Australian Government
Department of Education

2026–29 Census Action Plan

We create a better future for all Australians through education

Our **2026–29 APS Employee Census Action Plan** sets a three-year direction for improving employee experience, allowing us to focus on sustainable actions and build lasting improvements over time. Each year, we will review the Plan against our Census results and employee feedback to ensure it continues to respond to what matters most to our people.

Highlights in 2026

Highly committed and motivated workforce | **Strong supervisor support** | **Positive and inclusive workplace culture**

Where we will improve	What we will do	Success measures
Supporting sustainable delivery	**Simplify business processes:** Deliver an improvement program focused on simplifying high-volume business processes, reporting requirements, approvals and coordination activities that may be duplicative in nature and create unnecessary administrative effort. **Continue to embed workforce prioritisation and planning:** Introduce a practical planning tool at the branch and team level to map workforce effort, demand and impact. Use the tool to strengthen department-wide approaches to setting priorities, making trade-offs and allocating resources so workforce effort is focused on the department's highest priorities. Build greater visibility of work demands, dependencies and capacity to support more informed decisions about what should stop, start or continue.	• APS Census and employee feedback indicate improved perceptions that work is prioritised effectively, and resources are directed to the department's highest priorities. • Employees report greater clarity about priorities, decision-making and trade-offs when competing demands arise. • Employees and managers report that administrative burden and unnecessary process requirements have reduced over time. • Managers' report greater confidence matching workforce capability and capacity to business priorities.
Leadership, collaboration and communication	**Improve understanding of departmental priorities and decisions:** Establish a consistent department-wide approach to communicating key priorities and consulting on decisions and trade-offs, reflecting a shared commitment by the SES cohort and managers to departmental outcomes and providing employees with greater clarity about what matters most, how decisions are made and how their work contributes to departmental outcomes. **Equip managers to lead and support teams through change:** Strengthen support for managers at all levels to help them interpret priorities, navigate change and manage delivery pressures within their teams. Provide practical resources, guidance and peer learning opportunities that build confidence in leading conversations about priorities, change, wellbeing and performance expectations.	• APS Census and employee feedback reflect improved confidence in organisational communication, SES teamwork, leadership visibility and the management of change. • Employees report clearer understanding of departmental priorities, decisions and strategic direction. • Increased positive responses relating to leadership visibility and confidence in senior leaders working together. • Employees report being consulted on changes that affect their work. • Managers report greater confidence communicating priorities, decisions and change to their teams.
Capability through experience, exposure and training	**Build capability through experience and learning from others:** Promote a shared understanding that capability is developed through experience, exposure and learning from others, not only formal training. Increase opportunities for employees to build capability through stretch assignments, coaching, peer learning, job shadowing, cross-group experiences and practical application of new skills. **Strengthen leadership and management capability:** Support leaders and managers to build the skills needed to lead people, manage performance, develop capability, navigate change and deliver outcomes in increasingly complex environments. Use existing forums and capability initiatives to share practical tools, peer exchange, lessons and contemporary approaches. **Develop a department-wide Capability Framework:** Develop a Capability Framework that provides an enterprise-wide view of current and future capability needs, aligns capability investment with workforce and business priorities, and supports a more consistent approach to identifying, developing and evaluating capability across the department.	• APS Census and employee feedback reflect improved confidence in learning, development and opportunities to build capability through work. • Employees report greater confidence applying new skills and knowledge in their work. • Managers report greater confidence identifying, developing and deploying capability within their teams. • Capability investments are aligned to identified business priorities and workforce needs. • Increased participation in developmental experiences such as stretch work, peer learning, mobility and cross-group opportunities.

2025 Actions delivered

✓ Delivered ↻ Ongoing

- ✓ Change Central (intranet hub)
- ✓ Enterprise Change Framework
- ✓ EL2 Change Training
- ✓ Change Practitioner Network
- ✓ AI Strategy
- ✓ Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer and AI Accountable Officer appointed
- ✓ AI Confidence Pulse issued
- ↻ AI tools, training and guidance on the responsible and safe use of AI
- ✓ FocusED manager program aligned with capability review findings
- ✓ InformED Recap delivered through the intranet and EDition newsletter
- ✓ Peer-to-peer recognition program
- ↻ Targeted support and intervention to address staff wellbeing