Australian Government

# HR: THE PEOPLE PROFESSION

## An Australian Public Service Human Resources Workforce Strategy and Action Plan

August 2021

Australian Public Service.
A career plus more.

# Foreword

Colleagues,

It is with great pride that I present the Australian Public Service's first HR Workforce Strategy. The strategy provides a forward-looking approach to connect HR professionals, grow their capabilities, develop rewarding careers, and advance the HR service offering for the APS.

The future of the APS relies on the capability, agility and expertise of its people and HR will play a key role in delivering that vision. That means it's time for us all to take our capability to the next level. Gone are the days when HR was considered solely as an 'attract, recruit, and build' capability. HR nowadays is increasingly recognised for its important role in ensuring the APS has the capacity to deliver its core services to the community and anticipate the needs of the future.

This means our relationships with business are paramount. To get to the next level, we need business to trust us, engage with us early and follow our advice. In return, we must prove we truly understand the business by giving them timely, relevant and strategic advice. We will, of course, still focus on the people aspects of issues, but we increasingly need to use business skills to help understand what's important in the wider environment, and use that knowledge to ensure we offer viable solutions for business.

This strategy is not your usual, high-level document. We have deliberately created a strategy that is also in parts practical and action-focused, recognising that you will want to know what you can do to translate and implement the strategy both for yourself and for your agency. The strategy also recognises that different agencies are at different points in their HR journey. For example, some may already have their own HR workforce strategies, while others will not. Because of these differences, the strategy has been designed to be flexible, with no set timeframe, and is to be used as a guiding document. Suggested measures of success have also been included in Annex A, noting that agencies should measure success in the way that works best for them.

Each and every one of us has a key role to play in implementing this strategy and taking HR to the next level. We are the profession with the power to support and change the APS, but we can only do that by working together and helping one another. This strategy is one way we can do this. I hope you find it useful.

**Jacqui Curtis**
**HR Head of Profession**

# Continuing HR Professionalisation

## The 2019 Independent Review of the APS identified a range of current and future HR needs for the Australian Public Service.

It found that many of the recommendations generated from previous reviews, including the Unlocking Potential Review (2016), had not been implemented.[1] The Independent Review re-emphasised the importance of strategic capability and recommended that the Australian Public Service (APS) develop a professions model to lift its core expertise, meet long-term capability needs, and provide rewarding careers.

HR and digital and data professions were immediate priorities, given the significant demands that review implementation would place on the HR profession and the need to build stronger digital and data capability. HR professionals play a critical role in implementing recommendations from the review, including a whole-of-service learning and development strategy and a whole-of-service workforce strategy (Delivering for Tomorrow – APS Workforce Strategy 2025).

Following the review, the APS HR Professional Stream Strategy, formally launched in 2019 by Australian Public Service (APS) Commissioner, Peter Woolcott. The Professional Stream Strategy recognised a need to provide a systemic, service-wide approach to build and uplift strategic HR skills across the APS through the identification of capability needs, standards and career pathways.[2]

As such, the APS HR Head of Profession, Jacqui Curtis, and supporting implementation team have coordinated and implemented a range of initiatives to support the capability uplift of the HR workforce.

The APS HR Workforce Strategy (this Strategy) aims to build on the momentum of that work and guide the next phase of professionalisation. This Strategy charts the way for current and future leaders to successfully build capability individually and across the profession. In turn, this will support the APS to drive great organisational outcomes.

In developing the Strategy, extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted across numerous organisations, HR functional streams and experience levels to identify current challenges, gaps and opportunities. Comprehensive desktop research activities were undertaken to support the development of the Strategy.

### What do we mean by professionalisation?

A **profession** is commonly understood as a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to common ethical standards.[3] The group positions itself as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning.

**Professionals** are governed by codes of ethics, and profess commitment to competence, integrity and promotion of the public good.[4]

1 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Independent Review of the Australian Public Service, Canberra, 2019.

2 Australian Public Service Commission, APS HR Professional Stream Strategy, Canberra, 2021.

3 Definition from Professions Australia website *www.professions.org.au/what-is-a-professional.*

4 Sylvia R Cruess, Sharon Johnston and Richard L Cruess. "Profession: a working definition for medical educators."

For members of the APS, the APS Values, the APS Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct set out the standard of behaviour expected of agency heads and APS employees. As an HR profession, we reinforce these values and embody the code of ethics in the work that we do.

Various journal articles and publications written over the last decade note that, globally, HR has moved further into the realm of professionalism. This is due to a larger emphasis on competencies, the development of formal bodies of HR knowledge, official routes to learning and the introduction of standards of practice.[5]

We believe that what makes someone a professional is not limited to their skill, knowledge and qualification level but extends to the attributes, principles and mindsets they hold.

**For HR, to professionalise is to create a collective purpose and code of behaviour.**

*Teaching and Learning in* Medicine (2004): 74-76.

5 SHRM, 2013, 'Workplace Visions', www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/labor-market-and-economic-data/documents/13-0351%20workplace%20visions%20issue%202%20final.pdf

# Current Workforce Snapshot

## WHO ARE WE?

WE SUPPORT
**150,474 employees**
**ACROSS THE APS**
(APS Employment Data, 30 June 2020 release)

**4.3%**
of the APS workforce are
**HR PRACTITIONERS**
(APS Workforce Strategy 2025, pg 10)

**55%**
of us have a
**BACHELOR'S DEGREE**
**OR HIGHER**
(HR Census and APSED Insights, 31 December 2020)

## HOW WE WORK ACROSS THE APS

**63%** OF THE PROFESSION
**HAVE ONLY WORKED AT ONE AGENCY**
(HR Census and APSED Insights, 31 December 2020)

**MEDIAN LENGTH OF SERVICE**
FOR THE PROFESSION IS
**13 YEARS**
(HR Census and APSED Insights, 31 December 2020)

## Gaps and Challenges

Research and stakeholder consultation indicated that across the APS, many of the current capability gaps and workforce challenges in the HR profession are not necessarily 'new' or 'emerging' but are longstanding.

- Workforce capability gaps remain in workforce analytics, strategic HR, contemporary HR knowledge and customer-centred service delivery.
- Challenges relating to mobility were identified by HR practitioners across the APS. The barriers to successful mobility include geographical constraints, unwillingness to release staff, lack of backfilling capacity and unclear objectives.
- Lack of awareness regarding career progression opportunities and diverse career pathways was identified as a challenge for HR professionals.
- Communicating the value proposition of HR remains a key challenge for senior leaders across the APS.

Emerging challenges include:

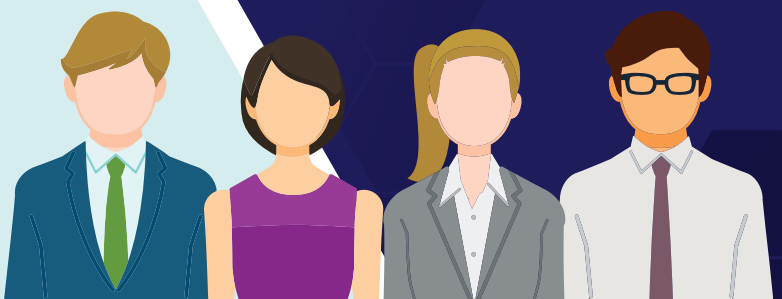
- Rising HR complexities in relation to workforce composition (e.g. ongoing, non-ongoing, contract, multiple employer, sub-contract).
- Skillsets in the APS remain in the 'traditionalist' HR space (such as recruitment, performance and payroll administration). This creates limitations on the ability to develop modern skillsets, cater for emerging workforce needs and appropriately implement change.
- Increasing concerns around mental health and wellbeing across the APS.

## Opportunities

HR offers a diverse number of careers across the APS. These careers are located throughout Australia, in both regional and metropolitan areas in all states and territories. HR roles require a range of qualifications and skill levels, and many are transferable across organisations, allowing for career flexibility. While traditional HR occupations are still needed, a number of new skillsets are also increasing in demand (e.g. data and network analysis, employee coaching, workplace design and employee wellness). This is due to the shift in HR roles towards those that support technological advancement, systems thinking, and sophisticated people and wellbeing management.

There are a range of opportunities for the workforce. Key opportunities include:

- Identifying different pathways to professionalisation for HR practitioners
- Building capability in focus areas (current and emerging)
- Consistent and widespread collaboration and information sharing.



# HR Workforce Vision

Our vision is for the APS HR workforce to have a strong professional identity, grounded in shared values and recognised standards. As a profession, we aim to **create opportunities and working environments to help our people be their best** for both themselves and the APS.

Through the implementation of the APS HR Workforce Strategy over the coming years, we envision the profession gaining greater capability, reaching further into and across business, and reinforcing HR's role as a respected contributor in the strategic direction setting of the APS.

**In order to be a trusted APS, united in serving all Australians by 2030, we must invest in HR professionals now to better prepare us for the future. Together we will:**

- Seize opportunities to deliver great services
- Foster a dynamic, adaptive and resilient workforce
- Build professionalism and expertise
- Embrace data and digital
- Collaborate to solve problems
- Work together to reduce silos
- Strengthen our leadership capability.

**The Workforce Strategy supports this vision through its focus on the following three pillars:**

- Growing individual capability
- Delivering consistent, high-quality services
- Maturing the HR profession.

# Our Commitment to Professionalisation

**We value being part of a profession and benefit from its continued improvement.**

As the profession matures, commitment to professionalisation must be shared across the workforce. Every person who belongs to the HR profession has a key role in implementing the Strategy.

We need to reach forward and take action at the individual and organisational level to drive improvement across the APS. As individuals we represent the profession in the actions we take, how we interact with our clients and how we view ourselves. At every level there are ways we can identify our contribution to the uplift of HR capability and HR services across the APS.

**AS AN HR PRACTITIONER,** my role is to engage with and support the activities of the professional stream and utilise its resources and activities to continue my own journey to professionalisation.

**AS AN HR MANAGER,** my role is to lead by example and motivate staff to engage in communities of practice and strive for more.

**AS AN AGENCY LEADER,** my role is to work with the APS HR leadership cohort, to be the drivers of change and empower people and organisations to challenge and innovate.

**AS THE HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM,** our role is to come together to share knowledge, overcome challenges and collaborate.

This Strategy serves as a guide for HR professionals. It is designed to be practical and useable for all members of the HR workforce, and implementable for all organisations across the APS.

Throughout the document you will see how the above roles contribute to each strategic outcome.

We encourage you to find where you fit, where you can support, and how you can contribute to the future of HR within the APS.

Annex A provides further details on measuring strategy success.

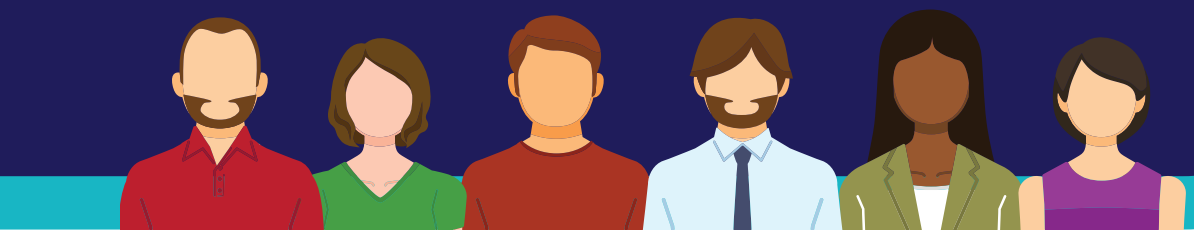
# Strategy Pillars

The Strategy links opportunities to be led by individuals and organisations across the APS. These opportunities are described within three pillars.

The pillars are designed to:

- Support individuals to have rewarding HR careers
- Support organisations to build the capabilities of their HR professionals
- Support a 'one HR' to enable a 'one APS'.

The Strategy identifies a range of outcomes under the three pillars. Together, the Stream will seize opportunities, and improve service outcomes to meet the HR needs of the future.



## Our Pillars

### 1. GROWING INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITY

We will ensure that all HR professionals have the opportunity to build their skills, knowledge and networks and are committed to continuing professional development.

This will help to ensure HR roles are rewarding and our staff are supported to respond to contemporary challenges.

**For HR professionals**

### 2. DELIVERING CONSISTENT, HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

We will build client trust by focusing on consistency, quality and strategic problem-solving. We will make it our goal to know your business.

**For organisations**

### 3. MATURING THE HR PROFESSION

We will always endeavour to do our best and build our reputation as a professional service. We will build a learning culture and share best practice and innovations across the APS and beyond.

**Across the APS**

# Pillar 1: Growing Individual Capability

**OBJECTIVE STATEMENT 1**

**We will ensure that all HR professionals have the opportunity to build their skills, knowledge and networks and are committed to continuing professional development. This will help to ensure HR roles are rewarding and our staff are supported to respond to contemporary challenges.**

**OUTCOME 1.1**

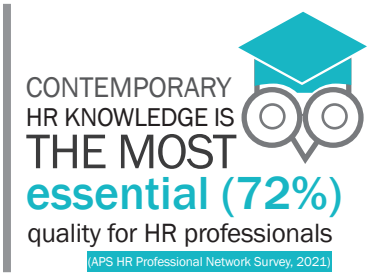
**All HR professionals will have identified their pathway to professionalisation.**

**ACTIVITY**

Implement the Pathways to Professionalisation Capability Framework.

## How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will use the Pathways to Professionalisation Capability Framework to understand my development opportunities and map my career and learning pathway.
- **As an HR manager,** I will use the Pathways to Professionalisation Capability Framework in performance and development conversations to plan opportunities for capability uplift.
- **As an agency leader**, I will consider the Pathways to Professionalisation Capability Framework when allocating learning and development resources to my HR team.
- **Across the APS,** we will share and track Implementation of the Pathways to Professionalisation Capability Framework.



*"Mobility in the public sector is important. The APS must be more permeable and mobile in order to foster diversity of thinking, the contestability of ideas and assist in capability development."*

**APS Commissioner, Peter Woolcott**

## Growing Individual Capability

**OUTCOME 1.2**

**HR professionals will be valued for their breadth of HR experience.**

**ACTIVITY**

Leveraging off the APS Mobility Framework, encourage mobility for HR professionals.

### How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will explore options for short-term secondments and bring my new skills back to my team and organisation.
- **As an HR manager,** I will encourage my staff to engage in mobility opportunities, and recognise those with a breadth of experience when I am recruiting and promoting staff.
- **As an agency leader,** I will promote and enable professionals to pursue mobility opportunities.
- **Across the APS,** we will work with, and leverage off, the APS Mobility Framework to encourage HR specific mobility.

## Growing Individual Capability

**OUTCOME 1.3**
**We promote a culture of learning and support staff to pursue professionalisation opportunities.**

**ACTIVITY**
Build awareness and engagement of HR learning opportunities.

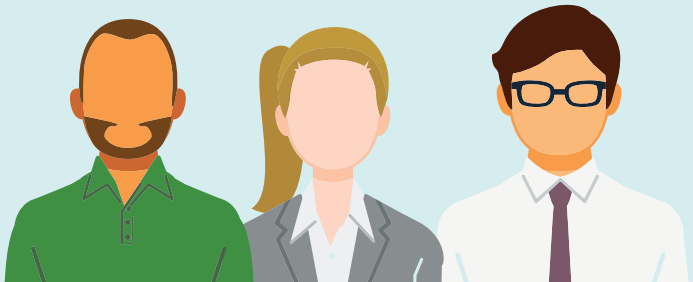
### How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will use a range of mechanisms, such as my performance review, coaching and mentoring, professional networking and individual and group learning to further develop my knowledge and capability.
- **As an HR manager,** I will provide guidance to staff members on learning and development techniques, resources and opportunities.
- **As an agency leader,** I will communicate the importance of life-long learning to staff.
- **Across the APS,** we will continue to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of learning for organisations.

# Action in Focus: A look at HR Mobility

HR professionals may wish to explore lateral development opportunities to gain new experiences and perspectives. For example, those in small agencies with generalist skills, could explore what it is like to work in larger agencies, amongst professionals who have deep business expertise, and vice versa.

A three to twelve month temporary move provides time to experience new subject matter or a delivery model. This will also facilitate new personal and professional connections.
HR mobility should leverage off the progress of existing programs and resources as outlined in the APS Mobility Framework.



# Pillar 1: Action Plan

The below actions are for individuals, leaders and agencies to incorporate into their own plans for realising the Strategy.

**Activity 1**
Implement the Pathways to Professionalisation Capability Framework.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM & APS LEADERSHIP ACTIONS**

- Engage staff and formally launch the Framework.
- Build staff awareness through targeted communications across the Network.
- Undertake education to support framework utilisation across the APS HR workforce.
- Provide information and support for integrating the framework into workforce processes:
  - + Recruitment
  - + Performance
  - + Capability and career development discussions
  - + Workforce planning
  - + Mobility and transition.
- Review framework uptake.

**Timeframe: 1-3 months**

**Activity 2**
Leveraging off the APS Mobility Framework, encourage mobility for HR professionals.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM & APS LEADERSHIP ACTIONS**

- Leverage progress made through existing mobility opportunities (such as the One APS Opportunities pilot).
- Communicate the benefits of breadth of experience.
- Identify talent mobility advocates (SES) across the workforce.
- Work with the APSC to communicate mobility options (in line with the APS Mobility Framework).

**SUGGESTED HR ORGANISATIONAL ACTIONS**

- Proactively engage/reach out to other departments/ agencies to set-up and coordinate mobility opportunities.

**Timeframe: 3-6 months / Ongoing**

**Activity 3**
Build awareness and engagement of HR learning opportunities.

**SUGGESTED HR ORGANISATIONAL ACTIONS**

- Engage with the APS HR Professional Stream initiatives (e.g. Pathways to Professionalisation Framework, mobility).
- Use the strategy key messages to build awareness amongst your team of methods and pathways for learning.
- Communicate opportunities for professional development within the HR workforce to potential recruits. Use the Pathways to Professionalisation Framework to showcase the many career pathways available for HR professionals.
- Re-assess commitment to learning and development to ensure it aligns with the profession and organisational outcomes.
- Assess and showcase benefits of learning.

**Timeframe: Ongoing**

*"Finding different experiences, challenging yourself, taking yourself out of your comfort zone, working with different people—all of that leads to better collaboration. It leads to you having good networks. It leads to you being able to be an interpreter. And that is not only of benefit to you, it's absolutely of benefit to the APS."*

**Helen Wilson, Deputy Australian Statistician, Australian Bureau of Statistics**

# What does success look like?

### PILLAR 1: OBJECTIVE

**We will ensure that all HR professionals have the opportunity to build their skills, knowledge and networks and are committed to continuing professional development. This will help to ensure HR roles are rewarding and our staff are supported to respond to contemporary challenges.**

- HR professionals are proactively broadening and building their expertise. The narrative and culture around mobility has shifted and individuals actively seek out opportunities to build their own capability and the capability of their organisation.
- Expertise is purposefully shared across the APS and professional networks are established and maintained.
- Lessons from across the APS are shared and professionals utilise the experience and expertise in other organisations to respond to challenges and improve HR service delivery.
- HR professionals make their development a priority and are supported by organisations, managers and executive.
- HR professionals have the capabilities to respond to future APS challenges such as changing resource profiles, variations in HR skillsets, increasing workplace complexity and technological advancement or lack thereof.

**Success for our clients looks like:**

- Clients receive contemporary and accurate HR advice at all levels.
- Increased mobility offers new perspectives and capability to our clients. The broadening of expertise ensures the HR workforce is better equipped to support and manage client challenges.

# Pillar 2: Delivering Consistent, High-quality Services

**OBJECTIVE STATEMENT 2**

**We will build client trust by prioritising consistency, quality and strategic problem-solving. We will make it our goal to know your business.**

**OUTCOME 2.1**

**We understand business and our clients understand the HR service offering. Together we meet organisational and APS objectives.**

**ACTIVITY**

Partner with business to understand drivers and requirements. Using this understanding, set and communicate expectations about the HR service offering.

## How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I take the time to understand business objectives, requirements and challenges.
- **As an HR manager,** I will work with my clients to develop a joint understanding of how HR and business can partner together to achieve organisational outcomes.
- **As an agency leader,** I will review service offerings and operating models to ensure we meet the needs of clients.
- **Across the APS,** we will support HR to understand and communicate their service offerings, including how this may change.

## Our client responses:

*"I want HR practitioners to understand my needs and the needs of the broader business."*

*"There is a disconnect between HR and business areas."*

*"I want contemporary, best practice HR solutions."*

## Delivering Consistent, High-quality Services

### OUTCOME 2.2

**We identify and value a diverse skillset and are preparing our organisation for future challenges.**

**ACTIVITY**

Identify and balance capability within the organisation's HR function.

### How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will look to balance my technical HR skills with a strong business understanding.
- **As an HR manager,** I will know what skills my staff possess. I support my team by ensuring they have the skills needed now and into the future.
- **As an agency leader,** I will identify where I have deep capability and seek to share it with others.
- **Across the APS,** we will support foundational capability uplift by facilitating rollout of a foundational HR skills program.

### OUTCOME 2.3

**We will develop a better understanding of what it means to be strategic in HR.**

**ACTIVITY**

Establish a 'Capability in Focus' Program which will target current capability gaps in strategic HR.

### How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will engage in the program and will adopt a learning mindset.
- **As an HR manager,** I will contribute and free up time to participate in the Capability in Focus program.
- **As an agency leader,** I will commit to providing resources for my organisation to participate and encourage robust conversation with colleagues across the service.
- **Across the APS,** we will coordinate the program by developing a forward work plan and identify leaders to support delivery.

# Pillar 2: Action Plan

**Activity 1**
Partner with business to understand drivers and requirements. Using this understanding, set and communicate expectations about the HR service offering.

**SUGGESTED HR ORGANISATIONAL ACTIONS**

- Consult with business areas to understand organisational drivers and requirements.
- Undertake a functional or organisational review to understand where there are gaps, duplication and inefficiency within the HR service.
- Once baseline requirements are identified, explore alternate or improved options for delivery, including outsourcing arrangements or shared services.
- Identify areas for potential skill transfer and capability uplift within business areas.
- Develop or refresh functional services so that business and HR are clear on what the 'HR service offering' looks like. This will support expectation management.
- Review and adjust service offering where required.

**Suggested timeframe: 6-12 months from commencement.**

**Activity 2**
Identify and balance capability within the organisation's HR function.

**SUGGESTED HR ORGANISATIONAL ACTIONS**

- Undertake environment scanning within and across the APS to understand current and emerging skill requirements. Leverage off APSC and APS HR Professional Stream resources and expertise.
- Leverage current resources or develop framework for skills audit.
- Conduct a skills audit across team, function or organisation levels to understand current capability.
- Review job roles to identify where requirements may need to be developed, expanded or redefined to ensure aspects such as employee experience, wellness and systems support are incorporated into job descriptions.
- Build, recruit or outsource skills following audit.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM ACTIVITIES**

- Leveraging off the HR graduate modules, develop and implement an HR Foundational Skills Package.
- Monitor and review success.

**Suggested timeframe: 6-12 months from commencement.**

**Activity 3**
Establish a 'Capability in Focus' Program which will target current capability gaps in strategic HR.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM & APS LEADERSHIP ACTIONS**

- Tap into existing HR Centres of Excellence.
- Design a forward program schedule.
- Plan and coordinate program.
- Deliver practical learning sessions.
- Share learnings within HR organisations.
- Evaluate program utilisation and benefits.

**Timeframe: Ongoing**

# What does success look like?

**PILLAR 2: OBJECTIVE**

**We will build client trust by prioritising consistency, quality and strategic problem-solving. We will make it our goal to know your business.**

- Across the APS, business and HR have a shared understanding of the role of HR and how they support organisations.
- A strong, consistent HR foundation has been achieved across the APS. This will ensure that a baseline HR understanding and service is delivered to the APS, regardless of individual experience, work stream or organisation size.
- HR professionals have a greater awareness and understanding of current capability gaps and future capability requirements. They are supported by the Stream to continue to build capability in these areas.
- The APS is known as an exemplar of HR services. Clients are satisfied with the services provided and the reputation of the HR workforce attracts a range of prospective employees.

**Success for our clients looks like:**

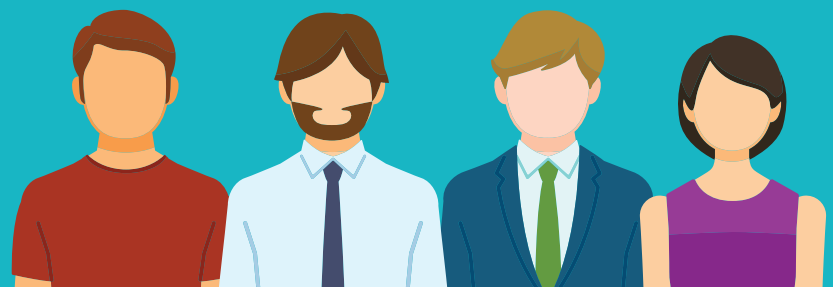
- Clients partner with HR and receive tailored, best practice solutions.
- HR professionals understand the complexity of the challenges clients face such as political changes, emerging issues with mental health and demographic trends. As a profession we are equipped to support the business to meet these challenges.

# Action in Focus: A Look at HR Services

Organisations should clearly articulate their HR service to ensure collective commitment to the work we do and the clients we serve. It ensures that both HR professionals and clients know what to expect.

The following questions should be considered before communicating your HR services:

- Have you explicitly identified the organisations business goals?
- Are channels of communication clear?
- Are client standards and responsibilities known?
- Have you reviewed and considered feedback received?
- Do you hold staff accountable?



# Pillar 3: Maturing the HR Profession

### OBJECTIVE STATEMENT 3

**We will always endeavour to do our best and build our reputation as a professional service.**
**We will build a learning culture and share best practice and innovations across the APS and beyond.**

### OUTCOME 3.1

**We will come together, to share ideas and collaborate on areas of increasing complexity, uncertainty and innovation.**

### ACTIVITY

Coordinate activities that foster genuine and targeted collaboration, information sharing and networking.

## How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will actively seek out collaboration and networking opportunities across the APS.
- **As an HR manager,** I will drive collaboration activities and share my organisation's successes and lessons learnt.
- **As an agency leader,** I will lead by example and foster collaborative relationships across the executive cohort.
- **Across the APS,** we will support coordination of collaborative activities.

### OUTCOME 3.2

**We will recognise the achievements of our colleagues and advocate the value proposition of HR across the APS.**

### ACTIVITY

Develop mechanisms for recognition of HR excellence.

## How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will recognise and acknowledge the achievements of my colleagues.
- **As an HR manager,** I will communicate the successes of my team and demonstrate the value of HR through the delivery of quality services.
- **As an agency leader,** I will ensure the business recognises where and how HR can support and shape the strategic direction of the organisation.
- **Across the APS,** we will develop mechanisms to recognise the achievements of HR professionals.

## Maturing the HR Profession

**OUTCOME 3.3**

**We will continue to support the ongoing professionalisation of the APS HR workforce.**

**ACTIVITY**

In order to deliver against the Strategy and create a culture of excellence across the APS, transition the current Implementation Team to a 'Centre of Professionalisation' model.

### How do you contribute?

- **As an HR practitioner,** I will utilise the resources and communities across the profession.
- **As an HR manager**, I will engage with the Centre to support its reach across the APS.
- **As an agency leader,** I will endorse the Centre and communicate its key messages/initiatives across my organisation.
- **Across the APS,** we will continue to support the professionalisation of HR.

# HR as a Strategic Partner

**The HR function in the APS is a key change leader that can enable us to meet our aspiration as a trusted APS. Strategic HR management is essential in promoting employee productivity and overall organisational success.**

### Ways to be a strategic HR partner:

- Engage with business, be curious and ask questions.
- Gain an intimate understanding of the problems and variety of factors that influence the business.
- Investigate and seek out answers by finding the right data, formulating and testing ideas and designing tailored solutions.
- Build and proactively manage business networks.
- Maintain an independent, trusted perspective on HR and strategic matters.
- Proactively support and influence key strategic initiatives to shape the direction of the organisation.

# Pillar 3: Action Plan

**Activity 1**
Coordinate activities that foster genuine and targeted collaboration, information sharing and networking.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM & APS LEADERSHIP ACTIONS**

- Develop a forward agenda to ensure discussion topics are relevant, current and applicable.
- Identify champions to lead collaboration sessions.
- Arrange activity schedule, location and communication channels.
- Identify mechanisms to share success stories and best practice artefacts/ resources.
- Conduct sessions.
- Distribute session summaries/additional resources to HR Network.
- Gain participant feedback.

**Timeframe: 1-3 months**

**Activity 2**
Develop mechanisms for recognition of HR excellence.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM & APS LEADERSHIP ACTIONS**

- Develop/adopt a model for recognition across the APS HR workforce.
- Consult with stakeholders (including the HR Network) to identify HR practices that may be recognised.
- Promote examples of excellence to the HR Professional Network to inspire others and demonstrate 'what good looks like'.
- Review engagement.

**Timeframe: 3-6 months**

**Activity 3**
In order to deliver against the Strategy and create a culture of excellence across the APS, transition the current Implementation Team to a 'Centre of Professionalisation' model.

**HR PROFESSIONAL STREAM & APS LEADERSHIP ACTIONS**

- Transition the current Implementation Team to the Centre of Professionalisation Team.
- Utilising current Professional Stream structures, establish the Centre of Professionalisation.
- Communicate forward work plan (identified in the APS HR Workforce Strategy Implementation Plan).
- Communicate progress.
- Review outcomes.

**Timeframe: 6-9 months**

# What does success look like?

**PILLAR 3: OBJECTIVE**

**We will always endeavour to do our best and build our reputation as a professional service.**
**We will build a learning culture and share best practice and innovations across the APS and beyond.**

- HR professionals feel engaged in their work and have a sense of belonging.
- Teamwork, collaboration and peer-to-peer recognition are encouraged and incentivised within and across HR organisations.
- Increased efficiency and problem-solving capability across the APS HR workforce due to targeted collaboration activities.
- Higher retention rates across HR streams due to increased opportunities to learn, collaborate and progress.
- There remains an APS HR Head of Profession, who, with their APS HR leader cohort, continues to champion HR professionalisation across the workforce.
- HR professionals are engaged with the offerings of the HR Professional Stream and in turn contribute to sustaining the Profession.
- As the APS shifts with changes in the political, economic and natural environment, HR professionals are adaptable and agile to the pace of change.

**Success for our clients looks like:**

- Clients have access to HR expertise and innovation beyond their department/agency.
- As the profession matures, the HR workforce will be able to further support the uplift of client HR management skills.

# Next Steps

We encourage you, as HR professionals, managers and agency leaders, to identify your own contribution to the professionalisation of the APS HR workforce.

Together, we will execute the strategies and initiatives outlined in this document.

The HR Head of Profession and support team have developed an accompanying Implementation Plan which will support the execution and communication of the APS HR Workforce Strategy and Action Plan.

The HR Professional Network will be updated on progress of activities and the Centre of Professionalisation will seek to support organisations on their own implementation journey.

To keep up to date with the Professional Stream, please connect with us through the GovTEAMS HR Professional Network.

# ANNEX A: ACHIEVING STRATEGY OUTCOMES

The APS HR Workforce Strategy and Action Plan is designed to enable practical implementation across the APS. All pillar activities contribute to improvement in individuals, organisations and the APS itself.

Organisations should measure success in a way that works best for them. Developing an individual action plan and progress framework will support you to successfully implement and track your progress against the Strategy. To support organisations, the Centre of Professionalisation will develop and distribute a range of resources and templates to help organisations measure their own success.

## Individual Organisations

- Demonstrated increase in the uptake of mobility opportunities as recorded through sources such as the APS Census.
- Measurable increase in the overall satisfaction with HR service offerings.
- Benchmarking the capabilities and skills of the HR function with those of other organisations (public/private/industry).
- Improvement in key stakeholder perceptions of HR/business partnerships.
- Increased engagement scores for HR staff at the organisational level.
- Increased efficiency in HR service delivery (timeliness and quality).
- Increase in the number of qualifications achieved by HR professionals.
- Increased participation in learning and development events, activities and programs.
- Improved confidence of HR professionals to meet organisational needs and manage client challenges.
- Improved client confidence in the capability and capacity for HR professionals to meet challenges and provide quality advice.
- Higher retention rates across HR streams due to increased opportunities to learn, collaborate and progress.
- Increased attraction of suitable recruits into the HR function.

The following list outlines how the Centre of Professionalisation will measure APS wide improvements over time. Noting there are no formal requirements for organisations to report to the Centre of Professionalisation on the progress of Strategy implementation, engagement activities and collaboration with the APSC to support measuring APS wide progress will be developed.

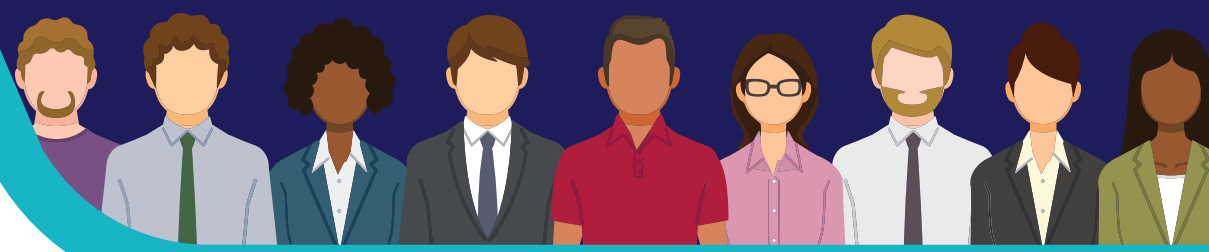
## Across the APS

- Across the HR profession, there is a measurable increase in the uptake of mobility opportunities
- Increased engagement in the professional development and networking activities coordinated through the APS HR Professional Network.
- There is an increase in individual led collaboration and networking forums/events across the APS.

*“People are at the heart of an organisation. And for the Australian Public Service, it is the actions of our people that determine the integrity of our institution, the quality of our advice to governments, and that we have a positive impact on the lives of Australians.*

*The capability of our HR practitioners is integral to this, as is a strategic approach to managing the capability and development of our people across the APS enterprise.*

*We’re transforming our workforce to ensure a world-class APS, now and in the future. We are creating an APS with deep capability and that is flexible, collaborative and mobile, to meet changing needs and increasing complexity that the future brings.*

*I encourage all HR practitioners to help lead this change. To engage with the initiatives that underpin the APS HR Workforce Strategy, and use the actions under this strategy to guide your professional development and build an enduring, strategically focused HR capability across the APS.”*

**APS Commissioner, Peter Woolcott**