

OPEN LETTER TO THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

Friday, 13 December 2019

Dear colleagues

The Prime Minister today released the final report of the Independent Review of the Australian Public Service (APS) and the Government's response as part of the Government's reform agenda for the APS: 'Delivering for Australians'.

We should all be proud of being part of the APS. We are a world-class public service. We work in remote and regional Australia, in Canberra and other capital cities, and around the world. What you do every day, helps to improve the lives of Australians in many different ways.

The Review highlights the strengths of the APS. It also highlights the need for us to adapt to meet the rising expectations of Australians and emerging opportunities and challenges – economic, social, technological and geopolitical.

The Review provides us with a vehicle to take ambitious and practical actions to lift our capability and strengthen our connections with the Australians we serve.

The Review makes 40 recommendations, and the majority are consistent with the Prime Minister's expectations for the APS and the Government's broader reform agenda for the APS.

The Government has endorsed the majority of the Review's recommendations. The Government's position on the recommendations reflects advice provided by the Secretaries Board.

The Government has committed \$15.1 million to commence delivery of the agreed recommendations.

The Board is setting up a small team in PM&C, supported by the APSC, to support delivery of the Government's APS reform agenda. We will conduct a sprint in early 2020 to plan implementation and sequencing of reforms, and to determine any further funding needs to be considered in the 2020 Budget. We look forward to talking to you more about these changes next year.

The reform agenda will focus on actions that have the highest impact on improving the lives of Australians, ensuring that we deliver results

together, and build our skills and expertise, including in data and digital technology. There will also be a strong emphasis on integrity of the APS, as this underpins everything we do. And reform will focus as much on our culture and purpose as on our systems, tools and processes.

Much of what we need to do builds on the great work already underway, including important reform initiatives led by the Secretaries' APS Reform Committee, and is consistent with many of the Review's recommendations.

For example, the Secretaries Board has already agreed to operate as an APS enterprise management board. We have established a professional stream for human resources, and will establish new professions early next year, to deepen our expertise and capability. The Board has also agreed an APS Framework for Participation and Engagement designed to help us better connect with Australians in our work. And we are lifting our use of data assets through the Data Integration Partnership for Australia, a collaboration of more than 20 Commonwealth agencies.

We thank our colleagues on the Secretaries Board for their hard work in driving existing reforms and shaping the future of the APS.

Many individuals and organisations made valuable contributions and, in particular, we thank all those public servants who made submissions to and engaged with the Independent Review.

As public servants we believe that what we do matters and we want us to be our best for the Australian people.

Please take the time to read the Review and the Government's response.

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and holiday break. We know some of you will be working through this period – supporting essential services including the continued response to the bushfires – and we take this opportunity to thank you, in particular, for your service.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Gaetjens
Department of the
Prime Minister and Cabinet



Peter Woolcott AO
Australian Public
Service Commissioner