Australian Government
Office of Parliamentary Counsel

2026 Employee Census Action Plan

Introduction

The 2026 APS Employee Census occurred between during 4 May and 5 June 2026, with results made available in late July 2026. At the Senior Management Team's request, the People Committee analysed the results of the Census, and proposed action areas for consideration. The response rate from our people is high, with 74% of employees participating.

The results of the Census for OPC are very positive[1].

- Over 99% of our results are similar to or higher than the APS overall result.
- We rank 5th out of 112 APS agencies on the Employee Engagement index.
- We rank 7th on the Enabling Innovation index.
- We rank 11th on the SES manager index.
- We rank 19th on the new Speak Up Culture index.
- We rank 21st on the Wellbeing Policies and Support index.
- We rank 23rd on the Immediate Supervisor index.
- All of these rankings are above the APS overall result for each index.

The People Committee analysis of the Census data developed themes for both celebration and maintenance, as well for monitoring and further action. OPC's People Committee is made up of employees from all of our four work groups.

There were are many areas to celebrate, however only four are highlighted. These have been selected because not only are they areas in which we have achieved progress and success, they are also areas that are very important to us. In each of these areas, as well as all of the other areas not highlighted, OPC will continue to embed and enhance our current strategies to continuously improve our workplace.

There are four areas where further action is needed. Each of these areas represents a challenge for OPC. We will continue to work, and to involve our people, to find and implement solutions to these challenges.

Implementation of agreed activities to address the Action and Monitoring areas identified in this Action Plan are incorporated in the OPC Strategic Plan implementation plan.

The quotes in italics in the Action Plan outlined below are taken from the comments OPC people made in the free text fields of the Census or during the People Committee's discussion of the results.

[1] See OPC Employee Census Highlights Report

CELEBRATION AND MAINTENANCE AREAS

Work environment and culture

OPC has a great culture, where we support and care for each other. We have worked hard to ensure our people have great working conditions, respect each other, and value working with integrity. We are committed to accessibility and workplace adjustments to support people of all abilities. We are friendly, hardworking, professional, and we take our values seriously. We celebrate successes and learn from mistakes.

"One thing my agency is doing really well is that it is an overall great place to work in terms of environment, the work, leadership, my cohort and the way employees are treated. I think OPC really cares about its people, and it shows."

"OPC is incredibly supportive and it feels like the needs of employees are a real priority."

Diversity and inclusion

OPC believes that for each individual to bring their best self forward, a sense of belonging must first be established. For us, inclusion is actively enabling genuine participation and contribution, where everyone, regardless of their background, identity or circumstances feels valued, accepted and supported to thrive at work. Our people have a range of identities and family structures, including caregivers and partners of all genders. We have put significant effort in recent years to ensure that everyone is supported to bring their whole selves to work.

"One thing my agency is doing really well is the inclusive and welcoming work culture".

"OPC collaborates and supports each other well. People work closely together, share expertise, and maintain strong professional relationships even under pressure."

Employee commitment to OPC goals

We are proud to have some of the most committed employees across the APS. Our people clearly understand how their work contributes to serving the Australian people, and believe strongly in OPC's purpose. Our people are committed to our goals and are happy to 'go the extra mile" to deliver high quality work.

"One thing my agency is doing really well is enabling us to deliver well for the community and meet our aims. Many staff here are so passionate about the work and it's wonderful."

"... I also think that as an organisation we take our work and mission seriously, it feels like what we do matters."

Individual autonomy

We are an organisation of professional experts. Relying on that expertise, we are able to give people choice in how they work, and enable them to focus and thrive by removing unnecessary administrative barriers. We encourage people to master their craft and apply their expertise.

"One thing my agency is doing really well is encouraging critical thinking in work.

FURTHER ACTION AND MONITORING AREAS

Workloads

We work hard. Our fast-paced work is essential to Australia's democracy and society. Our workloads, while similar to many other APS agencies, are determined by external factors with non-negotiable timeframes.

"If I could change one thing about my agency, it would be to have the ability to resist external pressure to deliver within unrealistic timeframes, which negatively impacts the quality of our work and our reputation".

This is an area of continual focus. Our Wellbeing framework and Working sustainably guidelines contain clear mechanisms to ensure our workloads are safe. Our people increasingly report that they feel supported and have effective strategies to manage their workloads. However, we will continue to consider what else we can do to manage our workloads to prevent exhaustion and ensure psychological safety.

Health and Wellbeing

While a higher proportion of our people (compared to the APS) are satisfied with the policies and practices to help them manage their health and wellbeing, we know that supporting wellbeing helps people cope with workload pressure.

"We need to have more support in place, and to ensure that people know how to access it. This would help with managing our workloads."

We will explore more targeted support and how we can better communicate what is already on offer for our people. We will also place greater emphasis on ensuring people feel able to use their leave entitlements for rest and recreation.

Leadership

In a context of heavy workloads and tight time pressures across OPC, it is understandable that each workgroup focuses on delivering its priorities to a high standard, and can lose sight of the contributions made, and challenges faced, by other workgroups. This siloed approach to working is reinforced by the different roles and responsibilities of each workgroup, that aren't visible or recognised across the organisation.

Combined with a constant agenda of change, this creates a difficult leadership challenge - to broadly communicate the impact of changing priorities on each workgroup, and the value each workgroup plays in achieving our shared OPC mission. We aspire to be "One OPC", however this strategic aspiration has not been fully realised.

"If I could change one thing about my agency, it would be a greater acceptance of change, and that consideration is given to the benefits and impacts of change to the whole organisation not just individual business groups."

We will work towards greater alignment in response to the challenges we face, and continue our focus on collaboration and unity at all levels to ensure it is embedded culturally in our organisation.

Communication

Ongoing, effective communication is essential for the success of any organisation. In periods of rapid change, it can be difficult to get the balance right and meet the needs and expectations of all our people.

"If I could change one thing about my agency, it would be communication - on some issues there is too much communication, and on other issues almost none".

As part of this change management challenge, we will review our internal communication practices to identify the most efficient and effective ways of messaging to our staff about priority issues that need to be addressed.