Australian Government
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

2026 – 27 Census Action Plan

Focused action. Visible progress. Shared accountability.

Our Commitment

We will act on employee feedback through three focused priorities that put our Strategic Framework into practice. Guided by our values, we will focus effort where it will have the greatest impact, make courageous choices about priorities, resources and delivery, work collaboratively across boundaries, remain curious about better ways of working, and involve people inclusively in decisions that affect them. Together, these actions will support One DEWR, shared impact over the next 12 months.

Priority	What we heard	Targeted actions	Success measures
1. Empower decision making and simplify processes	Decision making layers and administrative processes can make it harder to focus on high-value, high-impact work.	• Secretary, Deputy Secretaries and business process owners will review priority corporate, program and contract administration processes to remove duplication and enable decisions at the lowest appropriate level by 31 March 2027. • Corporate and Enabling Services Group, in partnership with Executive and managers will implement the AI Strategy to create a strong authorising environment for staff at all levels to work sustainably, focus on higher-value tasks and spend more of their time exercising their expertise to improve outcomes for the people we serve.	• At least a 3 percentage point improvement in the relevant 2027 Census measures on decisions being made at the lowest appropriate level, layers of decision making, and administrative processes. • Stories of success in simplifying processes, reducing approval steps and integrating AI into business practice are shared through communities of practice and whole of department communications.
2. Lead prioritisation and change together	Staff want clearer priorities, explicit prioritisation decisions, earlier involvement and honest, regular communication through change.	• The Executive will integrate budget, risk, business and workforce planning through the 2026–27 business planning cycle, enabling divisions and branches to make evidence-based prioritisation decisions. • The Secretary and Deputy Secretaries will agree and communicate department-wide priorities and explicit trade-offs—including work to stop, defer or deliver differently—and report progress through quarterly updates. • SES leaders will involve affected staff early in significant prioritisation and change decisions, communicate how feedback has informed decisions, and close the loop on outcomes.	• At least a 4 percentage point improvement in the relevant 2027 Census measures for senior leaders communicating priorities, change management and consultation. • By the end of the 2026–27 business planning cycle, each division has documented its priorities and material trade-off decisions, including work stopped, deferred or to be delivered differently. • Priorities and trade-offs have been communicated, and major department-wide changes have documented early consultation and feedback closure.
3. Plan and adapt for sustainable delivery	Staff experience workload and capacity differently. Some work is necessarily reactive and driven by external demands, while capability and available capacity are not always used effectively. Staff want ways of working that support wellbeing and reliable delivery, with meaningful opportunities to develop their capability and careers.	• All Groups will embed diversity and inclusion, Reconciliation Action Plan and Closing the Gap commitments into local business planning and action. • All leaders will use integrated business and workforce planning to assess workload, critical capability, capacity and resource allocation, and maintain practical contingencies for competing, emerging or reactive demands. Leaders and staff will share responsibility for pursuing development opportunities that build capability, support career growth and meet organisational needs. • Corporate and Enabling Services Group will introduce a consistent department-wide approach to managing psychosocial and wellbeing risk and sustainable work by 30 June 2027. This will support managers to make psychosocially informed decisions.	• At least a 4 percentage point improvement in the relevant 2027 Census measures for workload and wellbeing support. • At least a 3 percentage point improvement in the relevant 2027 Census measures for diversity cohorts, supported by demonstrated progress against relevant diversity and inclusion commitments. • At least a 5 percentage point improvement in the relevant 2027 Census measures relating to learning, development and training opportunities. • By the end of the 2026–27 business planning cycle, each group has documented actions that give effect to relevant diversity and inclusion, Reconciliation Action Plan and Closing the Gap commitments.

Accountability

- **Executive** sets direction, creates the authorising environment and holds the department accountable for delivering outcomes
- **Corporate process owners** lead department-wide implementation, monitors progress and supports sustainable change
- **Group and Division leaders** facilitate and embed local action, engage their people, reinforce agreed ways of working and manage delivery risks
- **All staff** put agreed changes into practice, contribute ideas and feedback, and share responsibility for improving outcomes

Whole-of-plan measure

Increase staff confidence that DEWR will act on Census results from the 2026 baseline of 45%, enabled by regular all-staff progress updates and ongoing governance through the People, Safety and Culture Committee.

Our Values

Impactful • Courageous • Collaborative • Curious • Inclusive

One DEWR, shared impact

We focus effort where it will make the greatest difference, work across boundaries, communicate clearly and make deliberate choices about priorities, resources and delivery.