Delivering for Australians

A world-class Australian Public Service: The Government’s APS reform agenda
Contents

Foreword 4

Delivering for Australians 6

Our APS reform agenda 8

1. Clear roles and priorities 9
2. Better services for Australians 10
3. Getting delivery right 11
4. Connecting the APS to all Australians 12
5. Adapting to change 13
6. Reinforcing integrity 14

Government response to recommendations of the Independent Review of the APS 15
In a changing and increasingly connected world, we need to change the way government works to better support, protect and serve Australians. More than ever, Australians should be at the centre of government – in the decisions it makes, in the programs and projects it delivers, and in meeting community expectations.

The Australian Government is not just guaranteeing but transforming the services Australians rely on – using digital technologies and data so Australians can access simple and reliable services, designed around their needs. The opportunities and challenges presented by technological, geopolitical and societal changes demand high quality, joined-up policy advice to secure strong outcomes and enable Australians to plan for their future with confidence.

Australia has a world-class public service. But, like any organisation, the Australian Public Service (APS) needs to adapt and evolve to meet the rising expectations of Australians.

The Government respects the experience, professionalism and capability of the public service, both in policy advice and implementation, and we expect the APS to get on and deliver the Government’s agenda. In the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, it is the Ministers who are accountable to the public. It is Ministers who provide policy leadership and direction.

My Government is embarking on a significant APS reform agenda – to put the Australian people at the heart of what the APS does. I have set out my expectations for the APS in six guideposts:

- Clear roles and priorities – with a clear understanding of the respective roles of Ministers and the APS, ensuring everyone in the APS has a clear line of sight to the Australian people they are seeking to support
- Better services – with a step-change in the quality of services we provide to Australians
- Getting delivery right – supporting effective implementation through setting clear priorities, breaking down bureaucratic silos, and being clear on what success looks like and how we’ll know we’re on track
- Connecting the APS to all Australians – genuinely understanding the needs of all Australians through more external hires, better engagement, openness to different viewpoints and using data and evidence to find out what’s really going on
- Adapting to change – ensuring the APS is fit for current and emerging challenges, including through digital transformation and more dynamic working methods that break down bureaucracy and hierarchy, and
- Reinforcing integrity – honouring the Westminster foundation of the APS and ensuring the APS acts with the utmost integrity.
Our APS reform agenda, ‘Delivering for Australians’, meets our commitment to deliver quality services and outcomes for Australians, based on these six guideposts.

‘Delivering for Australians’ is part of our commitment to build the APS’s capability and workforce to better support Australians, grow our economy and create jobs, and keep Australians safe. The APS needs to retain and build the key competencies and capabilities to discharge its responsibilities.

In May 2018, the Government commissioned an Independent Review of the APS, led by Mr David Thodey AO, to help provide a long-term roadmap for ensuring the APS is fit-for-purpose for today and for coming decades.

The Review has delivered a comprehensive reform agenda. We are pleased to release the final report of the Review and thank each member of the Panel for their dedication and expertise. We have asked the heads of the APS, the Secretaries Board, to take forward the majority of the Review’s recommendations. The Government’s position is set out in the response to recommendations of the Independent Review of the APS.

To all members of the APS, wherever you work – thank you for the work you do to improve the lives of Australians. Thank you for your service.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Delivering for Australians

A world-class Australian Public Service: The Government’s APS reform agenda

Some 150,000 Australians work in the Australian Public Service and related agencies. The APS has served Australians and successive governments with professionalism for more than one hundred years. Today, it is one of the highest ranked public services in the world.

The APS provides outstanding policy advice to successive governments. This has helped Australia address complex social, economic, environmental and security challenges – from action on suicide prevention and mental health, to improving our recycling and waste management practices, reforming our personal tax system, and changing the way we engage regionally through the Pacific Step-up.

People in the APS deliver on the Government’s infrastructure program, open up new markets and help lift productivity – so businesses can grow and provide jobs. They provide services to Australians – supporting farmers and small business, families and carers, older Australians and the most vulnerable. They support our nation’s defence and secure our borders and our national interests overseas. They work in cutting edge science.

Now, more than ever, we need a professional, capable, flexible, technology-enabled, citizen-focused APS. One that’s connected to the lives and aspirations of Australians and open to external expertise and different points of view.

The Government has embarked on a significant reform agenda to ensure Australians are at the centre of the Government – and at the heart of what the APS does. This will deliver a step-change in the delivery of services to Australian people, support stronger growth of Australian businesses and more jobs, and ensure the APS puts the needs of Australians first.

The Government has announced a new structure of government administration, reducing the number of departments from eighteen to fourteen to reduce silos and ensure that the services Australians rely on are delivered more efficiently and effectively.

We have established Services Australia to make getting government services easier. Improving the 980 million interactions with Australians that connect with more than 2.5 million aged pensioners, 1.4 million recipients of Family Tax Benefits, 820,000 job seekers and 653,000 carers and many more Australians who we support on the phone, online or in person.

We’re delivering the NDIS Plan – so Australia’s world-leading National Disability Insurance Scheme lives up to the high expectations of people with disability and their families and carers. Nearly 300,000 Australians with a permanent and significant disability have benefited from services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme – helping people live independently, find a job, and participate in their community and social activities.

Our reform agenda reflects our continued support for families, with record funding and major reforms to school education with our National School Reform Agreement and a renewed focus on teacher quality and ensuring that all students learn the basics they need to get a job and be part of the economy. Our new childcare subsidies support working families and respond to pressures on families in modern Australia.

We are continuing to support high quality health outcomes through record funding, pursuing further reforms to improve service delivery through a new five year National Health Reform Agreement and more than 2,200 new and amended medicine listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Medicare rebates are delivered quickly and conveniently, with 86.2 per cent of GP visits bulk billed in 2018-19, up four percentage points from 2012-13.
Greater attention to aged care services and our new mental health and suicide prevention initiatives will deliver support for Australians when and where they need it, while working towards better outcomes in suicide prevention.

We are also improving the health and other services that our veterans need and deserve and ensuring proper support and recognition for serving, reservist and retired service personnel.

And we are working with states and territories to help Australians access quality vocational education and training, so they can get the job they want, and to ensure we have highly skilled and qualified workers ready to meet the growing needs of businesses, including in regional areas. We are also working with the states and territories to deliver $100 billion of transport infrastructure and to support growth of regional communities through our population and planning framework.

The APS has performed at its best when on the ground supporting our farmers and regional communities as they respond to, and recover from, the drought and the 2019 North Queensland flood event. The APS is also deployed around the world, representing Australia’s interests and supporting those in need when coordinating Australia’s response to emergencies overseas.

We’re reducing and making it easier to comply with Government regulation – to support people exporting Australian food and agriculture, get project approvals or run their business.

We’re continuing to open overseas markets for Australian businesses and investors through trade agreements, which create jobs and supports communities, particularly in regional Australia.

We’re putting in place the building blocks for Australia to be a leading digital economy by 2030 and strengthening protections for Australian families and businesses against online harm.

To this end, we’re delivering the Government’s Digital Transformation Strategy – a comprehensive plan for world-leading digital services and capability to make Government easy to deal with, responsive to the experiences of Australians and fit for the digital age.

The heads of the APS will have a significant role in supporting this reform agenda. The Secretaries Board includes each departmental Secretary, the Australian Public Service Commissioner and the Director-General, National Intelligence. In partnership with the Secretaries Board, we are investing in and setting clear expectations for the APS – to ensure a productive, connected and professional public service that delivers the best possible results for Australians.

The Government is investing an additional $15.1 million to support the Secretaries Board and the Australian Public Service Commission to commence reforms.

The Secretaries Board will conduct a three-month sprint in early 2020 to plan implementation, including resourcing needs.

This agenda will support a world-class Australian Public Service.
Our APS reform agenda

1. CLEAR ROLES AND PRIORITIES
2. BETTER SERVICES
3. GETTING DELIVERY RIGHT
4. CONNECTING TO AUSTRALIANS
5. ADAPTING TO CHANGE
6. REINFORCING INTEGRITY

- Line of sight
- Engaging locally
- Services Australia
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Better use of data
- Building APS capability
- Reducing regulatory burden
- New APS structure
- APS-wide performance targets
- Pro-integrity culture

Our APS reform agenda
1. Clear roles and priorities

Under the Westminster system, Ministers and the APS have distinct, but complementary roles and responsibilities to the Australian public. Ensuring these roles and our priorities are clear supports effective relationships between Ministers and the public service and focuses our collective efforts on the most pressing needs of Australians.

Government sets the policy direction for our nation, and is accountable to the public for the difference it makes. The APS provides advice to the Government and implements its policies through projects, programs, regulation and services. They are often the face of Government helping Australians through important milestones in their lives: starting a family, finding a job or starting a business.

The support given to regional families affected by drought and floods, for example, saw the public service rally around the Government’s national response to support farmers and their communities to give confidence, encouragement and hope at a time of need – making a meaningful impact on the lives of Australians.

To succeed, there must be a clear line of sight from what everyone in the APS does, to the Australian people.

To achieve this, we will:

- focus on priorities – the Prime Minister has set a targeted number of significant priorities for each Minister, to ensure Ministers and their portfolios are focused on the things that matter most to Australians
- ensure a line of sight to Australians – with the Secretaries Board and the APS to embed a shared vision across the APS so everyone understands the impact their work has on Australians, and
- clarify the respective roles of Ministers and the APS – using guidance, induction and other training to reinforce the core responsibilities of the APS.

The public service is the indispensable engine room for any successful government in delivering on its commitment to Australians.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP,
Prime Minister of Australia, August 2019
2. Better services for Australians

We are putting people and businesses at the centre of service delivery. Our priority is making it easy to deal with Government, so people can easily access simple, reliable services how and when they need them.

The Government established Services Australia in May 2019. Services Australia will fundamentally reorient the way we deliver services, moving away from process-driven forms, payments and entitlements towards world-class connected services tailored to the circumstances, needs, and life events of individual Australians and their families.

This approach to seamless service delivery extends across the government. The Australian Taxation Office is a good example of this, with the introduction of MyTax reducing the time to complete a tax return from hours to minutes. In 2019, 82 per cent of refunds were issued within a week of lodgement, up from zero per cent four years ago.

Travellers will have noticed better services at our airports too. We are using emerging technology to process goods and people at our borders faster and more efficiently. New SmartGates technology has the potential for 90 per cent of travellers to self-process through immigration by 2020, cutting processing time to as little as 15 seconds.

We are also making it easier for businesses to navigate government regulation. We are transforming our systems to support this and will continue to look for new opportunities to simplify the business environment.

As part of our agenda, we will:
- join up the services we provide to Australians – with the Secretaries Board to develop a ‘better services’ roadmap to integrate government services, and through delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy
- make it easier for businesses to interact with Government – by adopting technology-driven solutions to help businesses navigate and comply with Australia’s regulatory environment, and
- embed a customer service culture in the APS – including a customer-focused Services Australia that puts people at the centre of government, and using best practices for service delivery.

Services Australia - Future vision

Creating a fundamentally new way of delivering services to the people and businesses of Australia

Services Australia brings together the vision of the Government’s Digital Transformation Strategy, with ambitious goals for customer service and transparency and this Government’s commitment to seamless interactions.
- Reducing demand on call centres to free up capacity to provide better service to those who need to talk to us about their complex issues.
- Customer-centred digital services with reminders, tell-us-once and claim tracking to deliver a seamless service tailored to the needs and life events of our customers.
Policy advice is only as good as the focus it gives to implementation – getting the little things right matters. This looks different for everyone in the APS. For someone preparing a reply to a letter to the Prime Minister or a Minister, it might mean ensuring the response is easy to read and shows care for the correspondent. For someone serving in a Medicare or a Centrelink office, it might mean asking an extra question so the customer can more easily get the services they need.

Getting delivery right means setting clear goals for major policies, projects and programs. It also means measuring progress towards achieving them. This helps answer three questions that should be asked for all initiatives. What is the initiative trying to achieve? Is it on track? And what does success look like?

The Government has established a small team, the Priorities and Delivery Unit, to support the Prime Minister deliver outcomes for Australians. Departments are also monitoring the delivery of initiatives in their own portfolios and reporting to Ministers on progress.

To get delivery right, we will:

- set new APS-wide performance targets – agreed with the Secretaries Board, these targets will allow the Board to measure achievement of shared goals like improving satisfaction with public services,
- track the delivery of Government priorities – with clear accountabilities for results and processes in place in departments to identify and fix off-track initiatives, and
- keep focused on what works – building the capability of the APS to evaluate how policies and programs are going and embedding evaluation into everyday practice of the APS.

The Australian Government’s deregulation agenda

Busting the obstacles that slow business investment and limit new job creation

The Government is making it easier for businesses to back themselves and take Australia’s growth to the next level – helping deliver more and better paid jobs.

- A new online checklist, so employers know the steps to employ their first person.
- Simplified business registers – making it faster and easier for businesses to interact with government.
- A single digital environmental approvals process and biodiversity database – getting major projects up and running by transforming the approvals process and bringing forward economic activity, and partnering with the Western Australian Government.
- A modern export documents system – moving paper based systems online so food exporters can get their products to market faster.
4. Connecting the APS to all Australians

Most Australians do not come to Canberra to lobby government. They are too busy working hard and paying taxes, looking after their families and giving back to their communities. They want governments to focus on what matters to them, like a strong economy, keeping Australians safe, and ensuring simple and reliable services.

We are listening and responding to the needs of Australians, so they know the Government and the public service are on their side. We want the APS to connect with Australians around the country.

Staff in the APS are already working closely with communities across Australia. Frontline staff deliver services that Australians rely on, while others are using government data and other tools to better understand and respond to the needs of Australians.

To strengthen the connection of the APS with all Australians, we will:

- bring Australians to the centre of government – involving Australians in designing better services and finding community-owned solutions to local challenges, including in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- engage more with local communities – with senior APS leaders who work in different regions to represent the whole APS, not just their own department or agency, when they engage with their local communities
- use data better – ensuring the APS has the right capability, tools and processes to securely use, share and understand data and other sources of information for better policy advice, regulation and services, and
- increase APS diversity – so the APS itself reflects and understands the people and communities it serves, recruiting more people from outside the APS and welcoming different views and perspectives.

Scaling up what works – responding to drought and floods

Locally led, locally understood and locally implemented

The Government has expanded the responsibilities of the North Queensland Flood Response & Recovery Agency to include drought, building on the success of its response to the 2019 North Queensland flood event.

The agency brought a new approach to serving communities in need and saw public servants at their best, connecting directly with people – and making sure that more than $3.3 billion of Commonwealth funding helped the people, businesses and communities affected by flooding in the way they need.

Visiting communities is a big part of their work, and the team are on the road talking to people and attending community events.

The Agency also partnered with the National Farmers Federation - showing how genuine partnerships with a common aim can improve the lives of Australians.
5. Adapting to change

The APS needs to evolve and adapt amidst change. Old ways of doing things need to be challenged and, if necessary, disrupted. The APS needs to respond to new and emerging challenges – economic, social, technological and geopolitical.

The APS has many examples of innovation and adaptability. To meet current and emerging challenges – and the rising expectations of Australians – the APS must continue to improve its agility and responsiveness.

The Government is restructuring the APS to break down silos, improve decision-making and collaboration on complex challenges, and deliver better services for the Australian people. This needs to be supported by world-class data and digital technology capability and efficient and common back-office functions that enable the APS to focus on delivering outcomes for Australians, not its internal administration.

The Government is investing in the skills, capability and expertise of the most important part of the service, APS people – those who will serve Australia during this period of change.

To support the APS adapt, we will:

- bust bureaucratic congestion – streamlining management and adopting best practice ways of working to reduce hierarchy and improve decision-making
- continue the digital transformation of Government – lifting APS data and digital capabilities and technology to improve services and deliver better outcomes, by establishing new data and digital professions and using centres of excellence to push innovation and share best-practice
- deliver common APS-wide enabling services – starting with a new internal finance and human resources platform for better outcomes, interoperability and productivity, and
- invest in staff – building their capability and expertise to meet current and emerging needs by investing in professional skills and learning, developing future skills needs and supporting current and future leaders.

Digital Transformation Strategy

Delivering world-leading digital services for the benefit of all Australians

Government that’s easy to deal with, informed by you, and fit for the digital age – three priorities of the Government’s Digital Transformation Strategy. Guided by a comprehensive roadmap to achieve these goals by 2025, the Government is on track to achieve its vision for simple, smart and personalised services, including:

- **Digital Identity** – myGovID has been released into the Apple iOS App Store and Google play stores, with more than 120,000 identities created. This will give Australian people and businesses a single, secure way to use government services online and remove the need to visit a government office with your identity documents.

- **Single Touch Payroll (STP)** – STP helps workers to be more certain their employer is paying their super and will assist track down billions of dollars of unpaid super. Over 536,000 employers were using STP on 10 November 2019.

- **My Health Record** – more than 22.6 million Australians now have a My Health Record – offering many potential benefits to patients, based on a digital summary of their health information, including better connections with health care providers, enhancing the quality of patient care, reducing duplication of pathology tests, improving medicine safety and reducing hospital admissions.
6. Reinforcing integrity

We are committed to good governance and integrity across the service. This means an APS that is apolitical, merit-based and committed to the highest standards of ethics. These core elements of the Westminster tradition are as important as they have ever been, and the Government reiterates the importance of the Westminster principles as the foundation of the APS.

Australians expect us to deliver a strong economy, keep them safe from threats abroad and at home, and to provide reliable services that meet their needs.

The trust that the Australian public confers on APS employees brings a level of responsibility that must be matched by the highest standards of ethical behaviour. This means that public servants need to act with the highest levels of integrity – consistent with the APS Values, Code of Conduct and other obligations – in everything they do.

To achieve this, we will reinforce APS integrity – with the Australian Public Service Commissioner and the heads of the APS to strengthen the pro-integrity culture of the APS and build better integrity guidance, processes and tools.

The Government will consider further reforms to reinforce integrity in the federal public sector, including establishing a Commonwealth Integrity Commission.

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Pro-integrity culture

Reinforcing a strong pro-integrity culture across the APS

In October 2019, the Australian Public Service Commissioner issued Guidance for Agency Heads: Gifts and Benefits, which establishes clear guidelines for publicly declaring what gifts and benefits APS Agency Heads accept.

Under the new arrangements, Agency Heads are required to publicly disclose all gifts or benefits they accept which exceed a value of $100 on their website four times a year. Agency Heads are also encouraged to apply these arrangements to staff, particularly senior public servants, and non-APS Agency Heads are also encouraged to adopt this process as best practice to deliver greater consistency across the public sector. The first set of registers will be published at the end of January 2020.

This Guidance provides clear advice about best practice in maintaining the highest standards of integrity, and sends a clear message from the top about the importance of transparency and accountability in a pro-integrity culture.
Government response to recommendations of the Independent Review of the APS

Recommendation and response

**Recommendation 1:** Implement APS transformation through strong leadership, clear targets, and appointment of a secretary-level transformation leader

**Agreed.** The Government has asked the Secretaries Board to implement agreed initiatives of the APS Review and other priority actions, as part of the Government’s broader APS reform agenda. The Board will conduct a three-month detailed planning sprint in early 2020 to develop an integrated set of reforms to build APS capability and lift its performance.

The Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), the Chair of the Secretaries Board, will lead this change, supported by the Australian Public Service Commissioner. The Board will be accountable for delivery of the program. Responsibility for the delivery of initiatives and metrics to measure success will be set during the detailed planning sprint. A small, high-impact team in PM&C will support the transformation.

The Board will develop and agree with the Government a set of APS-wide performance targets. The Board, through its Chair, will be accountable for mobilising the APS to deliver a set of clear and critical outcomes for the Australian people.

**Recommendation 2a:** Undertake regular capability reviews to build organisational capability

**Recommendation 2b:** Promote continuous improvement through the PM&C Citizen Experience Survey, APS census, external advice and better performance reporting

**Agreed.** The Secretaries Board will undertake a series of targeted reviews from mid-2020. This will include (with details to be determined in the three-month detailed planning sprint):

- thematic, cross-portfolio reviews of the delivery of functions (including enabling tools and services) and of particular services or policies
- portfolio-level reviews and stocktakes of functions and bodies, consistent with recommendation 34 of the APS review, led by portfolio secretaries, and
- commencing in 2021, a program of prioritised and future-focused reviews of agency capability, supported by the APS Commissioner.

The priority in undertaking these reviews will be to ensure the APS is operating productively and delivering the best collective outcomes possible.

PM&C commenced a Citizen Experience Survey in 2018. The Government supports the survey as an important means to better understand citizen experience and satisfaction with public services delivered by the APS.

The Secretaries Board has already endorsed the publication of APS Employee Census results. Three-quarters of APS agencies agreed to publication of results from the most recent Census.

The Secretaries Board has advised that it supports the proposal that agencies seek regular external advice on their performance and organisational health, and that agencies should adopt or continue their own effective and efficient mechanisms for doing so.
Recommendation 3: Drive APS transformation and build capability with innovative funding mechanisms

**Noted.** The Government will make an initial investment of $15.1 million to support the Secretaries Board commence delivery of agreed recommendations of the APS Review, including undertaking the detailed implementation planning sprint referred to in the response to recommendation 1 above.

Recommendation 4: Build the culture of the APS to support a trusted APS, united in serving all Australians

**Agreed.** The Secretaries Board will drive positive and long-term change of APS culture. The Board will leverage existing strengths of APS culture and build on the existing cultural, values and behaviour change programs in agencies. APS-wide culture change will focus on identifying and driving a small number of key behavioural shifts that will collectively lift APS performance and capability. The change program will reinforce APS integrity, including the legislated Values of the APS.

Recommendation 5: Promote a shared understanding of the APS and its role alongside the Executive and Parliament

**Agreed in part.** The Secretaries Board will, over the course of 2020 and 2021, work with parliamentary departments and others to progressively update induction and training materials to promote a shared understanding of the APS and its role alongside the Executive and the Parliament.

Consistent with the Secretaries Board’s advice, the Government does not agree with the recommendation to amend the Public Service Act 1999. The Government has made clear that it endorses the Westminster principles that underpin the APS, including as reflected in the Public Service Act 1999 and the APS Values, and it is not necessary to redefine and legislate these principles to achieve the intent of the recommendation.

Recommendation 6: Develop and embed an inspiring purpose and vision to unite the APS in serving the nation

**Agreed.** The Secretaries Board intends to engage the APS in developing an inspiring statement of its purpose, to put the needs and expectations of Australians at the heart of what the APS does. This purpose will reinforce the APS’s role in serving the Government, the Parliament and the people of Australia. The Government intends the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) and the Public Service Act 1999 to remain within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio, with the Minister responsible for the public service sworn to PM&C.

Recommendation 7: Reinforce APS institutional integrity to sustain the highest standards of ethics

**Agreed in part.** The APS Commissioner will lead a series of initiatives to build a pro-integrity culture within the APS and reinforce integrity in what every member of the APS does. This will be part of the APS-wide cultural change program (see response to Recommendation 4) and will be reinforced in APS-wide induction, mandatory training and other core systems and processes. The Board will also explore measures to extend the reach and application of existing APS integrity requirements.

The Government will consider further reforms through establishing a Commonwealth Integrity Commission to reinforce integrity in the federal public sector.

Consistent with the Secretaries Board’s advice, the Government does not agree with the recommendation to amend the Public Service Act 1999. The Government considers the APS Commissioner has adequate powers to investigate and seek integrity information. The Board and responsible agencies will continue to monitor the effectiveness of current legislative frameworks for APS integrity.
Recommendation 8: Harness external perspectives and capability by working openly and meaningfully with people, communities and organisations, under an accountable Charter of Partnerships

Agreed in part. The Government expects the APS to better understand the needs and expectations of all Australians, and to work effectively with them. This is an integral part of good policy, implementation and service-delivery. Rather than agree a new framework like the proposed Charter of Partnerships, the APS will apply the recently-agreed APS Framework for Engagement and Participation to support genuine collaboration with Australians in designing better services and finding solutions to policy problems. Application of this Framework will be monitored through individual and agency-level performance processes.

Building on existing tools, the Board will pursue two new initiatives to better understand the needs of Australians – an APS-wide survey of business (to be trialled in 2020 for Government consideration before being rolled-out), and an APS-wide analysis of complaints hotspots. Agencies will use these data and insights to inform its advice to Government.

The Government notes the proposal for a new wide-ranging review of privacy, FOI and record-keeping arrangements. The Government’s principal focus is to ensure that agencies effectively implement current requirements, addressing practical problems where required. Any further reform to these arrangements would be considered separately to the Government’s response to the APS Review.

Recommendation 9: Use place-based approaches to address intergenerational and multi-dimensional disadvantage

Agreed in part. The Government is already pursuing place-based approaches in a number of regions, including in responding to natural disasters (e.g. through the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency) and other initiatives like regional and city deals in places like the Barkly Region, Darwin, Townsville, Western Sydney, Geelong, Launceston, Hobart and Adelaide.

Rather than develop a new framework, the Secretaries Board will first undertake cross-portfolio analysis on lessons learned and success factors for place-based approaches, including opportunities to expand this work. As part of this analysis, the Board will consider how regionally-based Senior Executive Service (SES) can better work with local communities and other jurisdictions. The Board will also consider how to best use different data sources in place-based work.

Recommendation 10: APS to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Agreed in part. The Government and the APS are committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The new National Indigenous Australians Agency is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia, and with other portfolios and state and territory governments, to ensure Government policies, programs and services address the needs of different communities.

The Government is committed to improving local and regional decision-making and considering options for a national Voice, and has commenced a process to co-design models and options for this. The Council of Australian Governments and the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations have agreed to a formal Partnership Agreement to finalise the Closing the Gap Refresh and provide a forum for ongoing engagement throughout implementation of the new agenda.

The Government notes the recommendation that Parliament consider establishing an additional parliamentary committee on Indigenous Affairs. The establishment of parliamentary committees is a matter for the Parliament. The Government considers that the current arrangements are appropriate.
Recommendation 11: Strengthen APS partnerships with ministers by improving support and ensuring clear understanding of roles, needs and responsibilities

Agreed in part. The Secretaries Board will lead work to ensure the APS provides the highest quality support for Ministers, and will liaise with Ministers to consider the merits of proposals like new tools and mechanisms for providing advice and support to Ministers and for Ministers to provide periodic and real time feedback to the APS.

The Board will support the APSC and the Department of Finance to improve and roll-out better training and guidance for APS employees and parliamentary staff on how to support Ministers and their offices. The APSC will update its guidance on the roles and responsibilities defining interactions between Ministers, their advisers and public servants.

The Secretaries Board and agency heads will support senior public servants to work in ministerial offices, in a range of roles, and will use mechanisms to improve APS mobility (see response to recommendation 21) and talent development (see response to recommendation 23) to support this.

The Government does not agree to change arrangements for advisors. The Government expects all ministerial staff to uphold the highest standards of integrity and it uses a range of mechanisms to ensure they are held to account for these standards. The Government does not consider it necessary to amend the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 as proposed. The Government, and successive governments before it, have maintained a high number of policy advisers with public service experience and the Government does not consider it necessary to set a formal guidance about the number of advisers in each office who should have public service experience.

Recommendation 12: APS to work closely with the states and territories to jointly deliver improved services and outcomes for all Australians

Not agreed. The Government accepts the Secretaries Board’s advice not to proceed with this recommendation. The Government considers that existing arrangements are effective. The Council of Australian Governments has set and tracks key national priorities through a performance dashboard (available at https://performancedashboard.d61.io/aus), the Closing the Gap framework, and other sector-specific approaches. The Government also works closely with its state and territory partners, through COAG and other forums, to take practical action on national priorities like the drought, infrastructure and improved waste recycling. Current arrangements for the secretariat of COAG are consistent with long-standing practice and continue to support COAG effectively; the Government does not currently intend to alter them.

Recommendation 13: Improve funding, structure, and management of digital functions across the APS

Agreed in part. The Government will continue to strengthen the Digital Transformation Agency, including building its capability and role in support the digital transformation of government. The Digital Transformation Agency is supporting Services Australia deliver one of the Government’s highest priorities – better services for Australians. The Government notes the proposal that, in the long-term, it consider moving the Digital Transformation Agency to a stand-alone central department.

The Secretaries Board will actively support the Digital Transformation Agency discharge its responsibilities as part of implementing the Government’s APS reform agenda.
**Recommendation 14:** Conduct ICT audit and develop whole-of-government ICT blueprint

*Agreed.* The Secretaries Board will conduct an urgent audit of government ICT capability, risks and needs and, in light of the audit, seek Government agreement to commission a longer-term ICT blueprint as proposed. The Digital Transformation Agency has already commenced working with the Departments of Defence and Home Affairs, Services Australia and the Australian Taxation Office to examine a single whole-of-government technology architecture and identify critical technology capabilities. This will support the effective and efficient digital transformation of Government – particularly in identifying opportunities to effectively update and replace legacy ICT systems and identify where new systems should be common or interoperable platforms for more than one agency, or whether an agency should adopt its own system. It will also support the development of coordinated APS-wide advice on major departmental investment priorities (see response to recommendation 34 below), and the Government’s work on a whole-of-Government digital technology architecture led by the Digital Transformation Agency.

**Recommendation 15:** Build data and digital expertise across the service by applying the professions model and creating centres of excellence

*Agreed in part.* The APS will establish separate digital and data professions in 2020, to build capability and support career paths in these critical areas. The APS Commissioner will lead the development of the professions.

The APS has centres of excellence in areas including:

- automation (Productivity and Automation Centre of Excellence – Department of Finance)
- augmented intelligence (Augmented Intelligence Centre of Excellence – Services Australia)
- digital sourcing (Digital Sourcing Centre of Excellence – Digital Transformation Agency; supported by the broader Centre of Procurement Excellence – Department of Finance)
- innovation (Centre of Excellence in Innovation – Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (from 1 Feb 2020)), and
- data (Data61 – Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; Data and Analytics Centre of Excellence – Australian Taxation Office; Analytics Community of Excellence – Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources).

The Secretaries Board will support work to leverage and spread the expertise developed through these and other such centres of excellence.

**Recommendation 16:** Deliver simple and seamless government services, integrated with states, territories and other providers

*Agreed.* The Government has established Services Australia as one of the building blocks of its substantial reform program to ensure Australians can access simple and seamless government services. Supporting this and other Government reforms, the Secretaries Board will prepare a long-term roadmap of steps to improve and integrate services for Australian people and businesses. This roadmap will, at a high-level, identify opportunities to link up services for Australians, designed around their needs and practical actions to get there.

**Recommendation 17:** Adopt common enabling tools and services to support efficiency, mobility, and collaboration

*Agreed.* The Secretaries Board will lead an ambitious adoption of common enabling tools and services for the APS. This builds on current initiatives like the Government’s Shared Services Program, the use of shared hubs for administering grants, and tools like GovTeams and CabNet+ that facilitate real-time, cross-portfolio collaboration on shared documents and projects. The Department of Finance is presently leading plans to build and pilot a common whole-of-government Enterprise Resource Planning foundation (GovERP), to bring together human resources and financial data. The Productivity and Automation Centre of Excellence, in the Department of Finance, is helping scale up process automation across government.
**Recommendation 18:** Share and protect data for better services and policies, and make data open by default

*Agreed.* Effective use of data, while ensuring privacy and security, supports better services for Australians, and better policy, programs and research. The Government’s Data Sharing and Release legislative reforms will support the APS better share and use Commonwealth data. The Government is also building APS capability to interrogate and use insights from data, including through investment in the Data Integration Partnership for Australia. Further to recommendation 15, the APS will establish a data profession in 2020 to support work to build the APS’s data capability. Consistent with the Australian Government Public Data Statement 2015, the APS has securely made extensive data open for public use, as recognised in Australia’s high-ranking in the OECD OURdata Index: Open-Useful-Reusable Government Data 2019.

**Recommendation 19:** Develop a whole-of-service workforce strategy to build and sustain the way the APS attracts, develops and utilises its people, to ensure that it can perform its functions

*Agreed in part.* The Government announced the development of an APS Workforce Strategy in the 2018-19 Budget. This will create an integrated and strategic approach to workforce management at APS levels, enabling the APS to better plan for and develop the capabilities it needs for the future. The Strategy will help position the APS as an employer of choice, with a high-performing, diverse and flexible workforce, deployed when and where needed.

The APS Commissioner will release the first APS Workforce Strategy in 2020. The Secretaries Board will drive implementation of the Strategy and use it to guide efforts to deliver recommendations 20-25 and ensure the APS workforce is able to deliver for Australia and Australians now and into the future.

The Government will continue to manage the size of the APS through the Average Staffing Level rule, and support flexible application of the cap to deliver priorities. The Government notes the recommendation that it abolish the Average Staffing Level rule in light of outcomes arising from the APS Workforce Strategy; it considers the Average Staffing Level rule is working effectively and will keep its application under consideration in light of workforce needs and the Government’s priority to deliver budget repair.

**Recommendation 20:** Establish an APS professions model and a learning and development strategy to deepen capability and expertise

*Agreed.* The Secretaries Board will build APS skills and expertise, and address gaps in capability, through development of an APS professions model. This will help the APS develop current and future capabilities identified in the APS Workforce Strategy (see response to recommendation 19). The APS Commissioner is the overall head of professions, with senior APS leaders to lead individual professions. The APS established a human resources profession in October 2019 and will progressively establish further professions in 2020, commencing with data, digital and procurement professions.

The Secretaries Board will agree an APS-wide learning and development strategy to target APS investment in learning and development, emerging leaders and future skills needs, and to ensure investment delivers demonstrated returns where most needed at an enterprise level. The APSC will support the development and implementation of the strategy.

**Recommendation 21:** Improve mobility, support professional development, and forge strong linkages with other jurisdictions and sectors

*Agreed in part.* The Secretaries Board will agree a framework for mobility that includes incentives, targets and other practical steps to support mobility across the APS, and with other sectors. In doing so, the Board will focus on areas of the APS where mobility is most likely to lift capability and performance as identified in the APS Workforce Strategy (see response to recommendation 19). The APS will not introduce a mandatory requirement that experience in two or more portfolios or sectors is a pre-requisite for appointment to the SES, but through the mobility framework will adopt a more comprehensive approach that makes clear that, in applying the merit principle, broad experience including in different portfolios or sectors is a highly desirable attribute for appointment to the SES.
**Recommendation 22:** Standardise and systematise performance management to drive a culture of high achievement

**Agreed.** The APS Commissioner amended the *Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Directions 2016* in July 2019 to set clear expectations about performance management (including SES performance management) across the APS. The Directions clarify the obligations of agency heads, supervisors and APS employees in achieving, promoting and fostering a high-performance culture. The Secretaries Board will build on this to embed a high-performance culture in the APS. Work already underway to increase the interoperability of APS HR systems will support effective performance management processes and enable the APS to have a system-wide understanding of current performance levels.

**Recommendation 23:** Identify and nurture current leaders and staff with potential to become future APS leaders

**Agreed.** The APSC, supported by the Secretaries Board, will complete benchmarked capability assessments for all SES Band 3s (deputy secretary equivalents) in 2020 and will commence capability assessments for all SES Band 2s and 1s in the first half of that year. These assessments will help target development, guide career paths, and identify under-performers.

The Board has commenced a pilot EL2 talent development initiative under way. Findings from this project will inform future Board decisions on identification and support of future leaders at the EL level.

The Secretaries Board will support development of the APS leadership pipeline, with the APSC to regularly advise on APS-wide capability and development of current and future APS leaders.

**Recommendation 24:** Overhaul recruitment and induction to reflect best practice, use APS’s employee value proposition and target mid-career and senior talent outside the APS

**Agreed in part.** The Secretaries Board has commenced development of an APS brand and employee value proposition to support efforts to lift external recruitment. This will be informed by, and delivered after, the APS Workforce Strategy (see response to recommendation 19). The APS Commissioner will provide clear expectations for effective APS recruitment, including to support internal and external mobility, through guidelines on best-practice recruitment.

The Secretaries Board will use targeted mid-career and senior recruitment processes to address current or capability needs identified in the APS Workforce Strategy. Individual agencies will lead these recruitment processes and, through sharing merit lists, let other agencies know that highly-rated applicants may be interested in joining their agency. The APSC will support this process.

The Secretaries Board has agreed to centralised pre-qualification checks for graduates, and will further consider the merits of extending such approaches in light of how the approach to graduates goes.

The Attorney-General’s Department will lead cross-agency work to assess further opportunities to streamline and standardise security clearance processes, noting the importance that Australia’s security clearance processes remain robust and manage risk effectively.

The APSC will support delivery of essential whole-of-service induction for new recruits to the APS and will examine the feasibility of using app-based ‘micro-learning’ as one tool to provide this induction and other training accessibly, easily and effectively.
Recommendation 25: Strengthen the APS by recruiting, developing and promoting more people with diverse views and backgrounds

Agreed in part. The Government and the Secretaries Board are committed to shaping an APS that reflects and understands the people and communities it serves. The Secretaries Board is leading a range of actions to increase diversity and inclusion across the APS, through renewed Indigenous, gender and disability employment strategies. The Government has also requested the APS Commissioner to ensure the APS does more to retain and recruit older Australians. The Board does not consider additional goals and strategies are currently needed to advance this work and will continue to renew and update its approach to ensure it is effective.

The Secretaries Board will harness the APS200 in delivering on these strategies and in leading the behavioural shifts necessary to support their effective delivery – including focussing on a mindset that genuinely welcomes different views and perspectives.

The Board will continue to support special measures recruitment rounds for diversity groups, building on the success of the Indigenous special measures recruitment round at SES level in 2018, led by PM&C. The APSC will support agencies to run these rounds and facilitate merit lists being used from these rounds across the APS.

Recommendation 26: Embed a culture of evaluation and learning from experience to underpin evidence-based policy and delivery

Agreed in part. The Department of Finance, supported by the Secretaries Board, will establish a small team to help build evaluation expertise and practices. This will leverage the evaluation expertise already existing in many agencies, with other agencies to review and boost their own evaluation capabilities. Finance will develop guidance to ensure systematic evaluation of programs and policies in line with the Enhanced Performance Reporting Framework and work with PM&C (including the Office of Best Practice Regulation) to embed evaluation planning in new policy proposals and Regulation Impact Statements. The APS will create an evaluation profession after establishment of the central evaluation function in the Department of Finance.

The Government endorses these initiatives and supports the appropriate publication of completed evaluations.

Consistent with the Secretaries Board’s advice, the Government does not agree with systematic changes to Cabinet and Budget advice processes. The Government considers that existing arrangements are effective. The Cabinet Handbook requires proposals to provide concise and robust advice on implementation challenges and risk mitigation strategies; it is expected that this should include consideration of evaluation plans. Similarly, the Australian Government Guide to Regulation provides that proposals should address implementation and evaluation planning.
**Recommendation 27: Embed high-quality research and analysis and a culture of innovation and experimentation to underpin evidence-based policy and delivery**

*Agreed in part.* The APS has strong applied research capability, including in respected research and analysis institutions like the following:

- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Office of National Intelligence
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
- Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics
- Bureau of Communications and Arts Research
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Australian Institute of Criminology
- Australian Institute of Marine Sciences
- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (from 1 Feb 2020) - Australian Antarctic Division, and the
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Other departments and agencies also invest in research capability, including through different innovation incubators like the Design Hub in Services Australia, BizLab (Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources), the Behavioural Economics Team of Australia (PM&C), the digital records management initiative with the ANU (Department of Finance) and the co-Lab innovation hub (Digital Transformation Agency). The APS also works with private and non-government research bodies to boost its capability.

The APS will continue to invest in and support research and publish research as appropriate. The Secretaries Board does not consider it necessary to formalise publication of research in new protocols or similar.

PM&C and the APSC will lead engagement with academia on research on better public administration.

**Recommendation 28: APS to provide robust advice to the Government that integrates and balances the social, economic and security pressures facing Australians**

*Agreed in part.* The Secretaries Board and central agencies including PM&C will support the delivery of integrated policy advice that balances different social, economic, security and international interests. This will be supported by the use of Secretaries Board clusters (see recommendation 29) and cross-agency taskforces to examine specific issues – a good example is the inter-agency taskforce established to develop a strategy for critical minerals that are essential for defence purposes and have vulnerable supply routes.

The Secretaries Board will consider the use of scenario planning exercises to explore cross-cutting issues and emerging trends, in consultation with the Government.

The Secretaries Board does not consider it necessary to establish a new Integrated Strategy Office within PM&C. One of the Department’s primary roles is to integrate and balance competing interests and this is best supported by ensuring existing arrangements support this, rather than creating a new office to do it.
Recommendation 29: Establish dynamic portfolio clusters to deliver government outcomes

Agreed. The Prime Minister has established clear priorities and targets with each Minister, with the Priorities and Delivery Unit in PM&C in place to track delivery and help measure progress against them.

The Secretaries Board will support delivery of government priorities. It will use existing arrangements (such as theSecretaries Committee on National Security and the Secretaries Social Policy Committee) and, rather than establish a new set of standing clusters, will establish new Secretary or Deputy Secretary-level committees dynamically around the delivery of particular government priorities. PM&C will help ensure such arrangements are established promptly and meet the needs of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in helping achieve government outcomes.

Recommendation 30: Ensure that Machinery of Government changes are well planned and evaluated, enabling a dynamic and flexible APS that responds swiftly to government priorities

Noted. Decisions on machinery of government changes are a matter for the Prime Minister and will be guided by the Prime Minister’s judgment on appropriate administrative arrangements to deliver the Government’s priorities. The Secretaries Board will share lessons on the effective implementation of machinery of government changes.

Recommendation 31: Review form, function and number of government bodies to make sure they remain fit for purpose

Agreed in part. Consistent with this recommendation, the Government is reducing the number of departments from 18 to 14 to ensure the number and functions of government departments are fit for purpose to deliver better services, reduce bureaucratic silos and provide coherent advice on complex issues.

The Government is currently considering changes to the Commonwealth Governance Structures Policy. The Secretaries Board will, from mid-2020 (as noted in the response to recommendation 2a), conduct portfolio reviews and stocktakes of portfolio functions and bodies against the Policy. The Government will consider any proposals.

Recommendation 32: Streamline management and adopt best practice ways of working to reduce hierarchy, improve decision-making, and bring the right APS expertise and resources

Agreed. The Secretaries Board is focused on ensuring that the structure and hierarchies of APS agencies support the effective and efficient delivery of outcomes for Australians. As a first step, in 2020 the APSC will update 2014 guidance on optimal management structures, which was designed to flatten management structures and increase spans of control, and conduct a review of SES and non-SES classification levels and structures. The Secretaries Board will, in their own departments and through portfolio agencies, apply the updated guidance and use the review of classifications to ensure decision-making is simple and that there are no more layers of clearance than necessary.

The Secretaries Board will oversee development of new APS-wide guidance on best-practice problem solving and dynamic ways of working, to support development of common languages and approaches for teams, often working across agencies or disciplines, to tackle problems in an evidence-based and agile way. Agencies will review their own capability in deploying these methodologies through capability reviews (see response to recommendation 2a).
**Recommendation 33:** Move toward common core conditions and pay scales over time to reduce complexity, improve efficiency and enable the APS to be a united high-performing organisation

**Not agreed.** Current policies around APS pay and conditions are working effectively. Employees and agencies are agreeing to new enterprise agreements or productivity-based pay rises on existing terms and conditions, in an efficient and effective manner. The Government accepts the Secretaries Board advice not to proceed with service wide pay points and will continue with the existing APS Enterprise Bargaining Framework. The Secretaries Board will further consider options to inject greater discipline in SES remuneration as a means of facilitating greater SES mobility.

**Recommendation 34:** Ensure APS capital is fully funded, sustainable and fit for purpose, and capable of delivering policy and services as intended by the Government

**Agreed.** The Department of Finance is developing a prioritised whole-of-government plan for major departmental investment, for Government consideration. The Department of Finance will also assess agency minor capital requirements. The Government will consider funding needs in the 2020-21 and subsequent Budget processes, balancing investment against other priorities in light of the overall fiscal position.

**Recommendation 35:** Deliver value for money and better outcomes through a new strategic, service-wide approach to using external providers

**Agreed in part.** The Department of Finance has established the Centre of Procurement Excellence to lift APS-wide procurement capability and to drive better commercial outcomes through ongoing coordination of procurement and the aggregation and analysis of procurement information to deliver efficiencies. This applies where an external provider is engaged through a procurement.

The Secretaries Board will further consider the proposal for a broader framework for the APS use of external providers. There is a considerable number of existing rules and guidance that apply to the APS’s use of external providers (including grants to the states and territories), and the Board will review these and consider whether a new Framework is likely to deliver better outcomes.

The Digital Transformation Agency is supporting better outcomes in sourcing digital products and services through the Digital Sourcing Framework for ICT procurement.

**Recommendation 36:** Provide robust and responsive advice to support governments deliver priorities through improved budget prioritisation

**Agreed in part.** The Board will undertake a series of reviews (see response to recommendation 2a) that will support robust, ongoing spending advice to Government. The Government prioritises and reviews current and expected spending through the usual Budget processes, supported by additional insights from analyses like the Intergenerational Report, Productivity Commission reports and research, and one-off processes like the National Commission of Audit and agency-level Functional and Efficiency Reviews.

The Department of Finance will continue to support dynamic funding mechanisms to foster innovation and agility in project delivery and support delivery of emerging or cross-portfolio priorities. The Digital Transformation Agency is working with the Department of Finance and other agencies on effective agile funding models to support digital projects.

The Cabinet has recently agreed to a new Commonwealth Investment Framework to effectively manage balance sheet investments such as equity investments, loans and guarantees.

The Government considers that the *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998* is operating effectively and does not agree to a review of the Act.
Recommendation 37: Strengthen the primacy, role and performance of Secretaries Board within the public service

Agreed in part. The Secretaries Board will operate as the strategic management committee responsible for leading the APS and running it as a single enterprise. This includes setting APS-wide performance targets (see response to recommendation 1), mobilising the APS to deliver government priorities (see response to recommendation 29), and supporting the development of common enabling tools and services for the APS (see response to recommendation 17). The Board will reform its own way of operating to support this, including providing clearer direction to the APS and better communication of its work and priorities.

The Board will undertake cross-portfolio work to analyse future trends and their implications for Australia in collaboration with Government. It will connect it to existing work (including the Intergenerational Report, the Productivity Commission’s Productivity Review and CSIRO’s Futures reports) and deliver it with proposed scenario planning work (see response to recommendation 28).

Consistent with the Secretaries Board’s advice, the Government does not agree that the Secretaries Board requires additional legislative or ministerial authority. The Government considers that existing arrangements are effective.

Recommendation 38: Clarify and reinforce APS leadership roles and responsibilities

Not agreed. The Government accepts the Secretaries Board’s advice not to proceed with this recommendation. The Government considers that current roles and responsibilities of the Secretary of PM&C, the APS Commissioner and portfolio Secretaries work effectively in practice and there is no need to alter these or further clarify them in legislation.

The APS Commissioner will establish an Advisory Board to help ensure the APSC best discharges its responsibilities.

Recommendation 39a: Ensure confidence in the appointment of all agency heads

Recommendation 39b: Ensure that performance management of Secretaries is robust and comprehensive

Recommendation 39c: Ensure that robust processes govern the termination of secretaries’ appointments

Agreed in part. As set out in the Public Service Act 1999, the Secretary of PM&C and the APS Commissioner are responsible for the performance management of Secretaries. These processes were recently strengthened, including through seeking 360 degree feedback to inform performance discussions. The Secretary of PM&C and the APS Commissioner will continue to support robust and comprehensive performance management and will publish the performance management framework for Secretaries.

Consistent with the Secretaries Board’s advice, the Government does not agree with initiatives in recommendations 39a and 39c. The Government considers that the PM&C Secretary and the APS Commissioner already support effective Minister-Secretary working relationships. The Government considers that current processes and arrangements governing the appointment and termination of Secretaries and agency heads work effectively and there is no need to alter them. The Government reiterates its commitment to the apolitical nature of the APS, as set out in the Public Service Act 1999, and the expectation that all Secretaries and agency heads demonstrate the highest standards of public service professionalism and expertise in the discharge of their legislative responsibility on behalf of the Government, the Parliament and the Australian public.

Recommendation 40: Reform and energise the APSC as a high-performing and accountable central enabling agency

Agreed. The Government and the Secretaries Board value the APSC and recognise the importance of its responsibilities, including its role as the central agency with responsibility for management of the APS workforce. The APSC is building its capability and capacity following a mid-2019 future-focused capability review, conducted by an independent panel.

The Government also notes collaborative agreement by the Secretaries Board to adjust funding arrangements for the APSC to ensure financial sustainability into the future.