



Australian Government



COMMONWEALTH
OMBUDSMAN

2022-23

CORPORATE PLAN

Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26

Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and emerging.



WA BASED ARTIST – KEVIN BYNDER

Aboriginal Artist – Whadjuk Nyungar Badimia Yamatji

The centre of the artwork portrays and represents the colours of the Ombudsman. On the outside of the circle are the semi circles they represent the Women and Men that work and have worked, in the Ombudsman's Office. The coloured circles that surround the Ombudsman are the different sectors such as Overseas Students, VET Student Loans, Defence Force, Private Health Insurance, Postal Industry and Immigration. All these sectors are represented by the Ombudsman and in the artwork they are all connected to the centre. The blue features between each sector are the waterways and the Derbal Yerrigin (Swan River). These are created by the Waagyl (rainbow serpent). The red circles represent the business and people of the community we serve.

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Commonwealth Ombudsman's foreword



As the accountable authority of the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (the Office), I am pleased to present the Office's 2022–23 Corporate Plan for the period 2022–23 to 2025–26, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The plan is the Office's primary planning document, guiding how we will deliver on our purpose.

This corporate plan reflects our enduring commitment to providing assurance to the Parliament and the public that the entities we oversee act with integrity and treat people fairly. We seek to influence systemic improvement in public administration in Australia and the region. This plan sets out how we intend to achieve our objectives and measure our performance.

Over the next 4 years we will continue our longstanding role of considering complaints from members of the public about the wide range of Commonwealth, ACT and private sector organisations we oversee. We will investigate complaints, review administrative action and make recommendations to agencies with a view to improving outcomes for those in the community engaging with them.

We are always looking at ways to improve how we engage with the community – this work is never done. We will continue to consider how we can improve the accessibility and customer focus of our website, phone system, correspondence, and online complaint forms, and provide ongoing training and support for our staff.

The remit of our Office is broad, and while complaint handling has and always will be a core component of our work, our own motion investigations, inspections of the use of covert and intrusive law enforcement powers and places of detention, and independent oversight and administration of redress schemes play an equally important role in influencing systemic improvement across public administration.

We will hold agencies to account and continue to do so in a way that is constructive and fair. The Office will continue to fulfil continuing roles, undertake new or expanded roles as Governments and Parliaments so determine, and finalise the administration of some roles as they end.

This year the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme commenced a staged winding down with the opportunity to lodge an intent to report abuse closing on 30 June 2022. For those current and former Defence members who lodged an intent to report, their reports of abuse must be lodged by 30 June 2023 to be eligible for a reparation payment. Following the conclusion of the Scheme, we will continue offering restorative

engagement conferences, facilitate referrals to counselling and provide a confidential mechanism to report serious Defence abuse for those who feel unable, for whatever reason, to access Defence's internal mechanisms. Once all eligible reports are assessed, the Office will collate relevant and de-identified data into a final report, providing valuable insights and meaningful analysis to not only shine a light on the past, but inform a way forward for the Australian Defence Force.

Further, the VET FEE-HELP Student Redress Measures, which came into effect from 1 January 2019, end on 31 December 2022. These measures were introduced to assist thousands of students who found themselves with inappropriate debts raised by Vocational Education and Training providers. We continue working closely with the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Australian Taxation Office and community organisations to identify and implement strategies to raise awareness of the ending of the measures and ensure those who applied for assistance have their matters independently assessed.

Looking forward, we will continue engaging with the Comprehensive Review of the Legal Framework of the National Intelligence Community and working with the Attorney-General's Department to implement any decisions made by Parliament about future oversight of the use of covert and intrusive powers. The Office plays a vital oversight role to maintain public and Parliamentary trust that these tools are being properly deployed in accordance with the legislation which governs their use.

We will continue our work progressing Australia's implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) as the National Preventative Mechanism

(NPM) Coordinator and Commonwealth NPM. We are now also, as the ACT Ombudsman, part of the multi-body ACT NPM, working cooperatively alongside other oversight bodies in the ACT.

In addition to producing guidance materials, inspecting places of detention, and engaging with civil society and advocacy groups, this year we began meeting with the nominated NPM network across Australia as NPM Coordinator as we work towards full implementation of OPCAT by January 2023. Our work in this area continues to evolve as we commence inspections of Australian Federal Police and Australian Defence Force holding cells.

With the easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, we will also resume a full program of work with our international integrity partners in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands and Samoa, assisting them to build their oversight capacity.

I would like to thank the Deputy Ombudsman, Penny McKay, who acted as Ombudsman for the last 12 months. I also thank the acting Deputy Ombudsman, Louise Macleod, the leadership team, and all the staff of the Office for their commitment and resilience over the past year as the Office navigated the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain service to, and deliver outcomes for, the Australian community. As the newly appointed Ombudsman, I look forward to fulfilling this corporate plan and taking the important work of the Office forward.



Iain Anderson

Commonwealth Ombudsman
16 August 2022

What we do



OUTCOME

Fair and accountable actions by Australian Government entities and select private sector organisations



PURPOSE

To provide assurance of integrity and fairness and to influence



ENGAGEMENT

Public
Government agencies
Private sector
Parliament



LOOKING AHEAD

Improve services
Deliver critical functions
Optimise our influence



Complaint Handling



Investigations



Education



Audits and Inspections



Engagement

Purpose

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's outcome is:

*'Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations, by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and statutory compliance inspections and reporting.'*¹

We deliver this outcome through our purpose to:

- Provide assurance that the Australian Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations the Office oversees act with integrity and treat people fairly.
- Influence enduring systemic improvement in public administration in Australia and the region.

The Office delivers on its purpose through complaint handling, conducting investigations, audits, inspections and education activities, encouraging good public administration practices and undertaking specialist oversight tasks. The Office also influences improvement in public administration in Indonesia and the Pacific region through collaboration with integrity partners.

In fulfilling its purpose, the Office strives to maintain the confidence of 3 main groups:

- Members of the public who contact us to complain, report or otherwise seek help.
- Government agencies and private sector organisations we oversee.
- Parliament (and, as we are both the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the ACT Ombudsman, this means both the Australian Parliament and the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly).

During 2022–23 and over the next 4 years, the Office will focus on maintaining the quality of our services to the public, agencies and Parliament by:

- Responding to regular survey feedback about our interactions with the public and agencies on ease of access, timeliness and clarity of our communications.
- Delivery of critical oversight functions to ensure public confidence in the way law enforcement and integrity agencies exercise intrusive and coercive powers, and on the treatment of people held in detention by the Commonwealth.
- Careful identification of areas of public administration where our critical but discretionary activities should be dedicated – in the form of own motion or other investigation and reporting work – to optimise our influence on the wider system.

¹ Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, Portfolio Budget Statement 2022–23, Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, 2022

Performance

We identify 5 essential objectives underpinning delivery of our purpose. Each of these objectives is linked to our detailed performance criteria. The table below outlines our purpose, objectives and performance criteria.

OUR PURPOSE

Provide assurance that the Australian Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations that the Office oversees act with integrity and treat people fairly. Influence enduring systemic improvement in public administration in Australia and the region.

OBJECTIVE 1

Influence Australian and ACT Government entities to improve public administration and complaint handling systems through public reports, recommendations and direct engagement.

- We influence improvements in public administration and the practices of the agencies and organisations we oversee.
- We are responsive in our dealings with agencies.
- We maintain the confidence of Parliament.

OBJECTIVE 2

Provide an efficient, effective and accessible government complaint handling service.

- We assist the public to resolve issues with agencies and organisations we oversee.
- We are helpful to the public when they contact our Office.
- We improve public awareness of our role in influencing public administration and industry practice.

OBJECTIVE 3

Undertake oversight and assurance activities relating to the integrity of Australian Government entities, Australian Capital Territory Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations.

- We influence improvements in public administration and the practices of the agencies and organisations we oversee.
- We are effective in our dealings with agencies.
- We maintain the confidence of Parliament.

OBJECTIVE 4

Provide effective and impartial industry complaint handling services and provision of consumer information.

- We assist the public to resolve issues with agencies and organisations we oversee.
- We are responsive and helpful to the public when they contact our Office.
- We improve public awareness of our role in influencing public administration and industry practice.

OBJECTIVE 5

Deliver capacity building programs under the Australian Aid arrangements to support ombudsmen and allied integrity bodies to improve governance and accountability.

- We effectively deliver our capacity building programs for the ombudsmen and allied integrity bodies under the Australian Aid arrangements.
- We maintain the confidence of Parliament.

Our performance against each of the criteria will be demonstrated through a combination of qualitative analysis and quantitative data. For some criteria, setting a target (such as a target that 100 per cent of reports will be published within statutory timeframes) is appropriate. For other measures, our aim is to improve our performance compared to previous years (for example, measuring an increase in the total number of enquiries, complaints and website visits).

4 year projection

We are currently undertaking a review of our Performance Framework which incorporates our Objectives, Key Performance Indicators and supporting guidance material. We anticipate any resulting changes to the Performance Framework will be reflected in the 2023–24 financial year.

Quantitative metrics

The following table outlines the performance criteria and the quantitative metrics applicable.

Performance criterion	Objective	Primary confidence measure	Applicable quantitative measures and targets	2022–23
1	2 and 4	People	Percentage of people who contacted the Office providing a rating of 'satisfied' (or better) with our services in response to complainant satisfaction surveys.	65%
			Percentage of complainant satisfaction survey responses with a rating of 'satisfied' (or better) evaluating our independence.	65%
			User satisfaction with the privatehealth.gov.au website	75%
2	2 and 4	People	Complaints with the Office will be finalised within our service standards.	90%
3	2 and 4	People	Increase in the total number of enquiries, complaints and website visits compared to the previous reporting period, after taking into account changes due to new jurisdictions.	Annual count
4	1 and 3	Agencies and Organisations	Percentage of recommendations in public reports accepted by the agency or organisation.	75%
			Percentage of recommendations accepted for Defence abuse reparation payments and VET Student Loan re-credits.	95%
5	1 and 3	Agencies and Organisations	Percentage of satisfaction survey responses from agencies demonstrating a rating of 'satisfied' (or better) with the quality of our work.	80%
			Percentage of feedback responses from participants in educational or other events demonstrating a rating of 'satisfied' (or better).	90%
6	5	Agencies and Organisations	Percentage of outputs delivered under the Australian Aid arrangements.	80%
7	1, 3 and 5	Parliament	Number of reports published.	Annual count
			Number of submissions made to, and appearances before, parliamentary committee processes.	Annual count
			Percentage of reports within statutory timeframes.	100%

Updated performance metrics from 2023 to 2026 to be determined based on review and implementation of the Office's Performance Framework.

Key activities

During 2022–23 and over the next 4 years, the Office will focus on enhancing the quality of our services and maintaining the confidence of the public, agencies and Parliament through:

- Responding to feedback from the public and agencies about our service – with a particular focus on ease of access, timeliness and the clarity of our communications.
- Delivery of critical oversight functions to ensure public confidence in the way law enforcement and integrity agencies exercise certain intrusive and coercive powers.
- Careful identification of areas of administration where our critical but discretionary activities should be dedicated – in the form of own motion or other investigation and reporting work – to optimise our influence on the wider system.
- Delivery of the activities outlined in the Services Agreement between the Office and the ACT Government to provide oversight and improve public administration in the ACT.
- Monitoring places of detention under the control of the Commonwealth as Commonwealth NPM under the OPCAT and coordinating Australia's NPM Network as NPM Coordinator.

Our jurisdiction is broad, and we work across a diverse environment. We oversee Commonwealth entities and their contracted service providers, subject to some specific statutory exclusions (such as the intelligence agencies and the Australian Taxation Office). We oversee Commonwealth, state and territory law enforcement and integrity agencies' use of certain intrusive and covert powers. We proactively monitor Commonwealth places of detention and coordinate the network of preventive monitoring bodies across states and territories, as part of Australia's implementation of the OPCAT. We also oversee a range of private sector organisations including:

- private health insurers
- some postal operators
- some providers of tertiary and vocational education services.

Our legislation provides the power to require the production of information or documents, to examine witnesses, including under oath or affirmation, and to enter premises for the purposes of our functions. We work closely with agencies and the organisations we oversee, fostering collaborative relationships to garner cooperation with us in the performance of our functions, without the need to exercise our formal powers.

This includes agencies and organisations about whom we have received complaints and receive our requests for information as well as managers of Commonwealth places of detention and law enforcement agencies who respond to our requests to access and inspect facilities and records. It also includes consideration of recommendations in relation to reparation payments such as to the Department of Defence.

Our environment includes a role in liaising and cooperating with state and territory ombudsmen and information commissioners and other regulatory and oversight bodies, to reduce duplication and maximise effectiveness of oversight. This ensures a coordinated national approach to issues – as appropriate – and opportunity to learn from others to improve our practices.

The Office works with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to deliver partnership programs with ombudsmen and integrity agencies in the Indo-Pacific region as part of the Australian aid program. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic we are constantly finding ways to adapt how we work and to influence systemic improvement in public administration in the region.

Service to the public

The Office is committed to continuing to provide high quality and client-focused service to members of the public. We are committed to providing outcomes for individuals and the broader community that are timely and easy to understand.

Part of our commitment to serving the public includes ensuring agencies implement the recommendations we make in our investigations and reports. To this end, in 2022-23 we intend to publish our second biannual report on the implementation of recommendations from our public reports between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2021.

Our Channel Management Strategy continues to inform and guide our work and the ways people can engage with us. Priorities include improving the accessibility and customer focus of our staff, website, phone system, correspondence, and online complaint forms.

4-year projection

To improve user experience, we are prioritising enhancements to the channels the public use to engage with our Office, including our website. We will also improve the timeliness of our contact with members of the public who make complaints and review the ways by which we update them on their matter, and how often.

Factors within our control

Management of additional or expanding functions

As an independent oversight agency, we have considerable discretion to set our priorities and use our resources to deliver systemic improvement in public administration. The Office remains as relevant as ever, and as a result, our oversight functions have expanded in recent years.

Electronic Surveillance Reform

In 2022-23 the Office is again resourced to provide a secondee to the Electronic Surveillance Reforms Taskforce. This Taskforce is working to replace the current Commonwealth electronic surveillance laws with a single, streamlined and technology-neutral Act.

4 year projection

The Office has a long history of taking on new functions and administering programs requiring an independent approach. While any additional or expanded functions are a policy decision for government, the Office is well placed to take on further complementary activities with appropriate resourcing.

Management of ceasing functions

Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme

On 16 December 2017, the Office commenced administering the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme. Following a 12-month extension, access to the Scheme is due to end on 30 June 2022. Former or current serving Defence members who lodged an intent to report by 30 June 2022 have 12 months to lodge a report of defence abuse for assessment. Following the conclusion of the Scheme, we will continue to offer restorative engagement conferences, facilitate referrals to counselling and provide a confidential mechanism to report serious Defence abuse for those who feel unable, for whatever reason, to access Defence's internal mechanisms.

4-year projection

Once all eligible reports are assessed, the Office will collate relevant and de-identified data into a final report. We anticipate finalising all cases within the 4 year reporting period.

VET FEE-HELP Student Redress Measures

The VET FEE-HELP Student Redress Measures (the Measures), which came into effect from 1 January 2019, will end on 31 December 2022. Under the Measures, people who believe they incurred a VET FEE-HELP debt because of inappropriate conduct by an education provider can complain to the Office. We assess whether a recommendation will be made to the Secretary of the Department for Employment and Workplace Relations to recredit the debt.

The end of the Measures means potentially eligible complainants with a VET FEE-HELP debt have a limited period in which to make a complaint to the Office. In most cases, a person will only become aware of a VET FEE-HELP debt if/when they interact with the tax system or must start repaying the debt because their income surpassed the relevant threshold.

4-year projection

Based on current volumes and our funding for this function, we anticipate finalising all complaints on hand and others received by 30 June 2023. We will continue working closely with the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Australian Taxation Office and community organisations to identify and implement strategies to raise awareness of the Measures and highlight the importance of potentially eligible people contacting the Office by 31 December 2022.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Our vision for reconciliation is to acknowledge, value, respect and affirm the history and cultural richness of First Nations peoples. In 2020 our Office launched our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2020-2022 which is a vital part of our commitment to ensuring we deliver services to First Nations peoples that are equal, open and culturally sensitive. Our RAP also focuses on ensuring we improve our cultural awareness as an Office to provide a working environment that is culturally appropriate for our employees. Given our current RAP ends in 2022, we will develop a new RAP to inform our ongoing commitment to cultural awareness across our Office.

Our Office has a dedicated Manager for Indigenous Coordination and a First Nations Employee Network, providing advice and support to staff handling complaints relating to First Nations peoples and communities. Our RAP Working Group also delivers on the actions within our RAP and to raise staff awareness.

4-year projection

The Office will continue to support and grow our First Nations workforce and deliver culturally sensitive complaint services. The Office will continue to carry out our commitments under the RAP to support our staff to grow, learn and practice innovative reconciliation measures across the Office.

Diversity and inclusion

Our Office's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2021 provides a framework for diversity and inclusion across the Office. It supports a workforce that reflects the diversity of our stakeholders, partners, and the community we serve. We have executive champions, networks and regular activities to support our inclusive culture.

4-year projection

Our 2022-2024 diversity and inclusion strategy will be launched in late 2022.

Geographic diversity

Our staff work across offices in Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Information and communications technology (ICT), such as video conferencing, is used by the Office to ensure continuity of purpose and collaboration between the various locations. Our remote working capability and video conferencing functions were increased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to increase our flexibility by improving our remote working technology to maintain or better our current productivity.

4-year projection

We will continue providing services across the country and improve the agility and connectivity of the offices through enhanced ICT capability.

Factors outside our control

Decision-making by agencies and private sector organisations we oversee

While the Office seeks to influence the agencies and private sector organisations we oversee, their decision-making is largely outside our control. A large part of our work involves engagement with public and private sector entities. We acknowledge that entities may encounter their own constraints when interacting with our Office and we endeavour to work with each entity to achieve outcomes.

Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory Government

Decisions made by the Commonwealth and ACT Government can impact our operating environment, including changes to our oversight responsibilities and levels of our resourcing.

International engagement

We have a long-standing and effective role in supporting the advancement of Ombudsman and allied integrity agencies in the Indo-Pacific region, to develop institutional capacity in delivering robust oversight of government administration.

We work closely with our international partners to:

- provide targeted advice and training
- foster and share best practice across our partnerships and the wider Indo-Pacific region
- strengthen the relationships between our Office and our international partners, as well as building relationships between similar organisations in the Indo-Pacific region
- strengthen institutional capacity at all levels.

COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and we will continue to seek innovative ways to deliver on our purpose and outcome. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our operations were impacted by border closures and lockdowns across our office locations. As we moved to a hybrid way of working, we embedded systems to balance staff mobility and ensure continued service delivery.

To adapt to this new environment, we:

- used remote monitoring of law enforcement activities and immigration detention centres rather than in-person inspections
- adopted a flexible and risk-based approach to our visit activity, adapting inspection schedules as required
- implemented a new Home Based Work Policy in early 2022, supporting staff to work from home 5 days per fortnight
- introduced new ways to deliver our international program
- applied contingency plans to our phone service
- improved our online complaint forms to help complainants contact us.

4 year projection

The Office anticipates the factors outside of our control will persist over all or part of the 4 year reporting period. We will monitor these factors through our risk management planning and governance arrangements and respond as necessary.

Risk Oversight and Management

We promote a shared understanding of risk consistent with the functions and objectives of an integrity oversight agency, including:

- a high standard of complaint handling, investigations, audit and inspections – encouraging good public administration practices
- well informed decision-making
- proper use of public resources
- better performance outcomes
- fostering a positive risk culture that is aligned to these functions and objectives.

We accept certain risks inherent to our functions, providing the function is:

- consistent with our strategic outcomes described in the Portfolio Budget Statement and this corporate plan

- a proper use of public resources, for which the Office is responsible
- subject to appropriate performance and conformance measures.

Management of risk is led by the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) in accordance with the Office’s Risk Management Policy and Framework (RMPF). Membership of the SLG is comprised of the Senior Assistant Ombudsmen and Deputy Ombudsman and is chaired by the Ombudsman.

The RMPF ensures that management of risk is integrated into planning, decision making and activities under a single risk management structure and provides the Ombudsman with appropriate systems and internal controls for the oversight and management of risk.

We use our Risk Appetite and Tolerance Statement to identify, monitor and review against the following risks:

	Risk Description	Treatment
REPUTATION	Ineffective complaint handling and services / Complaint handling services do not meet community expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews of programs, practices, policies and procedures • Review of Office accessibility • Identify emerging issues at monthly executive meetings • Plans and strategies
	Inability to effectively influence external stakeholders / failure to hold external stakeholders to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of external stakeholders and their activities to support the Ombudsman’s meetings • Appointment of central contacts for agencies • Regular interaction with stakeholders, i.e. to encourage appropriate policy development and to identify relevant systemic issues • Identify emerging issues at monthly executive meetings • Internal and external audits • Reviews of programs, practices, policies and procedures • Develop fit-for-purpose education and outreach events

	Risk Description	Treatment
REPUTATION	Inadequate Office services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Office accessibility • Internal and external audits • Plans and strategies • Implement a fit-for-purpose staff function • Reviews of programs, practices, policies and procedures • Further consideration of available channels for contacting the Office • Review of available information on our website
	Inability to effectively influence external stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of external stakeholders and their activities to support the Ombudsman's meetings • Appointment of central contacts for agencies • Regular interaction with stakeholders, i.e. to encourage appropriate policy development and to identify relevant systemic issues • Develop fit-for-purpose education and outreach events • Identify emerging issues at monthly committee meetings • Internal and external audits
RELEVANCE	Failure to identify areas within agencies and organisations where the Office can use its influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of external stakeholders and their activities to support the Ombudsman's meetings • Appointment of central contacts for agencies • Regular interaction with stakeholders, i.e. to encourage appropriate policy development and to identify relevant systemic issues • Identify emerging issues at monthly executive meetings • Internal and external audits • Plans and strategies
	Ineffective core business systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including Security and ICT reviews • Review of programs, practices, policies and procedures • Internal and external audits • Implement a fit-for-purpose staff function • Wellbeing program and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) • Workplace assessments • Identify emerging issues at monthly executive meetings • Effective internal budget management
RESOURCE	Inability to attract and retain staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and strategies • Review of programs, practices, policies and procedures • Internal and external audits • Implement a fit-for-purpose staff function, i.e. HR Director • Wellbeing program and EAP • Workplace assessments • Identify emerging issues at monthly executive meetings

The Ombudsman is also supported by the Audit and Risk Committee who provide independent advice on the Office's financial reporting, performance reporting, system of risk oversight and management, and the system of internal control, for the entity.

4-year projection

In line with the release of the new 2022 Commonwealth Risk Management and Policy, the Office will undertake a full review of its RMPF and continue to review and monitor based on the environment over the 4-year reporting period.

Capability

To deliver on our purpose and outcome, the Office continues to focus on enhancing 2 organisational capabilities – our people and technology.

People

Achieving and delivering on our purpose is dependent on our people and their qualities and capabilities. Our continued success is reliant on attracting and retaining a workforce that remains adaptive, dynamic and engaged. We recognise the need to continue finessing our people strategy, so we remain competitive as an employer of choice, now and into the future by focusing on 4 key areas:

- **Effective leadership** – is a critical driver of organisational performance. We encourage leadership at all levels and support this by developing leadership skills in middle management and in our emerging leaders to ensure effective organisational succession. Our senior executive and staff at all levels work together to achieve the targets set out in this corporate plan.
- **Attraction, Recruitment and Retention** – recognises the critical skills needed across the Office and builds on recent improvements to our recruitment practices, including enhancing internal mobility and career development opportunities for staff.
- **Employee Wellbeing** – builds on the Office's wellbeing and recognition programs for recognising and rewarding high performance, and purposefully develops our staff and continues providing strong support for their wellbeing through our Performance Management Framework, Wellbeing Strategy and EAP support services.
- **Capability enhancement** – reviews the Office's centralised learning and development and performance development frameworks to embed core competencies and skills across the Office, and ensures our learning and development is aligned with Australian Public Service (APS)-wide capability initiatives and strategies. Our focus will also address

capability needs and gaps identified through APS Reform, census results and the increase in hybrid ways of working.

Technology

We are seeking opportunities through technology to make engaging with our Office easier. We aim to respond to and resolve issues faster, using research on how we can most effectively communicate with the public.

The Office's technology strategy has 5 pillars. These are:

- **Security and Reliability** – ensure the Office has robust, reliable and resilient ICT services as part of a whole-of-government response to increased security and cyber threats. This will be a principal design and delivery consideration for all ICT projects, system designs and upgrades. We will continue increasing our compliance with the Essential Eight controls to achieve level 2 maturity for all controls by the end of 2022.
- **Mobility** – continue supporting our workforce to work productively using secure and fit-for-purpose technology solutions.
- **Digital Records and Information Sharing** – ensure our digital record-keeping supports staff mobility and helps employees to work productively and innovatively.
- **Digital Accessibility** – anticipate public demand for digital engagement and self-services through accessible portals, user-friendly online forms, and channels tailored to their needs. We will ensure both customer and staff experience and needs are considered in the design and implementation of solutions. Our website will be redesigned in accordance with user needs.
- **Business Intelligence** – invest in business systems that support inter-operability and on-demand, dynamic analytics. We will build robust and trusted data sets and harness quality data and analytic knowhow to deliver rich insights and foster better collaboration with the agencies we oversee.

Cooperation

We build strong working relationships with the agencies we oversee and civil society to support the Office's ability to influence systemic improvement in public administration. This includes:

- responding to agencies requests for comments on new initiatives or reforms
- participating in government forums
- holding briefings with agencies and peak bodies on a regular or ad-hoc basis as required, and
- identifying opportunities to expand (and reduce) the Office's engagement activities to match priorities.

The Office also holds outreach and engagement with members of the public and stakeholders to improve awareness of our Office and identify current issues and trends.

Subsidiaries

As ACT Ombudsman, the Office will continue to influence systemic improvements in public administration in the ACT. The Office will continue to provide assurance that ACT Government agencies and other designated entities that fall within our jurisdiction act with fairness and integrity.



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