Australian Government
National Emergency Management Agency

2026/27 Employee Census Action Plan

The Australian Public Service (APS) Employee Census is an annual survey which is used to collect confidential attitude and opinion information from APS employees on their experience in the workplace. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) values our employees' responses to this survey and we are committed to taking ongoing action to improve our employee experience and build on our positive workplace environment.

OUR GOAL

To reflect on our employees' experiences and continuously improve and promote a positive and productive working environment. In doing so, we aim to attract, retain and develop employees to elevate organisational performance and deliver high-quality outcomes for the Australian Government and community through enabling secure, stronger and resilient communities before, during and after emergencies.

AREAS TO CELEBRATE

Our employees are dedicated and passionate about the work we do. We have effective and supportive managers leading our people, ensuring we meet our purpose and objectives. The results highlight that:

- **Employees continue to demonstrate a strong connection** to NEMA's purpose and the outcomes it delivers for the Australian community, with 93% reporting they believe strongly in the agency's purpose and objectives.
- **Employees remain highly engaged** in improving the agency, with strong levels of innovation, commitment and willingness to contribute beyond their core responsibilities.
- **Results highlight the positive impact of immediate supervisors,** with employees reporting high levels of confidence in local leadership, support and team management.
- **Flexible work arrangements** continue to be valued, with most employees confident that requests for flexibility would be given reasonable consideration.
- **Employees report a clear understanding of how their roles contribute to outcomes** for the Australian public, reinforcing a strong sense of purpose and role clarity across the agency.
- **Workgroups are generally viewed positively,** with employees rating team performance highly and reporting strong collaboration and support within their immediate teams.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Our employees recognise the need for **continued investment in Senior Executive Service (SES) Leadership, health and wellbeing support** and the need for greater productivity and efficiency **by reducing red tape**. We will be focussing on:

- **Empowering our employees by reducing barriers to work** – we recognise the need to manage workloads and decision-making efficiently within available resources and frameworks and identify opportunities to improve employees' day-to-day experience.
- **Strengthening collective SES leadership and communication** – results show an opportunity to increase visibility of agency-wide leadership alignment, with 24% agreeing SES leaders work as a team and 37% agreeing SES clearly articulate agency direction and priorities, highlighting opportunities to strengthen information sharing and engagement, and further strengthen employees' perceptions that NEMA supports and cares about their health and wellbeing.
- **Change management –** we recognise change management continues to be an important focus area with 15% of employees indicating change is managed well across the agency.
- **Bullying and harassment** – results show 19% of respondents reporting they have experienced bullying and harassment showing the need to strengthen existing measures to ensure a safe and inclusive workplace for all employees.

AREAS OF FOCUS AND HIGH-LEVEL ACTIONS

EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES BY REDUCING BARRIERS TO WORK

- Review delegations and authorisations to streamline approval levels and improve efficiency, where appropriate, without compromising financial, procurement, integrity or other key controls.
- Support good decision-making for managers through learning and development opportunities.
- Review and stocktake high impact barriers to work productivity, including ICT, recruitment processes and governance structures to identify where change can be made and clearly communicate constraints and reasons where changes cannot be made.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Reduced delegation levels and layers of approvals required for reasonable tasks and actions.
- Capability uplift of middle managers through increased delegations and decision-making opportunities.
- Staff feel heard regarding high impact barriers to work and understand the opportunities and limitations for change.
- The 2027 Census responses relating to engagement factors and barriers to work show improvement.

STRENGTHEN SES COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Strengthen SES performance and leadership arrangements through continued alignment with the APS Commission's SES Performance Leadership Framework by 30 June 2027, including 360-degree feedback for all SES.
- Strengthen the collaboration and collective accountability across the SES cohort through regular SES engagement across the agency.
- Strengthen shared expectations across the SES and Executive Level cohort.
- Draft and implement an agency-wide change management framework.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Enhanced SES performance and leadership practices, supported by 360-degree feedback for all SES, by 30 June 2027.
- Staff feel increased connection to all parts of the agency through access to clear and consistent information and implementation from the whole of the SES cohort.
- The 2027 Census responses shows improvement in all responses related to SES Leadership working as a team, role clarity and employees' perceptions about internal communication.
- Employees feel informed, consulted and supported during organisational change, leading to improved confidence in how change is managed.
- The 2027 Census responses shows improvement in change being managed well in the agency.

EMBEDDING INTEGRITY AND RESPECT

- Strengthen a leadership-led integrity culture, including through the SES Integrity Masterclass as mandatory learning for all SES.
- Empower staff to call out unacceptable behaviours through tangible guidance that raises awareness and supports a safe and inclusive workplace, including reviewing and refining the Bullying and Harassment Policy and promoting our harassment contact officer network.
- Identify barriers to reporting and improve confidence in the agency's reporting systems through strengthening the bullying and harassment complaints handling procedures.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- All SES attend the SES Integrity Masterclass.
- The mechanism for reporting and support for those experiencing bullying and harassment is strengthened and fit for purpose.
- Staff feel more confident in the reporting and support systems relating to incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Staff know what acceptable and unacceptable workplace behaviours are and are empowered to speak up should an instance of unacceptable behaviour arise.
- The percentage of respondents reporting they have experienced bullying and harassment in the workplace in the 2027 Census shows a reduction.
- The 2027 Census results shows an improvement in questions that relate to support and care of health and wellbeing.