Australian Commission on
Safety and Quality in Health Care

2026 APS Employee Census Action Plan

The APS Employee Census provides an important opportunity to better understand staff experiences and improve how we work together. The Commission's Leadership acknowledges the feedback provided through the Census and is committed to leading the organisational response and working with staff to make meaningful, measurable and embedded improvements.

Purpose

This Action Plan sets out the Commission's response and priorities arising from the 2026 APS Employee Census. Progress will be monitored throughout the year, and additional actions may be identified as opportunities arise to further strengthen outcomes across these priority areas.

What you told us

1. Workload & Capacity

Competing priorities, workload pressures and resourcing challenges can affect our ability to focus on and deliver high-value work.

2. Leadership & Accountability

Staff want greater visibility of leadership, clearer accountability and more transparent decision-making.

3. Wellbeing & Respect

Positive and respectful behaviours and an inclusive workplace are priorities.

4. Communication & Engagement

Staff value meaningful opportunities to contribute, collaborate and influence decisions.

1. Workload, Prioritisation and Organisational Capacity

What you told us

Staff reported challenges balancing competing priorities, changing demands and workload pressures. Delays in decision-making and administrative requirements were also identified as factors impacting capacity and the ability to focus on and deliver high-value work.

What we will do

Clarify priorities

- Establish a consistent approach to organisational and team prioritisation.
- Improve visibility of key deliverables and expectations.

Support workload management

- Strengthen approaches to managing workload and organisational capacity.
- Encourage and support regular, early conversations about workload pressures and resource needs.

Reduce red tape

- Improve efficiency by streamlining and simplifying processes and administrative activities where possible.
- Enhance program and organisational reporting mechanisms to report once, and adapt for different audiences.

How

- Strengthen the Commission's prioritisation and planning framework by finalising and publishing organisational priorities following budget allocation, reviewing the prioritisation methodology as part of the 2027-28 planning cycle, and implementing agreed planning and budget timeframes to support earlier prioritisation, resource allocation and work planning.
- Support managers and staff to regularly discuss workloads, competing priorities and capacity pressures and take action where required.
- Undertake a review of Commission processes and administrative requirements, informed by staff consultation, and leverage the Leadership Meeting, to identify opportunities to reduce red tape, simplify processes and remove barriers to getting work done, supported by a clear implementation and monitoring plan.
- Deliver leadership and organisation-wide education on briefing processes, supported by the publication of agreed guidance, templates and resources to evaluate and refine.
- Implement a refined program and corporate reporting mechanism to report once and adapt for different audiences.

2. Leadership, Accountability and Decision-Making

What you told us

Staff are seeking greater visibility of leadership, clearer accountability and increased transparency in organisational decision-making. They have emphasised the importance of meaningful consultation and genuine opportunities to contribute to decisions that affect their work, recognising that engagement and communication are critical to building trust, understanding and shared ownership of outcomes.

What we will do

Increase leadership visibility

- Create more opportunities for staff engagement with leaders.
- Improve communication of key decisions.

Strengthen accountability

- Clarify roles, responsibilities and decision-making pathways.
- Enhance transparency of governance processes, by reviewing and documenting decision-making pathways and delegations so decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level, with clear escalation where required.

Support leadership capability

- Continue leadership development initiatives.
- Promote consistent leadership behaviours across teams.

How

- Strengthen executive communication and visibility through initiatives including *Ask the Executives* sessions, regular Executive updates to teams, and increased opportunities for staff to hear directly from the Executive about organisational priorities, key decisions, major initiatives and organisational change.
- Build on recent changes to the Leadership Meeting and Directors' Meeting to strengthen collaboration between the Executive and Directors, improve organisational oversight, support more timely decision-making, and ensure operational issues and staff feedback are considered, actioned and communicated effectively.
- Improve communication, consultation and transparency through Executive and Leadership communications, All Staff Meetings, and regular feedback to teams on key decisions, including the rationale for decisions and how staff feedback has informed outcomes.
- Review governance arrangements, delegations and decision-making pathways to strengthen accountability, improve transparency and ensure decisions are made at the appropriate level.
- Explore leadership development opportunities, such as the Activate Management Program for staff who may act in leadership roles.

3. Wellbeing, Respect and Inclusion

What you told us

Staff highlighted the importance of a healthy, respectful and inclusive workplace where people feel supported, valued and safe to contribute. Feedback included opportunities to strengthen wellbeing and workplace culture through continued focus on workloads, workplace behaviours and ways of working.

What we will do

Promote respectful behaviours

- Reinforce expectations for respectful and inclusive conduct.
- Strengthen staff awareness of available support options and pathways for raising concerns about inappropriate workplace behaviours and interactions.

- Foster a culture where employees feel safe to speak up, ask questions and raise concerns with confidence.

Support workplace wellbeing

- Promote employee wellbeing initiatives and resources.
- Encourage healthy and sustainable ways of working.
- Recognise and celebrate individual and team achievements and contributions.
- Support managers to create environments where employees feel safe to contribute and raise concerns.

How

- Undertake team-based ways of working exercises to translate the APS Values into everyday behaviours, interactions and agreed team practices.
- Support the move to the new office environment by establishing shared expectations for ways of working that promote collaboration, respect, inclusion and connection.
- Support leaders and managers to foster respectful, inclusive and psychologically safe team environments through regular communication, guidance and capability development.
- Strengthen awareness of reporting, support and resolution pathways, and review initiatives that address workplace bullying and inappropriate behaviour to foster a culture where employees feel safe to speak up, raise concerns and access support when needed.
- Promote wellbeing initiatives and available support services, including the development of a wellbeing resource guide on the intranet to improve awareness and accessibility of wellbeing information.
- Strengthen staff recognition through everyday actions and the INSPIRE awards.

4. Communication, Engagement and Development

What you told us

Staff continue to value opportunities to provide feedback, contribute to organisational initiatives and access resources that support communication, learning and professional growth. We will continue to build on initiatives to maintain momentum and support continuous improvement.

What we will do

Continue staff engagement

- Maintain feedback channels and consultation opportunities.
- Encourage participation in working groups and peer networks.
- Strengthen peer networks across comparable roles to support connection, shared learning and consistent ways of working.

Strengthen communication and connection

- Support opportunities for staff to collaborate and stay informed.
- Continue to improve communication and feedback loops across the Commission.

Develop our people

- Enhance onboarding and induction, ongoing growth and professional development opportunities to support staff.
- Support leadership, management and professional development opportunities.

How

- Implement staff pulse surveys and feedback opportunities, including QR code feedback channels, staff forums and other mechanisms for staff to contribute ideas and provide feedback on organisational initiatives
- Continue collaborative engagement activities and working groups, including the Cultural Working Group and Office Relocation Working Group and communicate outcomes arising from these forums
- Develop and implement an annual staff engagement calendar incorporating professional development opportunities, RAP activities, wellbeing initiatives and activities that strengthen connection across the Commission
- Refresh the Commission's intranet and strengthen internal communication approaches to improve access to information, consistency of messaging and communication across the organisation, including regular updates on actions taken in response to staff feedback
- Enhance staff and leadership capability through improvements to induction and onboarding processes, the Manager Hub, establishment of an EL2 Managers Forum, and reinforcement of Commission values and behaviours through onboarding, performance and development discussions.

How we will measure success

- Progress against this Action Plan will be monitored throughout the year by the Executive and Leadership teams
- Regular updates will be provided to staff on progress, outcomes and actions arising from this Action Plan
- Staff feedback including pulse surveys, consultation activities and future APS Employee Census outcomes, will be used to assess progress and inform continuous improvement.