

# OPEN LETTER TO THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

Friday, 20 March 2020

Dear colleagues

We are writing to say thank you.

Thank you for all you are doing in these testing times and for all that you do every day to support the Government and the people of Australia.

We are proud to lead a workforce that is so capably responding to national and global challenges while continuing to deliver the quality services Australians rely on every day.

We do not yet know the full extent of COVID-19, but we do know that the APS has a vital role in advising on the health and economic response and managing the delivery of the assistance to help with recovery.

This is what we did and are continuing to do for the recent bushfires – and we thank you for your contribution to these efforts. The impact on the Australian community of both of these events is and will be significant, and we recognise that this impact extends to the APS workforce, both personally and professionally.

To play our part in slowing the spread of the virus and its impact on our public health system, each department and agency in the APS are reinforcing basic hygiene measures, like regular hand washing, and introducing new measures including social distancing. For some departments and agencies, this will be straightforward, while for others it may cause some disruption. Your help in putting these measures in place is appreciated.

The APS is supporting the Government and serving the public throughout. The Chief Operating Officers of all departments and the largest agencies are meeting daily to manage whole-of-government issues relating to COVID-19, including contingency planning. For up-to-date information on [APS-wide guidance](#) visit the Australian Public Service Commission's website, and review your department's information regularly for measures being adopted in your workplace.

At the same time, we are committed to supporting the health and safety of you and your family.

We know that uncertainty can be stressful, and you may have questions. That's why we're encouraging all APS staff to check in on each other and if you have any concerns speak to your managers. Don't hesitate to make use of the support services available to you, including your agency's Employee Assistance Program – it's there to be used.

Working together to support, protect and serve Australians reaffirms the strength of the APS and the importance of the work we do. Events like these also demonstrate the importance of adaptability to how we meet future challenges.

In December last year the Government made a commitment to build the capability and workforce of the APS through an ambitious reform agenda, *Delivering for Australians*.

Now more than ever, the need for an agile and responsive public service is clear. As we continue to drive the reform agenda, the work that is currently being undertaken across the APS is already embracing the ethos behind it – an APS that works together to provide for Australians now and into the future.

Yours sincerely



**Philip Gaetjens**  
Department of the  
Prime Minister and Cabinet



**Peter Woolcott AO**  
Australian Public  
Service Commissioner