

APS Purpose Statement

Deliberative Committee Terms of Reference

Scope: APS Purpose Statement Deliberative Committee

Changes are proposed to the *Public Service Act 1999* that will help the APS better serve the Government, the Parliament, and the Australian community into the future.

One of the proposed changes is to create a clear and inspiring APS purpose statement, renewed every five years, which sets out a unified vision for the APS, making it clear what the APS aspires to. The wording of the purpose statement itself will not be legislated, allowing it to be flexible to the views and expectations of government and the community, and to be refreshed at five yearly intervals.

A Deliberative Committee made up of 40 staff members representing the APS will lead the development of the inaugural purpose statement. The Deliberative Committee will develop the purpose statement in consultation with APS staff and the Australian public.

The Deliberative Committee will balance feedback from staff and the public as they work through the process to develop the Purpose Statement, developing options which will be put to a final online vote by the APS and the public.

Membership

The Deliberative Committee is made up of 40 current APS employees, working in a facilitated environment, with specialist facilitators supporting the members to achieve the stated outcomes which follow.

Secretaries Board supports the participation of 40 staff members for a maximum of ten full days of workshops. Staff participate within the requirement, conditions and obligations of their employment.



Deliberative Committee outcomes

OUTCOMES

1. The committee must review relevant historical and current information to inform purpose statement options. The committee must identify sources of information, including individuals and organisations they wish to inform their thinking as they progress to designing purpose statement options.
2. The committee must develop at least six purpose statement options to be put for initial testing by the public and the APS.
3. Following this, the committee must refine and determine six purpose statement options for submission to Secretaries Board and the Minister for the Public Service.
4. The Minister for the Public Service will note all options for the Purpose Statement prepared by the Deliberative Committee.
5. The Secretaries Board will review and nominate three final purpose statement options to be put for a final vote by all APS staff and the public.
6. Once the final purpose statement has been chosen by public and staff vote, the Deliberative Committee will announce the chosen purpose statement.

Participation

Between June and August 2023 the Deliberative Committee will have a maximum of ten full days to develop a series of purpose statement options. Committee members will participate in six face-to-face sessions and four virtual sessions.

Committee meetings will have two components:

- information gathering, presentations, workshops and discussion which are open to the public and public servants to attend
- closed forums to support deliberative discussions and drafting and development of a final purpose statement.

Public and APS engagement will occur alongside the Committee process to contribute to and inform the development of the new Purpose Statement including:

- questions in the Survey of Trust in Australian public services
- broad online engagement via the APS Reform website for public and APS staff

Decision making

The Deliberative Committee will be facilitated by a team of four specialist facilitators from within the APS to support decision making. When consensus cannot be reached, the committee will move to a vote, with majority ruling.



Deliberative Committee members may be required to brief senior leaders on decisions and the process to develop the purpose statement. Members will be supported to undertake these responsibilities with training and/or mentorship from the APS Reform Office if required.

Media, communications and privacy

Involvement in the Deliberative Committee is within the context of employment of the APS and there are no changes to conditions or expectations (e.g. Code of Conduct applies). All staff who volunteer to participate within the Deliberative Committee will be required to sign communications and photography releases.

Preparing, recording and delivering outcomes

The APS Reform Office in consultation with the APS Commission will develop information to support the Deliberative Committee to achieve their outcomes. Records of each Deliberative Committee meeting will be kept and shared with staff and the public via the APS Reform website. The process will be evaluated at regular intervals and post implementation evaluation measured, as well as ongoing measurement of cultural and personal alignment to purpose through the APS census. Learnings will be used to inform approaches to future purpose statements.

Finalisation

Once the final purpose statement is chosen, the Deliberative Committee will be disbanded, noting staff may be called upon to share reflections, participate in APS Reform or Purpose Statement implementation activities. The Deliberative Committee may also be called upon to assist with the renewal of the purpose statement after five years.