from reliable and verifiable data sources, to reduce potential bias in measurement and reporting.
- **Metric.** A specific variable or feature tied to a data source that can be counted, measured, observed or described as evidence of change.
- **Data source.** Consistent and verifiable source of data collection supporting the progress of outcomes through the measure of specific metrics.
- **Baseline.** The performance metrics supporting each outcome describe the indicative trajectory of progress. That is, the change expected from the outlined baseline (i.e. increase, decrease or maintain) rather than setting specific targets. The expected trajectory against the baseline will be reviewed annually to set a realistic expectation of progress.



# Section 6: Program risks

## A framework to proactively identify and manage risks

Risk is a natural part of developing and implementing reform. Given the breadth and complexity of the APS Reform agenda, the APSC uses a mature approach to risk management that accounts for the service's risk culture, risk appetite, and risk management processes. Considered risks include threats to achieving the primary objectives of reform and threats to individual initiative outcomes. The APSC works with reform-leading agencies and implementation teams to manage risk through 4 main components: understanding the context in which the reform is being implemented, considering the agency's existing appetite for risk, identifying and assessing potential risks, and developing appropriate strategies to control or treat those risks.

## The APSC supports systematic mitigation of risk

The APSC uses a range of complementary approaches to ensure comprehensive consideration of existing and emerging risks. These include centrally coordinated identification of strategic risks, quarterly reporting to measure progress and risks, and regular risk reporting to the APS Reform Program Board and to internal governance mechanisms. This centralised approach to risk mitigation is driving a consistent approach across a distributed delivery model of reform, and ensures that key governance bodies, including the Program Board, have whole-of-program oversight of risks.

## The APSC is successfully managing strategic risks

Building on the assessment of overarching risk themes in the previous Annual Progress Report, over the past year the APSC has identified and successfully managed 4 primary whole-of-reform strategic risks: capacity of the APS to absorb reform; ability of the APS to secure buy-in and communicate the value of reform; management of the complex design of reform as a shared, devolved and tailored program; and passage of legislation.

These risks have been managed at a whole-of-program level, supported by the Change Management Strategy, the Implementation Handbook, performance metrics, and the reform governance architecture.

### **Capacity of the APS to absorb reform**

This risk acknowledges the resourcing constraints of APS agencies to implement multiple reforms within their operating environment at the same time, especially for smaller entities. Key to mitigating this risk is the provision of clear guidance and resources to support change, staggering delivery, streamlining project planning, and ensuring project teams have the right mix of capability and capacity.

### **Ability of the APS to secure buy-in and communicate the value of reform**

This risk reflects the level of awareness, knowledge and 'buy in' across agencies about the APS Reform program. Key to mitigating this risk is comprehensive and genuine engagement with those affected by the reforms outside of the public service, clear communication regarding expected outcomes, and open and unambiguous advice to government that highlights both progress and challenges of implementing enduring reforms.

## **Management of the complex design of reform as a shared, devolved and tailored program**

This risk reflects the necessary challenges and uncertainties associated with a large-scale and ambitious program of change. Complex systems transformation—that endures and is delivered at scale—requires a transparent understanding of the varied nature of APS working contexts, and the need to tailor changes to individual organisations’ needs. Key mitigation strategies include clear communication, data-informed reform prioritisation, and consistent reporting mechanisms for monitoring, accountability, and transparency.

## **Passage of legislation**

This risk acknowledges the critical role of legislation in multiple reform initiatives. The government’s legislative program is extensive and supports the full extent of government responsibilities beyond the Reform program. Therefore it is vital that the Reform program makes the most of its limited opportunities for legislative change.

Passage of the *Public Service Amendment Act 2024* in June 2024 has ensured the successful and timely implementation of several reform initiatives. Future reforms which may benefit from legislative change will consider both legislative and non-legislative options to achieve the desired outcomes.

# Section 7: Future focus areas

The APS Reform program is building a stronger APS that supports government to deliver better outcomes for the community and acts as a model employer. This is a journey that requires the APS and the government to work together to strengthen the culture of frank and professional advice, integrity and stewardship.

The scope and scale of the APS Reform program is significant. This is a multi-year transformation effort that requires long-term, sustainable changes to improve how the APS delivers for all Australians. Many of these changes—be they systemic changes, cultural changes, legislative changes, or changes to policy development and service delivery—will be underway long before Australians can perceive tangible changes to the service offering of the APS.

The initial phase of the APS Reform agenda set the foundations for transformation of the public sector, and cultivated a culture of continual improvement in how the APS designs and delivers for, and with, Australians. While the ambitious reform agenda is in its relative infancy, it is clear that the APS is already transforming: more departments and agencies are advocating for innovation, collaborating more often, and fostering stewardship across their diverse and far-reaching workforces.

As the current iteration of reform moves into the embedding phase, reform will transition to business as usual, but change will remain constant and enduring. In this next phase, it is essential that the APS maintains the momentum to ensure that the changes initiated transition into enduring outcomes achieved. To be future-ready, the APS must continue to act as an enabler and facilitator of best-practice public service, drawing on global research, embedding participatory practices, change management methodology, progressive policy design and human-centred service delivery.

Key government commitments, such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and supporting a sovereign and resilient Indo-Pacific, among others, will require the APS to increasingly engage, collaborate and partner with external stakeholders to deliver on government objectives.

Public servants at all levels will need to work proactively with stakeholders to generate shared value, solve problems together, and develop policies and programs that reflect the aspirations of those affected by them. Public service leaders will need to model effective engagement behaviours, champion partnership, and engage appropriately with risk.

Delivering on these cross-cutting commitments also requires a more diverse and culturally capable APS that reflects the society and community it serves, including through representation at senior levels. The *Public Service Act 1999* requires the APS Commissioner to foster an APS workforce that reflects the diversity of the Australian population. Australia has one of the largest overseas-born populations in the world and one of the highest relative levels of net migration. All Australians share the benefits and responsibilities arising from the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society. Improving the cultural and linguistic diversity of the APS workforce will drive increased levels of cultural competency, innovation and creativity. Bringing diverse perspectives and the potential for improved relationships with communities and stakeholders will strengthen government policies and services, including to strengthen social cohesion.

The diversity and cultural capability of the public service workforce is also a critical factor in Australia's progress to Close the Gap, and achieve equality for First Nations people. Despite some pockets of good practice across the APS, slow progress to achieve equality for First Nations people indicates that governments have not yet fully grasped the scale of change required to their systems, operations and ways of working. The APSC's first ever appointment of a First Nations Systems Lead has fundamentally changed the governance architecture for reforming the way the APS works with First Nations people, and is improving how the APS attracts and retains First Nations staff. Establishing the

Collaboration Circle pilot, bringing together Chief Operating Officers and First Nations staff from across the service, as a permanent sub-committee of the COO Committee embeds the voices of First Nations APS staff in the structure and systems of the APS in an enduring way. Building the cultural capability of the APS, and enhancing APS capability to effectively and genuinely engage with First Nations people, will continue to be essential in giving effect to the government's commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The APS can support Australians through major transformations such as the transition to a net zero economy. Action to reduce carbon emissions will help to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, but can also create a boom in new jobs and new industries. Transitioning to a net zero economy requires an APS that has the capability to effectively engage with industry and communities, to coordinate effort, to broker investments that create jobs in regional Australia, and to support workers across the country through this transition.

The APS's understanding of, and networks in, the Indo-Pacific is critical to our ability to deliver on the government's domestic policy priorities, in addition to the international priorities that are more traditionally associated with cross-cultural capability. International experiences have long shaped and pushed the thinking on Australian domestic policies—from the impact of formal international standards to the information sharing of ideas and best practice for policy successes and challenges. Improving the APS's capability in our local region directly correlates with improved policy, delivery and regulatory advice that integrates both domestic and international security and broad economic considerations.

At the heart of Australia's democracy is an APS that embodies integrity in everything it does. Integrity is a core part of being a public servant. It is how we help build and maintain public trust in government. The internet has fundamentally changed the way information is produced and distributed, including through the increasing influence of social media platforms. Enduring initiatives to strengthen public service integrity will continue to be a critical safeguard against countering mistrust and misinformation, and to preserve Australia's confidence in the public service and Australia's democratic process.

Over the past year, APS Reform has progressed from early foundational work to a phase of reinforcement and consolidation. As the Reform program moves towards a horizon of continuous improvement it is critical that this momentum is maintained. The world is rapidly changing, and the APS is doing more than ever as its roles and responsibilities expand to keep pace with the rising needs and expectations of Australians. Continued reform progress and momentum is essential to ensure that the APS is well-placed to better support people and deliver results on the ground, now and into the future.

# Appendix A: Case studies

## Case Study 1: Strengthening trust in the public service to deliver for Australia

### Case Study 1: Strengthening trust in the public service to deliver for Australia

#### Focus: Public service employees are stewards of the public service

#### Challenges

##### **Weakening public trust in government threatens the health of democracies**

Globally, public trust in government is deteriorating. The APS delivers vital community services and policies that affect the lives of millions of people. To do this effectively, public trust is essential.

##### **Recent inquiries highlighted gaps in integrity and stewardship practices, processes and systems**

These inquiries provide critical lessons for action on integrity across the service and at all levels, including senior decision-makers. A strategic and coordinated approach to integrity across the service is needed.

##### **Increasing complexity and speed of change means stewardship role of the public service is even more critical**

Domestic, regional and international contexts are complex and volatile. Rapid technological and social changes require a forward-thinking public service. Public service stewardship is critical to ensure public need and benefit are central to policy design and delivery.

#### Achievements

##### **Enduring, system-wide initiatives are working together to strengthen trust and integrity**

- ✓ 18 reform initiatives to strengthen trust, stewardship and integrity.
- ✓ Initiative intersections are reinforcing integrity and stewardship capability across the service.

##### **Stewardship legislated as a new APS Value**

- ✓ Changes to *Public Service Act 1999* enshrine Stewardship as an APS Value.
- ✓ All public servants are responsible for leaving the APS in better shape than we found it.
- ✓ Public Service Commissioner's Directions and resources to put value into practice.
- ✓ Legislated agency capability reviews and Long-term Insights Briefs on national challenges embed APS stewardship capability.

##### **Louder than Words action plan published**

- ✓ Agencies to self-assess against Commonwealth Integrity Maturity Framework.
- ✓ Integrity in APS eLearning module updated and released May 2024 for all new employees.
- ✓ 450+ participants in SES Masterclass since 2022; additional resources published on APS Academy Integrity Craft toolkit.

##### **Further pro-integrity culture and systems uplift**

- ✓ Frameworks, policies and changes to Section 10 of the PGPA Rule 2014 strengthen protections against fraud and corruption.
- ✓ APS staff have guidance and resources to support high standards of integrity.
- ✓ Stage 2 Integrity Reforms to bolster previous reforms with public consultation underway

## **Benefits to the community:**

**Trust in government and public institutions is the “glue” for a cohesive, prosperous and democratic society.**

Australians’ trust in government and in public services is relatively high:

- 58% trust public services (higher when they have actually used these services).
- Trust in government is higher than the OECD average (46% compared to 39%) and has increased by 8% since 2021.

**Stewardship and integrity reforms ensure Australians can continue to have high trust in the APS.**

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**APS Value of Stewardship** commits to the community that APS delivery and advice to government considers the impact of policy on the public now and in the future.

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**Service-wide culture, systems and accountabilities for integrity standards provide the community with:**

- confidence in the public service to do the right thing on behalf of the nation and the diverse communities the APS serves.
  - assurance that APS staff at all levels are empowered to provide frank advice on risks and impacts of policy directions on communities.
  - legislated, enduring protections to ensure the public service is the robust, national asset Australia requires to meet the complex challenges facing the nation in both the short and long term.
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## Case Study 2: APS improving public engagement to deliver better services

Focus: Genuine partnership and engagement with Australia's people, communities and industries

### Challenges

#### Complex problems need collaborative, multi-dimensional solutions

Today's highly complex geopolitical, social and digital environment requires proactive, genuine partnership and engagement across community, business and industry sectors.

#### Limited inclusivity means limited insight

Historically, engagement efforts have not been consistent across government agencies. Quality engagement with diverse communities and harnessing their lived experiences of, for example social and economic disadvantage, gender discrimination, ageism, racism, and ableism is essential to good policy and service design.

#### Increasing complexity and speed of change means stewardship role of the public service is even more critical

Domestic, regional and international contexts are complex and volatile. Rapid technological and social changes require a forward-thinking public service. Public service stewardship is critical to ensure public need and benefit are central to policy design and delivery.

### Achievements

#### Increased recognition of the need for effective partnership and engagement capability

- ✓ More agencies are seeing the need for partnership and engagement capabilities in their workforce, increasing from 21% in 2023 to 60% in 2024 (APS Agency Survey, 2023; 2024).

#### Whole of Australian Government principles through the Charter of Partnerships and Engagement

The Charter provides the essential principles for effective engagement and partnering to meet the needs of a modern, diverse Australia through:

- ✓ good practice guidance and self-assessment tools
- ✓ embedding these principles in APS Academy training and learning experiences
- ✓ cross-government workshops on effective change management.

#### Systemic cultural capability uplift

Appointed a First Assistant Commissioner and First Nations Systems Lead at APSC:

- ✓ addressing systemic barriers to the APS engaging in genuine partnerships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
- ✓ building cultural capability of the APS.

#### Engaging with business and industry

Senior APS executives engaged business leaders to:

- ✓ connect APS and private sector executives to address shared problems such as data transformation and AI
- ✓ harness business insights via masterclasses
- ✓ private sector knowledge embedded in leadership development
- ✓ market stewardship pilots encourage strategic and proactive engagement and collaboration with stakeholders.

### **Benefits to the community:**

**Improved ability of the APS to engage and partner across business, academia and the not-for-profit sectors produces value for the Australian community by leveraging diverse expertise to inform policy and services in an increasingly complex environment**

**Clear expectations that the APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and service design by meaningfully engaging with communities, academia and industry**

- APS staff have practical resources for *how* to do this in practice with tools to support assessment, review, and continuous improvement in partnering.
- Corporate plans leverage the Charter so that processes and skills are integrated into agencies' future planning.

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### **“Reliable and accessible services, when and how you need them” is the APS Vision for service excellence**

- The Charter supports this Vision by ensuring that services are user and client centred.
- Engagement data is a necessary ingredient to achieving this.
- Better customer service experiences link to strengthened trust in government.

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### **First Nations Systems Lead drives change**

- Delivering insights about systemic issues and for genuine partnerships with First Nations people.
- Cultural Capability Hub for APS staff was established as a precursor for genuine partnerships.
- Extension of First Nations talent programs establish a pipeline to the APS senior executive.

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### **Harnessing private sector data and analytics via business partnerships**

- Strengthened collaboration with the business sector to address shared challenges such as AI.
  - Integrating business insights for more effective, industry relevant decision-making.
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# Case Study 3: An APS that leverages and values the diversity of Australia

Focus: Setting the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity

## Challenges

### Through the *Public Service Act 1999*, the APS workforce should reflect the diversity of the Australian population

Diversity of gender, culture, age and ability in the APS enriches policy and service design, so that they better reflect the needs of the community. However, barriers to career advancement and remuneration limit diverse representation.

### Persistent gender pay gap

The national gender pay gap is closing, with the APS gap now at 4.5% compared to the Australian Bureau of Statistics economy wide figure of 11.5%. Women's lower earnings compared to men results in economic and productivity costs for Australia.

### APS workforce more diverse but not at the senior levels

APS employment data show that while the cultural and linguistic diversity of the APS is largely reflective of the working age population at 25%, representation drops to 11% across the senior executive service.

### Insufficient systemic change prevents progress on Closing the Gap

The Productivity Commission's recent review found that fundamental changes to how government engages with the First Nations community and shares power and decision-making is required to deliver on the Agreement.

## Achievements

### Landmark legislative reforms to reduce the Gender Pay Gap

- ✓ Passage of the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023* makes employer pay gap data publicly available for the first time. Commonwealth public sector employer pay gaps will be published in early 2025.
- ✓ Following *Respect@Work* reforms passed in 2022 Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees now report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. The first report – covering 2022 – was released in June 2024. As reporting matures it will allow for comparison between private and public sector progress in closing the wage gap.

### CALD Employment Strategy driving whole of APS change

- ✓ Setting standards for cultural safety and understanding.
- ✓ Cultural capability development and accountability for leaders.
- ✓ Establishing inclusive recruitment, mobility and progression processes.
- ✓ Commitment to 24% CALD representation in the SES by 2030 to reflect parity with the Australian community.

### Boosting First Nations Employment in the APS to 5% by 2030

3 pillars of action create new employment opportunities and tackle barriers to engagement, retention and advancement

- ✓ Boosting First Nations in Senior Executive Service to 100 (SES 100).
- ✓ Growing a talent pipeline by supporting 75 Executive Level employees.
- ✓ Strengthening system-wide cultural capability and accountability.

### Senior executives hear directly from First Nations staff

Collaboration Circles successfully building APS cultural capability

- ✓ All 6 recommendations to the COO Committee devised to improve APS cultural awareness training were endorsed without change.
- ✓ Building on this success, the current cycle has begun working on retention strategies for First Nations staff in the APS.

## **Benefits to the community:**

**To deliver best outcomes, the APS should reflect the diversity of the people it serves and ensure that people from all communities have equity of opportunity within the service as a career**

### **Leading on gender equality**

- The Gender Pay Gap in the Australian Public Service is 4.5%.
- APS bargaining 2023-24 created common conditions to support gender equality, including clauses related to family and domestic violence support, respect at work, equal parental leave entitlements, and flexible work.
- In the broader economy, more than half (57%) of employers took corrective action as a result of WGEA's reporting, showing the impact these reforms have on workplace equality.
- Although higher than the Commonwealth public sector, the national gender pay gap is now the lowest it has ever been.

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### **Integrated reforms that increase transparency, accountability and action plans to create a workforce culture that thrives on diversity**

- 93% support the goals and development of the CALD Employment Strategy and Action Plan (public and internal engagement data shows).
- Agency heads are accountable to report progress twice a year.
- SES training delivered to recruit, build and manage multicultural teams.

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### **First Nations leadership boosted across the APS**

- SES 100 placed 23 candidates into SES roles across 12 APS agencies, 5 of those were attracted from outside the APS (as at September 2024).
  - A second SES100 APS-wide recruitment exercise at SES Band 1 and Band 2 level will commence from November 2024, with a merit pool to be established in March 2025.
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# Case Study 4: Strengthening APS capability to meet Australia's current and future needs

Focus: The APS continuously improves its capability

## Challenges

### **The 2019 Independent Review of the APS noted that while the APS was not broken, it was not performing at its best**

Outsourcing large amounts of work to labour hire and consultancies eroded APS capability and quality service delivery, often delivering poor return on investment. Workforce capability must be restored to ensure the APS remains a capable, trusted institution.

### **Sustained, systemic, whole-of-service transformation**

The government noted the need for 'service-wide transformation', encompassing both short-term change and long-term reform, to achieve better outcomes and more efficiently serve the government, the Parliament and the Australian public.

### **Australia faces increasingly complex social and geopolitical challenges and needs a capable APS**

Australia faces increasingly complex challenges from multiple fronts. The APS's capability gaps require strategic, integrated, whole-of-service treatment to ensure Australia can navigate evolving domestic, regional and global challenges.

## Achievements

### **Restoring APS capability through the Strategic Commissioning Framework**

- ✓ The APS is bringing core work back in-house so core public service work is done by public servants.
- ✓ Agencies have identified core work that should not be outsourced and have set commitments to begin bringing this back in-house in 2024–25.
- ✓ APS-wide, agency targets for 2024–25 total around \$527 million.
- ✓ Where outsourcing of core work is necessary, the SCF ensures knowledge and skills transfer to the APS.

### **Capability reviews are supporting a culture of continuous improvement**

- ✓ Public Service Act amendments require that all departments of state and large agencies participate in a capability review every 5 years, measuring readiness for future challenges.
- ✓ Taking effect from 11 December 2024, capability reviews are published on the APSC website.
- ✓ 6 reviews completed, generating insight about capability gaps and opportunities to address these.
- ✓ Each review applies a framework that supports a structured assessment of the agency's organisational capability.

### **Targeted and scalable learning solutions for policy challenges, now and emerging**

- ✓ Round 1 of the APS Capability Reinvestment Fund saw 10 initiatives funded to deliver collaborative projects across 23 government agencies. Round 2 projects are underway.
- ✓ These multi-agency partnerships generate impactful and long-term solutions on shared priority areas and their challenges that can be scaled across the service.
- ✓ The APS Indo-Pacific Executive Development Program is an example of developing capabilities to navigate challenges and opportunities in and with the Indo-Pacific.

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**Benefits to the community:**

**A properly functioning APS is essential to the prosperity and security of all Australians. Rebuilding capability ensures that public institutions have the skills needed to tackle complex issues, and assurance that capability investment is done in the public interest**

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**Bringing core work in-house deepens system-wide capability and reduces the risks to integrity, expertise and public trust posed by excessive outsourcing.**

- Agencies are now in their first year of implementing the Strategic Commissioning Framework.
  - APS Agencies have committed to bring core public service work back in-house in 2024–25 to the value of around \$527 million.
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**Transparency and assurance that the APS has the skills and capability needed to serve the public**

- Capability Reviews bring accountability and transparency to how agencies continuously improve organisational capability.
  - Repeating and publishing Capability Review reports and agency action plans commits agencies to progress milestones.
  - Agencies are supported through the broader system-wide Reform Agenda to implement action plans.
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**Collaborating across the Indo-Pacific region to address climate change**

- The Capability Reinvestment Fund Round 1 prioritised complex domestic and international challenges.
  - The inaugural APS Indo-Pacific Executive Development program fosters stronger connections with the Indo-Pacific on issues like climate change and energy challenges.
  - The Program commenced on 2 November 2023 with 94 participants from 27 agencies, providing a rich diversity of perspectives shared throughout the 7-month learning journey.
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# Appendix B: APS Reform Performance Framework

Four Pillars							
The APS embodies integrity in everything it does		The APS puts people and business at the centre of policy and services		The APS is a model employer		The APS has the capability to do its job well	
Eight Outcomes							
(1) Public sector employees act with and champion integrity	(2) Public service employees are stewards of the public service	(3) The APS delivers human and user-centred policy and service excellence	(4) The APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples	(5) The APS' employee value proposition is attractive	(6) The APS sets the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity	(7) The APS sets the standard for First Nations employment and cultural competency	(8) The APS continuously improves its capabilities
Performance indicators – each of which are reflective of, and support by, metrics							
The APS has improvements towards a strengthened pro-integrity culture	<i>Stewardship is defined and promoted and easily accessible for all APS employees</i>	<i>Increase in quality of partnership, engagement and relationship management</i>	<i>Increased partnership with First Nations communities and organisations</i>	The APS's employee value proposition attracts and retains the right talent	The APS has a continued decrease in the gender pay gap	First Nations representation and inclusion is increased in the APS	<i>The APS is effectively addressing current and emerging capability needs</i>
Decrease in unacceptable behaviours in the APS	APS work practices embody and underpin stewardship	<i>The Public Service has increased transparency in how public engagement informs decision-making for policy and services</i>		Increase in employees deriving satisfaction from non-monetary conditions	A decreased percentage of employees reporting they have experienced workplace discrimination	<i>The APS is more culturally capable and is a culturally safe workplace for First Nations employees</i>	Reduced reports of skill and capability deficits in agencies
					The APS workforce reflects the diversity of the Australian community		

<b>Legend: Nature of performance indicator</b>	External measure with public reporting of metrics	<i>Italicised indicates sub metrics require development</i>
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## Outcome 1

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
1  Public sector employees act with and champion integrity	The APS has strengthened a <b>pro-integrity culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score to "My agency encourages people to act with integrity"</li> </ul>	APS Employee Census	New Census question, baseline will be established in 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score to "I am supported to provide expert, frank and fearless advice"</li> </ul>		
	Decrease in unacceptable <b>behaviours</b> in the APS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Code of Conduct investigations</li> </ul>	APS Agency Survey	1,122
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Code of Conduct breaches</li> </ul>		996
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased score of "During the last 12 months, have you been subjected to harassment or bullying in your current workplace?"</li> </ul>	APS Employee Census	10%

## Outcome 2

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<b>2</b> <b>Public service employees are stewards of the public service</b>	<b>Stewardship</b> is defined and promoted and easily accessible for all APS employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of stewardship</li> </ul>	Legislative changes & APSC	Baseline unavailable for 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The APSC actively promotes Stewardship to the whole of the APS through communications and engagement activity</li> </ul>	APSC reporting	Baseline unavailable for 2023
	APS work practices embody and underpin <b>stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score to "My workgroup embodies the APS value of stewardship"</li> </ul>	APS Employee Census	New survey question, baseline will be established in 2024

### Outcome 3

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<b>3</b> <b>The APS delivers human and user centred policy and service excellence</b>	Increase in quality of <b>partnership</b> , engagement and relationship management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in satisfaction with Australian government services from stakeholders</li> </ul>	Trust and Transparency Survey	72%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score to “The people in my workgroup put end-users at the centre of our work”</li> </ul>	APS Employee Census	New survey question, baseline will be established in 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in satisfaction of relationship of external partners</li> </ul>	<i>Source to be developed with agencies with partnerships in place (case studies)</i>	Baseline unavailable for 2023
	The Public Service has increased <b>transparency</b> in how public engagement informs decision-making for <b>policy and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of engagement outcomes published</li> </ul>	APS Agency Survey	Baseline unavailable for 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of projects that undertake public engagement to ensure relevant end-users inform decisions</li> </ul>		Baseline unavailable for 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in coordination and collaboration across agencies</li> </ul>	APS Agency Survey	Baseline unavailable for 2023



### Outcome 4

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p><b>The APS has effective relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples</b></p>	<p>Increased <b>partnership</b> with First Nations communities and organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of partnership stocktakes, including strengthening of existing partnerships (cl. 32 and 33 of National Agreement)</li> </ul>	<p>Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report</p>	<p>38</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in proportion of public engagement projects designed and delivered in partnership with First Nations people</li> </ul>	<p><i>Source to be developed through Monitoring and Accountability Framework</i></p>	<p>Baseline unavailable for 2023</p>

## Outcome 5

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b></p> <p><b>The APS's employee value proposition is attractive</b></p>	<p>The APS's <b>employee value proposition</b> attracts and retains the right talent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in resignation rate of ongoing staff in APS</li> </ul>	<p>The Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED)</p>	4.9%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in retention rate within 3 years of employment in the APS</li> </ul>		81.4%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve or maintain ranking in Australia's top graduate employer</li> </ul>	<p>Australian Financial Review Top 100 Graduate Employers</p>	<p>Australian Government Graduate Program ranked 25<sup>th</sup></p>
	<p>Increase in employees deriving <b>satisfaction</b> from non-monetary conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score in employees reporting satisfaction with current job</li> </ul>	<p>APS Employee Census</p>	73%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score in employees reporting satisfaction with non-monetary employment conditions</li> </ul>		74%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased score in employees reporting wanting to leave their current position in pursuing work outside the APS</li> </ul>		11%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score in employees reporting satisfaction with wellbeing policies and support</li> </ul>		64%

## Outcome 6

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>The APS sets the standard for equity, inclusion and diversity</b></p>	<p>The APS has a continued decrease in the <b>gender pay gap</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained performance/trend in the report of the APS gender pay gap</li> </ul>	<p>APS Remuneration Survey</p>	5.2%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in the disproportionate representation of males and females across classifications, particularly at the APS 3 to APS 5 levels</li> </ul>		<p>APS3 - 62% (F) / 38% (M)</p> <p>APS4 - 68% / 32%</p> <p>APS5 - 63% / 37%</p>
	<p>A decreased percentage of employees reporting they have experienced workplace discrimination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased score in employees reporting they have experienced discrimination on the basis of background or personal characteristics</li> </ul>		<p>APS Employee Census</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score in employees reporting they feel their supervisor ensures that everyone can be included in workplace activities</li> </ul>	83%	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased score in employees who feel their agency supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture</li> </ul>	80%	
	<p>The APS workforce reflects the <b>diversity</b> of the Australian community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in proportion of First Nations employees</li> </ul>	<p>APSED</p>	3.5%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in proportion of First Nations people in SES roles</li> </ul>		1.8%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in proportion of SES with first language not exclusively English</li> </ul>		11%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased proportion of employees with disabilities</li> </ul>		5.1%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain proportion of women SES</li> </ul>		53.4%

## Outcome 7

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<p>7</p> <p>The APS sets the standard for First Nations employment and cultural competency</p>	<p>First Nations representation and inclusion is increased in the APS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in proportion of First Nations people in SES roles</li> </ul>	APSED	1.8%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in proportion of First Nations people in EL1 and EL2 roles</li> </ul>		1.8%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in First Nations employees as a percentage of the APS Workforce to 5%</li> </ul>		3.5%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in resignation rate of ongoing First Nations staff in the APS</li> </ul>		6.9%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in retention rate of First Nations staff within the first 3 years of employment in the APS</li> </ul>		78%
	<p>The APS is more culturally capable and is a culturally safe workplace for First Nations employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of completions of Cultural Awareness training</li> </ul>	APS Academy	1,282
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in overall score of bullying and harassment</li> </ul>	APS Employee Census	17%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in overall score of discrimination</li> </ul>		23%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of First Nations staff who report they were consulted during internal / corporate policy processes</li> </ul>	APS Agency Survey	Baseline unavailable in 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in First Nations staff who report workplace practices and policies are culturally safe and appropriate</li> </ul>		

## Outcome 8

Outcome	Performance Measure	Metric	Data Source/s	2023 Baseline
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>The APS continuously improves its capabilities</b></p>	<p>The APS is effectively addressing current and emerging <b>capability</b> needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased retention rate for ICT and Digital Solutions job family</li> </ul>	APSED	93.8%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased retention rate for Data and Research job family</li> </ul>		94.1%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased retention rate for graduates</li> </ul>		91.3%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased retention rate for trainees</li> </ul>		84.9%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of members of Procurement / Contract Management professions</li> </ul>	<i>Source be developed collaboratively with Finance</i>	Baseline unavailable in 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of members of Complex Project Management professions</li> </ul>	<i>Source be developed collaboratively with Defence</i>	Baseline unavailable in 2023
	<p>Reduced reports of skill and <b>capability</b> deficits in agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in employees reporting there are skills or capability gaps in their immediate workgroup</li> </ul>	APS Employee Census	46%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in employees reporting their work group has appropriate skills, capabilities and knowledge to perform well</li> </ul>		78%