Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Outside Employment and Volunteering Policy

Version control

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2.1	General Manager, Integrity Branch	August 2025	Policy updated to reflect departmental template and privacy collection notice inclusion
2.0	General Manager, Integrity Branch	July 2025	Policy established under enterprise agreement 2024 – 2027.
1.0	General Manager, Integrity Branch	October 2024	Initial policy

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Introduction

1. The Department of Industry, Science and Resource (the department) values and recognises the importance of staff participating in their community and that importance volunteering in particular can play to a vibrant and representative society.
2. The purpose of the Outside Employment and Volunteering Policy (the policy) is to support employees who choose to engage in outside employment and volunteering, to do so in a way that upholds the integrity of the Australian Public Service (APS) and their obligations under the APS Code of Conduct.
3. The department aims to maintain a workplace with a strong integrity culture.

Application

4. This policy is applicable to all departmental employees.
5. For the purpose of this policy, 'departmental employee' means Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, non-SES employees, ongoing and non-ongoing employees and casual employees. This policy does not apply to Questacon volunteers.
6. All departmental employees are required to adhere to the APS Values and APS Code of Conduct in relation to any outside employment. The department expects those who perform work for it to behave in a manner that is compliant with the APS Values, the Code of Conduct, and this policy.

Definitions

7. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:
   a. athletes refers to the professional or semi-professional participation in sporting events and competitions by departmental employees
   b. disclosure Officer refers to departmental employees responsible for assessing conflict of interest (COI) declarations to determine if a real or apparent conflict exists. Disclosure Officers are as defined in the department's COI policy as follows:
      i. Secretary – Disclosure Officer for SES Band 3
      ii. Deputy Secretary – Disclosure Officer for SES Band 2 and SES Band 1
      iii. General Manager – Disclosure Officer for non-SES staff, including EL and APS employees
   c. manager refers to an EL2 departmental employee and above. If a departmental employee is more comfortable or finds it more appropriate to speak to someone other than their Manager, they may also discuss and declare outside employment with someone in their direct line management, or the Central Delegate, being the General Manager of the Integrity Branch. For the purposes of this policy, all references to Manager, include the alternative contact points listed above
   d. outside employment refers to any paid or unpaid work which a departmental employee undertakes for private purposes separate to employment with the department (see examples at clause 16)
   e. performers refers to the professional or semi-professional participation in artistic expression by departmental employees. This includes, but is not limited to:
      i. actors
      ii. artists
      iii. singers
      iv. dancers
   f. Political entity refers to any of the following:

i. a registered political party

ii. a state branch (within the meaning of Part XX of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*) of a registered political party

iii. a candidate in an election or by-election

iv. a member of a Senate group

g. secondary employment is covered under the definition of Outside Employment

h. volunteering or voluntary activity refers to time, services or expertise willingly given for civic, charitable or humanitarian reasons without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. Volunteering is considered the same as outside employment, subject to the exceptions detailed in this policy.

Principles

8. This policy has been developed in accordance with the following principles:

   a. departmental employees may perform outside employment, provided that:

      i. it does not affect the performance of their official duties

      ii. it does not affect their compliance with the APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct

      iii. it does not conflict, or lead to a perception of conflict, with their official duties

      iv. it is performed entirely in the private time of the departmental employee.

   b. outside employment must not use any departmental resources or information or result in the disclosure of any department or government information.

The legislative framework

9. Conduct of public officials, both inside and outside the workplace, can affect community confidence in the administration of the department or the APS.

10. Public officials have obligations under section 29 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) to disclose details of a material personal interest.

11. The department also has obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act) which governs the way we handle personal information. The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) in Schedule 1 to the Privacy Act set out obligations for the collection, use, disclosure, and security of personal information. Further information is available at the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Public Service Act 1999

12. The *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act) requires APS employees and Agency heads to behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and APS Code of Conduct, and the integrity and good reputation of the employee's agency and the APS, at all times.

13. The APS Values, in section 10 of the PS Act, are:

   a. impartial – the APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence

   b. committed to service – the APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government

   c. accountable – the APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility

   d. respectful – the APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage

e. ethical – the APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does

f. stewardship – the APS builds its capability and institutional knowledge, and supports the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what it does.

14. The APS Code of Conduct, in section 13(7) of the PS Act, provides that an APS employee must:

a. take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with the employee's APS employment

b. disclose details of any material personal interest of the employee in connection with the employee's APS employment.

15. Additional information relating to the Code of Conduct, including expectations of all APS employees and requirements specific to the department, can be found in the Code of Conduct Procedures and Code of Conduct Guidelines documents.

Outside employment

16. Outside employment (as defined at clause 7) is any paid or unpaid work that a departmental employee undertakes for private purposes, in addition to, but separate to their employment with the department.

17. Examples of outside employment include, but are not limited to:

a. where a departmental employee is associated with an active Australian Business Number (ABN), (regardless of whether the departmental employee is actively using the ABN and / or engaging in business activities associated with the ABN)

b. where a departmental employee is listed as a Director, Secretary or other member of a company which is registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, (regardless of whether the departmental employee is active in the enterprise and / or derives an income from the role)

c. where a departmental employee is listed as a responsible person of a charity or not for profit which is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, (regardless of whether the departmental employee is active in the enterprise / or derives an income from the role)

d. owning, running or having an interest (e.g. partner, financial backer) in any sort of business or concern which is involved in trade, commerce or which provides a service (e.g. personal training, selling goods online)

e. holding a position as an elected public official

f. working on government elections

g. running a business from home

h. working in retail or hospitality

i. administering a family trust where the trust is used to run a business

j. driving a taxi or operating a ridesharing service (such as Uber)

k. being a courier or delivery driver (including working for a third-party delivery platform e.g. Uber Eats)

l. working for a consultancy company

m. helping with a family member's business (including spouse or partner) (e.g. labouring, providing customer service) whether paid or unpaid

n. seeking work while travelling overseas, including while accompanying a spouse on an overseas posting whilst employed by the department

o. using social media, websites, or apps to derive an income or benefit (e.g. social media influencer)

p. being a professional or semi-professional athlete

q. professional association with universities (e.g. tutoring, adjunct fellowships, professorships).

18. Examples of unpaid employment include, but are not limited to:

a. unpaid training that is not connected with a departmental employee's official duties

b. work experience

c. internships or similar arrangements with a company or an individual, other commercial organisation or government body

d. membership of a Board or Audit Committee (for both private and public sector entities)

19. Guidance about specific types of outside employment is contained in clause 36-60.

Volunteering

20. The department acknowledges the importance of volunteering to the community. However, volunteer activities may also intersect with a departmental policy or program and give rise to real or apparent conflicts of interest.

21. Except in circumstances outlined at clause 25-27 and specific election related volunteer campaign activities outlined in clause 36-40 below, departmental employees are to treat volunteering activities as the same as outside employment and comply with the requirements set out in this policy below.

Discuss and declare

22. Discussing outside employment and volunteering activities helps ensure that departmental employees are not the sole judge of whether these activities give rise to a conflict of interest. Managers are in the best position to determine whether activities may give rise to a conflict of interest due to their understanding of work requirements and context.

23. Departmental employees seeking outside employment must have a discussion before undertaking the activity. Employees should have this discussion with their Manager, however this discussion can also be had with a Disclosure Officer or the Integrity Branch. Requests to undertake outside employment are considered on a case-by-case basis and assessed on their own merits via submission of service now request conflict of interest form.

24. In some instances, volunteer work will not impact a departmental employee's ability to perform their official duties or create a real or apparent conflict of interest. Departmental employees are to use judgement to determine whether voluntary activity requires discussion and declaration.

25. Examples of volunteer activities that do not need to be discussed with your Manager, include:

a. assisting with a child's sports team (e.g. coaching)

b. assisting in a singular event for a school or community fundraising event (e.g. trivia night or Australia's Biggest Morning Tea) or collecting for a registered charitable organisation event (e.g. World's Greatest Shave).

c. participating in a school P&C committee

26. These activities are to be undertaken outside of work hours and have no connection to the department.

27. If a conflict of interest arises while engaging in the activities referred to in clause 25, it must be declared in accordance with the COI policy. For example, if a sporting organisation applies for a grant administered or funded by the department.

28. When a declaration is made the department will collect your personal information. The collection of personal information (i.e. details of role, and name of outside employer/volunteering organisation) to manage conflicts of interest with regards to outside employment or volunteering activities is reasonably necessary. The collection of information:

    a. directly supports the department's function to manage conflicts of interest.

    b. supports the department to manage security risks,

    c. supports the department to assess outside employment to determine it does not affect employees' performance of official duties, and

    d. assists employees to comply with the APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct.

29. During the discussion you will disclose personal information. The personal information is collected during the discussion to assess your outside employment or volunteering against this policy. It will only be used for this purpose and only disclosed to staff within the department with a need to know. Your personal information will be handled in accordance with the department's Privacy Policy.

30. During discussion the Manager must consider:

    a. the nature of the departmental employee's position and duties undertaken within the department

    b. the number of hours and frequency of the requested outside employment

    c. the workplace and operational requirements of the department

    d. if a conflict of interest exists or could arise

    e. the possible impact on the integrity and good reputation of the department and the APS, and whether employee engagement in the outside employment upholds the APS Values and APS Employment Principles (consistent with 13(11)(a) and(b) of the PS Act)

    f. the departmental employee's ability to perform their role and meet operational requirements effectively and efficiently

    g. any conditions that should be applied to engagement in outside employment.

31. A Manager should contact the Integrity Branch for guidance when an application for outside employment involves employment or voluntary activities associated with any company or organisation likely to have engagement with the department, its programs or policies.

Notification of outside employment

32. Where the employee undertakes outside employment, they must notify the Departmental and submit a conflict-of-interest declaration via Service Now, for the awareness of the relevant Disclosure Officer, before undertaking the outside employment. This disclosure should include any proposed management strategies were real or perceived conflict may arise.

33. Departmental employees new to the department who already undertake outside employment must submit this notification as soon as possible after commencement with the department.

34. Where a Manager has concerns that engaging in certain outside employment would not be consistent with the principles outlined in this policy, they are to discuss those concerns with the departmental employee, before escalating to the Disclosure Officer.

35. Where a Manager, after discussion with the departmental employee, still has concerns that the outside employment may be inconsistent with the principles outlined in this policy, the request is to be discussed with the departmental employee and the relevant Disclosure Officer (generally SESB1) for further consideration or action.

Government elections

36. The department respects the right of employees to participate in political activities across all levels of government, including political campaigning, fundraising and standing for office. However, these activities may give rise to conflicts of interest that must be managed.

Standing for election

37. Federal government: APS employees must resign before nominating as a candidate for the Senate or House of Representatives. The election of a person who did not resign from the APS before nominating for election to the Federal Parliament would be held invalid. An APS employee who resigns to contest an election to the Senate or House of Representatives has the right to be re-engaged in the APS under section 32 of the PS Act, as long as:
    a. they resigned no more than six months before nominations closed
    b. the application to be re-engaged was made within two months of the election being declared in alignment with section 37 of the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022*.
38. State and Territory government: APS employees intending to stand for election to State Parliament, or the Northern Territory or Australian Capital Territory legislative assemblies, should seek legal advice about any legislative provisions that require them to resign from the APS. Most state and territory governments will require employees to resign from their employment in the APS should they be elected.
39. Local government: APS employees may hold an office in local government organisations, provided they follow all steps outlined within this policy.

Working on elections

40. Departmental employees that wish to work for an electoral commission on federal, state, territory or local government elections (such as vote counting, polling official, etc.) must follow all steps outlined within this policy.

Political campaigning and fundraising

41. APS employees have the right to hold political views on national and international issues, advocate for causes they care about in their local community and engage meaningfully as citizens in Australia's democratic system—including actively participating in election campaign activities—in their personal capacity outside work.
42. As private citizens, departmental employees may choose to campaign for candidates for political office. This might include handing out how to vote cards on election day to activities with a higher profile. Volunteer campaign activities include:
    a. phone banking
    b. doorknocking
    c. manning stalls at public events
    d. handing out 'how to vote cards' in public places
    e. putting up campaign signage (including displaying such signage at their home)
43. Where departmental employees wish to undertake volunteer campaign activities, they are not required to discuss with their managers or otherwise notify the department before they undertake the above activities. These activities must be conducted outside work hours and employees must not wear anything or make statements that identify them as APS employees. If assisting with an election campaign in ordinary working hours, a departmental employee may apply for leave without pay, annual (recreational) leave, or long service leave.

44. If a departmental employee wishes to take on an active campaign role for a candidate, parties or interest groups in either a paid or unpaid role, which has public visibility or a significant time impost, this level of engagement may give rise to a conflict of interest with their public duties and their APS Values obligations. An active campaign role does not include volunteer campaign activities described in clause 42. Strategies for managing this could include granting leave, amending APS roles or duties temporarily, and making or revising existing conflict of interest declarations and management plans. Employees must speak with their manager before undertaking an active campaign role.
45. If a departmental employee participates in a political party, they must clearly indicate that these activities are not part of their official duties. For instance, they should avoid wearing anything that identifies them as an APS employee at political meetings or discuss departmental business. Additionally, departmental employees must not use government resources, such as email, telephones and photocopiers, for any political activities.
46. Departmental employees should also be aware that wearing or displaying material from a political entity while working in their usual role is generally inappropriate. It may give the impression that the agency endorses a political entity, and in some circumstances, it may create doubts about the impartiality of the official or the department. The APSC's Guidance on Social Media provides further information on expectations.

Defence Force Reserves

47. A departmental employee must notify their Manager if they are participating in the Defence Force Reserves as per clause 19 of the Leave Policy. Information on Defence Force Reserve leave can be found in clause 310 – 324 of the agreement.

Emergency Services

48. A departmental employee must notify their Manager if they are participating with an emergency management body as described in the *Fair Work Act 2009*. This is to ensure Managers are kept informed of a departmental employee's Emergency Services participation and to provide departmental employees with the relevant leave entitlements at the earliest opportunity. Information on Emergency Response leave can be found in clause 300 – 305 of the agreement.
49. Departmental employees should be aware that a real or apparent conflict of interest could arise from their involvement with an emergency management body and should be responded to accordingly. For example, a departmental employee may volunteer for a Country Fire Authority (CFA) which may be awarded a grant that is funded or administered by the department. In this instance, the departmental employee must complete a declaration and discuss with their Manager.
50. Declarations made regarding voluntary activity for state emergency services will be reviewed and changed as needed and will not require repeated approval unless a conflict of interest arises.

Serving on Boards

51. If a departmental employee is serving on a board they must ensure that their role does not conflict or lead to the perception of a conflict with the interests of the department. This includes ensuring that their responsibilities and decisions as a board member do not interfere with or influence their duties with the department. They must also follow all steps as outlined in this policy.
52. Departmental employees serving on boards must avoid any actions that could be perceived as lobbying on behalf of the board or using their departmental position to advance the interest of the board.
53. This does not apply to serving on a board in representation of the department.

Social media, websites and apps

54. Deriving an income or benefit from social media, websites or apps may be considered outside employment. This does not include the sale of commercial items for a one-off instance. Departmental employees must be mindful of any endorsements they make on behalf of an organisation, for example, if they receive a good, benefit or service in exchange for promoting it. Should a departmental employee be required to make an endorsement that is likely to conflict with the department, they must discuss and declare this with their Manager.
55. When undertaking outside employment that relates to social media, websites or apps, departmental employees must ensure this work is consistent with the department's and the Australian Public Service Commission's guidance on social media.

Athletes and Performers

56. Receiving payments or being required to make endorsements as a professional or semi-professional athlete or performer may be considered outside employment. Departmental employees must be mindful of any endorsements they make on behalf of sponsors, teams, corporate entities or sporting bodies and ensure these do not conflict with their duties in the department. Should a departmental employee be required to make an endorsement that is likely to conflict with the department, they must follow all steps as outlined in this policy.

Speaking engagements and providing training

57. Departmental employees possess a wide range of skills, knowledge and expertise and may be approached by organisations to speak on their area of expertise or to deliver training. Departmental employees that are approached to deliver training or requested for a speaking engagement must discuss with their Manager prior to accepting any offer.
58. Any speaking engagement or provision of training that is conducted by a departmental employee that does not relate to their role with the department or the APS must not be conducted during ordinary work hours.
59. Departmental employees must ensure that when they undertake a speaking engagement or provision of training that doesn't relate to their role in the department or the APS, they identify it as separate from their role with the department and that they are not speaking on behalf of the department.
60. Departmental employees must consider whether anything provided as part of a speaking engagement or training (e.g. a ticket to the event), should be declared in accordance with the Gifts and Benefits policy.

Review of outside employment arrangements

61. Once agreement has been reached, or approval if there is a conflict of interest, outside employment arrangements are valid for 12 months. All declarations must be reviewed and renewed within 12 months or when reasonably practicable from the original date of discussion with an employee's Manager and declaration.
62. All outside employment arrangements may be reviewed more frequently. Appropriate review times may include:

a. During MyPlan discussions and reviews

b. If issues arise as a result of the impact of the outside employment, such as:

   i. unsatisfactory performance, attendance, or contribution in the workplace

   ii. improper use of departmental resources

c. the employee moves branches or divisions

d. a new Manager is appointed who may be unfamiliar with the current management plan

e. there is a change of circumstances in the outside employment such as, cessation of outside employment or change in arrangements regarding the outside employment

f. a real or apparent conflict arises from the outside employment.

Ongoing management of declared conflicts

63. In the event a conflict of interest is identified due to a staff member engaging in outside employment, the staff member must propose actions to manage the conflict in alignment with the Conflict of Interest policy and the 5 'R's to develop a management strategy with the Disclosure Officer. The 5 'R's include:

    a. Register

    b. Restrict

    c. Remove

    d. Relinquish

    e. Resign

64. Departmental employees, Managers and Disclosure Officers must also consider other obligations in relation to other departmental policies, especially if the outside employment or volunteering includes, but is not limited to:

    a. outside employment or volunteering on behalf of a foreign government or entity

    b. any outside employment or volunteering where overseas travel is required

    c. any outside employment or volunteering that requires subject matter knowledge or expertise/experience directly relevant to current or former roles within the department.

Withdrawal of agreement

65. Manager agreement for outside employment declarations may be withdrawn at any time, in writing. Disclosure Officer approval for COI declarations are subject to the COI policy.

66. When a departmental employee moves to a new area within the department, declarations and relevant management strategies persist and must be adopted by the relevant Manager, unless there is a reasonable basis to withdraw approval. Any change to the conditions of the agreement (either through a change in the outside employment or in the employee's work with the department) requires a discussion between the departmental employee and Manager, and review of the agreement. This ensures the existing management strategies are fit for purpose and don't cause unnecessary disruption to the departmental employee's work or outside employment.

67. Departmental employees are expected to take steps to ensure that their performance of their role with the department is not impacted by any outside employment. Any concerns in relation to performance will be managed in accordance with the performance management process. If outside

employment is impacting performance, then it will be reviewed and potentially, agreement could be rescinded.

68. Agreement may be withdrawn if, for example, the outside employment adversely affects the departmental employee's health (i.e. fatigue, poses any work health and safety risks), or where the relevant Manager considers that a real or apparent conflict of interest has subsequently arisen.

Review of action

69. A departmental employee may request a review of a decision relating to:
    a. non-agreement of a request
    b. agreement of a request subject to conditions
    c. the withdrawal of agreement for outside employment

    via the steps outlined in the department's Review of Action Policy

70. Prior to engaging in the Review of Action process, employees should take steps to discuss the decision with their Manager first, then escalate to the relevant Branch/Division Head if required.

Outside employment during periods of leave

71. The requirement to discuss and declare outside employment also applies when a departmental employee is taking any form of leave (including leave without pay).
72. Where the outside employment is a continuation of existing arrangements that have been approved, further approval is not required, unless a change of circumstances occur that could affect the existing arrangement.
73. Where a departmental employee is on leave and presented with a new outside employment or volunteering activity they wish to undertake, they must contact their Manager to discuss and declare prior to commencing the activity to determine if it presents a conflict of interest.
74. Where a departmental employee is taking paid or unpaid leave to travel or accompany a spouse overseas, Managers may provide in-principle approval that will allow the departmental employee to seek outside employment. The departmental employee must meet their obligations to manage real or apparent conflicts of interest.
75. If departmental employees do not have access to ServiceNow to declare outside employment during a period of leave, the declaration can be submitted in an email to their Manager. Completion of the declaration through ServiceNow can be done upon the departmental employee's return to work.
76. Outside employment that would not be acceptable under this policy is not made acceptable by being undertaken during a period of leave, whether the leave is unpaid or paid.
77. Departmental employees are not to use personal/carers' leave for the purposes of undertaking paid or unpaid outside employment or volunteering. This leave is provided for departmental employees to use when they are suffering from an illness or injury which restricts their ability to perform their duties; or there is a requirement for them to provide care and support for a member of their immediate family or household who is ill or injured.
78. Departmental employees are not to work in any capacity for another APS or Commonwealth agency covered by the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973* during a period of mandatory absence as provided for by the Act.

Failure to comply

79. A departmental employee must have discussed and declared outside employment arrangements and obtained approval where a COI has been identified, prior to undertaking activities in accordance with the process outlined in this policy.
80. If an employee is found to be acting in any way contrary to this policy, then the matter may be reported to the Integrity Branch.
81. Failing to comply with this policy may also be a breach of the APS Code of Conduct.

Obligations for security clearance holders

82. Security clearance holders are under an obligation to inform the Australian Government Vetting Agency (AGSVA) of certain changes of circumstances in order to maintain their security clearance.
83. Security clearance holders must ensure their personnel security records with AGSVA are updated to reflect current personal circumstances and inform AGSVA of any outside employment or conflict of interest considerations.

Responsibilities

Departmental Employees

84. Responsibilities include:
    a. abide by the guidance in this policy
    b. only undertake outside employment in their private time
    c. be aware of and adhere to the department's policies regarding conflict of interest and outside employment
    d. discuss, declare and come to agreement on outside employment and volunteering arrangements with their Manager prior to engaging in activities
    e. submit a conflict of interest declaration for awareness of their Manager and the Disclosure Officer
    f. notify their new Manager of any outside employment arrangements when changing work areas or acquiring a new Manager
    g. inform their Manager of any changes in their official duties which could conflict with their outside employment
    h. inform their Manager of any material change in the nature or circumstances of the outside employment
    i. comply with a direction not to engage in a particular outside employment arrangement
    j. participate in regular reviews of outside employment arrangements unless at the time of review they’re on leave
    k. ensure that they are aware of any real or apparent conflicts of interest relating to outside employment

Managers and supervisors

85. Responsibilities include:
    a. discuss any proposed outside employment with their employee and come to agreement on outside employment and volunteering arrangements

b. consider all implications of the outside employment to ensure that it complies with the principles detailed in this policy and that there is a strong adherence to the APS Code of Conduct

c. where required, discuss with the Branch or Division Head any concerns relating to the outside employment

d. discuss any concerns with the employee where the outside employment is having a detrimental effect on the employee's health or efficiency and effectiveness in performing their official duties

e. where appropriate, advise the departmental employee, in writing, of reasons for withdrawing agreement to engage in outside employment.

Senior Executive Service (SES)

86. Responsibilities include:

a. consider all implications of the outside employment to ensure that it complies with the principles detailed in this policy and that there is a strong adherence to the APS Code of Conduct.

b. consider and, where appropriate, provide approval for outside employment or volunteering as soon as reasonably practicable

c. where appropriate, provide a written direction to an employee not to engage in a particular outside employment arrangement in accordance with section 13(5) of the PS Act.

d. advise the employee in writing of the reasons for directing them not to engage in a particular outside employment arrangement.

Integrity Branch

87. Responsibilities include:

a. provide guidance and support to all areas of the department regarding the policy

b. inform the Agency Security Advisor (ASA) of high-risk security related outside employment and volunteering

c. promote the policy

d. regularly review and update the policy.

Contact Details

If you need more information, please contact the Integrity Branch - s22 @industry.gov.au

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Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Workplace Behaviour Policy

Enterprise Agreement 2024 - 2027

Version control

Version	Approved by	Date	Version details
			Next review scheduled:
2.0	General Manager, People Branch	May 2026	Policy re-established under enterprise agreement 2024 - 2027
1.2	General Manager, People Branch	July 2022	Revised to include new department name and update broken links.
1.0	General Manager, People Branch	April 2016	Initial policy

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Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to:
    - Affirm the department's commitment to fostering a safe, flexible and respectful workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
    - Provide clear information and practical support to:
        - workers who believe they have experienced discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
        - workers who are alleged to have engaged in such behaviour.
        - managers responsible for addressing these matters.
    - Promote awareness among managers and employees of their responsibilities in identifying and responding to discrimination, harassment and bullying.
    - Establish fair, timely, sensitive, and confidential procedures for managing reports of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Scope

2. This policy applies to all the department's workers.
3. The term 'worker' is defined in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act). The department's workers include employees, trainees, contractors and sub-contractors, including those engaged under third party arrangements (i.e. labour hire).

Principles

4. The department is dedicated to cultivating and sustaining a positive workplace culture where individuals treat one another with respect and courtesy. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are not tolerated under any circumstances. A respectful and inclusive environment not only supports employee wellbeing but also contributes to increased productivity and improved morale.
5. The department has a positive duty to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate, as far as possible, all forms of sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, hostile workplace environments, and victimisation. This duty applies to all workers, including employees, contractors, volunteers and third-party staff.
6. The department maintains a zero-tolerance approach to victimisation or retaliatory behaviour and is committed to eliminating hostile workplace environments on the grounds of sex, in line with its positive duty under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.
7. The department, along with its managers and all other workers, holds a legal obligation to prevent and respond to incidents of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. All workers are expected to take reasonable and proactive steps to identify, prevent, and eliminate inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.
8. The department is committed to assessing and responding appropriately to any complaint raised by a worker regarding discrimination, harassment, or bullying. All complaints will be managed with sensitivity, confidentiality, and in a timely manner to ensure a fair and respectful resolution process. Any concerns about a hostile work environment should be raised as early as possible. The department may act in response to allegations of a hostile work environment, even if a formal complaint has not been lodged, to meet its obligations and maintain a safe and respectful workplace.

9. The department recognises that psychosocial hazards, including bullying, harassment, incivility and workplace conflict, can significantly affect workers' psychological and physical health. Consistent with its work health and safety obligations, the department is committed to identifying, assessing and controlling psychosocial hazards in the workplace.
10. The department maintains a zero-tolerance approach to victimisation or retaliatory behaviour towards any individual involved in a complaint process whether the process is informal or formal. All workers have the right to raise concerns or participate in investigations without fear of reprisal.
11. Where appropriate, the department may act in response to allegations of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, even if a formal complaint has not been lodged. This approach ensures the department meets its obligations as an employer and maintains a safe and respectful workplace.
12. Workers have the right to be assisted or represented by a person of their choice throughout any complaint or resolution process. This may include a union representative or another support person, depending on the worker's preference. Further information about complaint pathways and processes is available in the department's *Code of Conduct Guidelines* and through People Support.

Legislation

13. The department, along with its managers and workers, is legally obligated to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment, and bullying. These obligations arise under several key legislative instruments including:

    - *Public Service Act 1999* (the Act)

      All Australian Public Service (APS) employees must comply with the *APS Code of Conduct*, which requires them to:

        - treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment when acting in accordance with APS employment.
        - behave in a manner that upholds the APS Values, Employment Principles, and the integrity and reputation of the APS.
        - comply with all applicable Australian laws in the course of their duties.
    - *Public Service Regulations 2023 (the Regulations)*
    - *Fair Work Act 2009* (FW Act)

      This Act provides protection against workplace bullying and outlines mechanisms for employees to seek orders from the Fair Work Commission to stop bullying or sexual harassment.
    - *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (*WHS Act*)*
    - *Commonwealth and State Anti-Discrimination Legislation*

      Discrimination is unlawful under legislation including:

        - *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
        - *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
        - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
        - *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
        - *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
    - *Privacy Act 1988 (*Privacy Act*)*

      The department is bound by the Privacy Act, which governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

14. These obligations extend beyond the physical workplace and may apply to conduct occurring in external settings where there is a connection to work, for example, between colleagues or where the behaviour could impact the workplace or the department.
15. Workers engaged under contracts or third-party arrangements are also required to comply with the *APS Code of Conduct* and relevant legislation.

How does unacceptable behaviour affect the workplace?

16. All workers have a right to work in an inclusive and safe environment. Unacceptable workplace behaviour can have serious implications for productivity, morale and health and safety, and comes at a cost to the department. Some of the negative consequences of unacceptable workplace behaviour include:
    - fear, anxiety and stress can cause or exacerbate physical or psychological illnesses in individuals
    - the safety of individuals and groups, and ultimately the safety culture of the operation work productivity and costs
    - creating tension and conflict which can lead to poor staff morale, divided teams, absenteeism, and reduced productivity
    - higher staff turnover
    - increased legal cost or Comcare premium to the department due to claims being accepted and
    - damage to the reputation of the department

Expected workplace behaviours

17. The department expects all workers to behave in a manner that is consistent with the *APS Code of Conduct* and APS Values, and that upholds integrity and the good reputation of the Australian Public Service. All workers are expected to:
    - behave in a responsible and professional manner
    -
    - treat others in the workplace with courtesy and respect
    - speak with civility, listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of others
    - be fair and honest in their dealings with others
18. This policy applies to behaviours that occur:
    - in connection with work, even if it occurs outside normal working hours
    - during work activities, for example when dealing with stakeholders and clients
    - at work-related events, for example at conferences and work-related social functions
    - on social media where workers interact with colleagues, stakeholders or clients and their actions may affect them either directly or indirectly
19. Workers must complete the Respectful Workplace Behaviours training module on engagement and at least once every two (2) years thereafter. The module helps provide a framework of what constitutes respectful behaviour and is a reminder of the work, health and safety obligations from both the legal and psychological perspectives.

Social media

20. All workers are expected to uphold the APS Values and Code of Conduct when engaging in any form of social media, whether in a personal, professional, or official capacity.
21. This includes but is not limited to platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Instagram, Reddit, YouTube, online forums, and departmental collaboration tools (e.g MS Teams).
22. Workers must comply with the Australian Public Service Commission's (APSC) Social media: Guidance for Australian Public Service Employees and Agencies as well as relevant departmental policies.
23. Breaches of the social media expectations may result in management or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in line with the *APS Code of Conduct* and relevant procedures.
24. When using social media in a personal or professional capacity (including personal accounts and work-related connect not posted on behalf of the department), workers must:
    - maintain confidentiality and comply with privacy and copyright laws
    - obtain consent before posting images, videos or identifying information about colleagues
    - obtain approval from a relevant General Manager before posting work-related content that references departmental activities, workplaces, events, senior officials or could reasonably be associated with the department
    - not post content that could disclose sensitive information, including images of secure, restricted or identifiable departmental spaces (such as executive or boardroom areas)
    - avoid posting content that could create reputational or contextual risk for the department or imply endorsement by senior leadership or the department
    - ensure personal online activities do not interfere with job performance
25. When using social media in an official departmental capacity, workers must:
    - only post or respond on behalf of the department if authorised and following departmental clearance procedures
    - use approved departmental accounts and branding as per guidelines
    - keep records of official posts
    - maintain password and account security
    - seek permission from the Communications Branch before establishing new departmental social media accounts
26. For questions about personal and professional social media use, contact People Support.
27. For questions about the business use of social media, contact the Social Media Team in the Communications Branch.

Unacceptable and unreasonable workplace behaviour and conduct

28. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are unacceptable and unlawful. Workers (including managers) found to have engaged in unacceptable workplace conduct may be counselled, warned and/or disciplined. Where severe or repeated breaches are substantiated through investigation, this may result in formal disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with the APS Code of Conduct and the department's *Code of Conduct Guidelines*.
29. Complaints that are vexatious or frivolous are also unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. A complaint may be considered frivolous and/or vexatious, when, following assessment, it is

found to have been made in bad faith and with intention to cause harm or where the complainant deliberately provides false or misleading information with the intention to cause harm to other parties rather than to genuinely address a legitimate concern or issue.

30. Any act of violence, threat of violence, or other threatening behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, or abusive environment must be reported immediately to a manager and, where appropriate, to the police. In line with the department's *Insider Threat Program,* such incidents will also be brought to the attention of the Case Coordination group.

31. Examples of unreasonable workplace behaviours include:

    - assigning meaningless or unproductive tasks
    - issuing confusing or contradictory instructions
    - frequently changing work targets without justification
    - setting unrealistic deadlines
    - causing unnecessary disruptions
    - withholding critical information
    - deliberately failing to complete tasks or meet deadlines

Other forms of inappropriate workplace behaviour and conduct

32. **Incivility and microaggressions**: workplace incivility refers to low-level negative behaviours that, when repeated overtime, may contribute to a dysfunctional team environment, relationship breakdown, reduced productivity and harm to employee wellbeing. Incivility is generally characterised by a lack of respect, rudeness or discourteous behaviour. Examples may include failing to acknowledge colleagues, dismissive body language such as eyerolling, inappropriate facial expressions, or other conduct that may make others feel uncomfortable.

33. **Personal workplace relationships**: relationships that may compromise professional boundaries or create perceived conflicts of interest should be managed carefully. For example, such relationships may create awkward or uncomfortable situations for other colleagues or give rise to real or perceived concerns about fairness, integrity or workplace dynamics.

34. **Actions that unreasonably risk health and safety**: appropriate responses will depend on the circumstances and may include advice, support or other management action in line with departmental policies and procedures.

35. **Influence of drugs or alcohol in the workplace**: the misuse of drugs or alcohol in the workplace is considered inappropriate and may pose serious risks to health, safety, and performance. Workers are expected to be always fit for duty. Behaviour influenced by substance use that affects judgement, conduct, or the safety of others may be subject to management action. As per the department's *Drug and Alcohol Guideline*, if the department has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a worker has engaged in illegal activity in relation to alcohol or drugs, the worker may be referred to the police, and may face disciplinary action in accordance with the department's procedures for determining breaches of the Code of Conduct where appropriate. Further guidance on alcohol and drug use in the workplace is available in the department's *Drug and Alcohol Guideline*.

Discrimination

36. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated, or proposed to be treated, unfavourably because of a personal characteristic that is protected by law. These characteristics include, but are not limited to sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnic or cultural background, and disability.

37. **Direct discrimination** occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation due to a personal characteristic protected by law. These characteristics may include, but are not limited to, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnic or cultural background, or disability.
38. **Indirect discrimination** occurs when an unreasonable requirement, condition, or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging individuals who possess a personal characteristic protected by law. This form of discrimination may not appear intentional but can still result in unfair treatment or exclusion.
39. Protected personal characteristics are attributes defined under anti-discrimination laws. These include:

    - **Disability**, **disease**, or **injury**
    - **Parental** or **carer status**
    - **Race**, **descent**, **national origin**, or **ethnic background**
    - **Age**
    - **Sex** and **gender identity**
    - **Industrial activity**
    - **Religion**
    - **Pregnancy**
    - **Sexual orientation**
    - **Marital status**
    - **Political opinion**
    - **Social origin**
    - **Medical record**

    These characteristics are safeguarded under Commonwealth and state legislation, and discrimination based on any of them is unlawful.

Bullying and harassment

40. Workplace bullying refers to repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker, or group of workers, that poses a risk to their health and safety. Such behaviour may include actions that are victimising, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening in nature.
41. Workplace harassment refers to behaviour that is **unwelcome and unsolicited**, and that a reasonable person would consider **offensive, belittling, or threatening**. Harassment may be:

    - **Intentional:** where the behaviour is deliberately aimed at humiliating, offending, intimidating, or distressing another person, regardless of whether it had the intended effect.
    - **Unintentional:** where the behaviour, although not intended to cause harm, does in fact humiliate, offend, intimidate, or distress, and a reasonable person should have anticipated that outcome.
42. Workplace bullying and harassment may take various forms. Examples include, but are not limited to:

    - **Overt Behaviours:** Any act or threat of violence (including physical violence), unwelcome physical contact (such as hitting, pushing, grabbing, or deliberate unwanted touching), intimidating or aggressive actions, inappropriate verbal comments or propositions, pranks, or any behaviour that contributes to a hostile work environment. This includes offensive content shared via emails or text messages.

- **Ostracism:** Social or physical exclusion, such as isolating a worker, excluding them from work-related activities, ignoring their presence or contributions, or deliberately leaving a room when they enter.
- **Undermining:** Persistent, baseless criticism; unjustified removal of responsibilities; spreading gossip or rumours; and belittling or derogatory remarks or gestures that diminish a person's dignity.

43. Actions taken by management in a reasonable and lawful manner do not constitute bullying or harassment. For example, declining leave or flexible work arrangement requests based on operational requirements, providing constructive feedback on a worker's performance or assigning duties in a fair and respectful way are considered reasonable management practices and are not classified as inappropriate behaviour.

Harassment on grounds of sex or gender

44. Harassment based on sex is prohibited by the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.
45. Under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, a worker must not engage in unwelcome conduct of a demeaning nature towards another person based on their sex or a characteristic associated with that sex, including gender. This applies in situations where a reasonable person, considering all the circumstances, would anticipate that the behaviour could offend, humiliate, or intimidate the individual.
46. The department does not tolerate any form of unwelcome conduct that is demeaning in nature and based on a person's sex or gender. Such behaviour is unacceptable and contrary to the standards set under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the department's commitment to a respectful and inclusive workplace.
47. It is also unlawful under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* for a person to subject another person to a workplace environment that is hostile on the ground of sex. A hostile workplace environment may include, for example, workplaces where sexually explicit language, images or jokes are tolerated; where sexualised comments, banter or gestures occur frequently; or where behaviours create an intimidating, offensive or humiliating atmosphere, even if the conduct is not directed at a specific individual.

Sexual harassment

48. Sexual harassment is unlawful under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.
49. The department recognises that a workplace environment that is hostile on the grounds of sex is also unlawful, even if the conduct is not directed at a particular individual. A hostile work environment may arise where a workplace culture, practices, or behaviour create an atmosphere that is offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to a person or group because of their sex or gender. All workers share responsibility for identifying and addressing behaviour or practices that may contribute to a hostile environment.
50. The department recognises its positive duty to eliminate sexual harassment and related conduct, including hostile workplace environments, as far as possible. All workers share responsibility for upholding this commitment and are expected to take reasonable steps to prevent and address inappropriate behaviour.
51. In practice, this positive duty includes proactive risk identification, clear behavioural expectations, education and training, accessible reporting pathways, timely and appropriate responses to concerns, and regular review of workplace practices to prevent sexual harassment and related conduct.
52. Sexual harassment refers to **any unwanted or unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature** that a reasonable person would expect to cause offence, humiliation, or intimidation. Importantly, **a single incident is sufficient to constitute sexual harassment** it does not need to be repeated.

53. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

    - **Physical sexual harassment:** Unwelcome physical contact such as touching, hugging, cornering, kissing, or deliberately brushing against someone.
    - **Verbal sexual harassment**: Suggestive comments, jokes, anecdotes, insults, or taunts based on sex or gender.
    - **Sexually hostile work environment:** A workplace culture or atmosphere that is sexually charged or hostile.
    - **Sexual coercion:** Offering, implying, granting, or withholding work-related benefits in exchange for sexual favours.
    - **Unwanted sexual attention:** Persistent and unsolicited attempts to initiate an intimate, romantic, or sexual relationship, including intrusive questions or comments about a person's private life or body.
    - **Online sexual harassment**: Unwanted sexual behaviour occurring through digital platforms or communication channels.
    - **Stalking behaviour:** Actions such as following, watching, or loitering near a person or places they are known to frequent.

54. The department will seek and consider the preferences of the person reporting sexual harassment when determining how to manage the complaint. In some circumstances, the department may need to act once it becomes aware of the issue, even if a formal complaint has not been made, to meet its obligations to protect the health and safety of all workers and positive duty.

55. A worker's lack of objection to inappropriate behaviour does not imply consent, nor does it make the behaviour acceptable. All conduct in the workplace must meet respectful and lawful standards, regardless of whether a person explicitly objects at the time.

Roles and responsibilities

56. This section outlines the responsibilities that apply across this policy, including responsibilities relating to prevention, response and support in relation to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying covered by the policy.

57. The department is responsible for taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of workers while at work. This includes establishing and maintaining systems to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment and bullying; identifying and assessing risks; implementing appropriate control measures; and providing support to workers who raise concerns, as well as those who are subject to allegations.

58. The department is committed to taking reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate, as far as possible, conduct prohibited under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. This includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex, the creation of hostile workplace environments based on sex, and victimisation.

59. To fulfil its obligations, the department will take the following actions:

    - **Distribute and promote** this policy across the organisation.
    - **Provide training and education** to support understanding and implementation.
    - **Respond to and address complaints** promptly and appropriately.
    - **Review and improve measures** through consultation with workers, including measures to support individuals who raise concerns and those who are subject to allegations or investigations.

60. All workers are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety, as well as that of others in the workplace. This includes complying with this policy and actively participating in any measures implemented by the department to minimise risks and address complaints.

Manager responsibilities

61. Under the PS Act, the Secretary and Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are expected to model integrity and ethical behaviour, promote APS Values and Employment Principles and uphold the *APS Code of Conduct* in all aspects of their leadership and decision-making. This expectation is supported by APS leadership frameworks, including the Secretary's Charter of Leadership Behaviours (DRIVE).

62. Managers are responsible for monitoring workplace behaviour, addressing any instances of inappropriate conduct and maintaining documentary evidence of these actions, including file notes and records of conversations. In some cases, the seriousness of an issue may require the department to act, even if the person affected does not wish to pursue the matter formally. Managers must ensure that any information related to a complaint is only shared with individuals who have a legitimate role in managing or resolving the issue.

63. Managers play a critical role in fostering a respectful and safe workplace. To help prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying, managers should:

    - **Model appropriate behaviour** by ensuring their own conduct aligns with the *APS Values, Employment Principles*, and *APS Code of Conduct*.
    - **Set clear expectations** for acceptable workplace behaviour.
    - **Assess risks** of discrimination, bullying, and harassment—including sexual harassment—and implement control measures to eliminate or reduce those risks.
    - **Promote awareness** by supporting access to training, instruction, and information on appropriate conduct and complaint pathways.
    - **Respond promptly to complaints**, including acknowledging receipt, obtaining guidance on how to respond appropriately and advising affected parties on next steps.
    - **Inform workers that they can seek information from a Workplace Contact Officer or assistance from People Branch.**
    - **Encourage use of the *Employee Assistance Program* (EAP)**, which offers free, confidential, professional support, including *Manager Assist Program* for supervisors/managers.
    - **Consult with the People Branch** for guidance on appropriate actions and resolution strategies.

64. Managers and leaders are expected to take positive steps to prevent and respond to conduct that may contribute to a hostile work environment, including promoting a culture of respect and inclusion and addressing inappropriate behaviour promptly.

Worker responsibilities

65. All workers share the responsibility for preventing and addressing discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Everyone is expected to uphold the APS Values, Employment Principles, and Code of Conduct, ensuring their behaviour consistently reflects these standards.

66. Workers who witness discrimination, harassment, or bullying in the workplace are expected to take appropriate action. This may include:

    - **Speaking directly** with the person displaying the behaviour and informing a relevant manager.

- **Discussing concerns** with the affected individual and encouraging them to report the behaviour to a manager or the People Support Team, People Branch.
- **Encouraging** the affected individual to seek support.
- **Requesting assistance and action** from the relevant supervisor or manager.
- **Reporting observations** to a manager or the People Support Team, People Branch.

67. The identity of workers who report allegations of discrimination, harassment or bullying will be handled confidentially to the greatest extent possible. However, confidentiality may be limited where disclosure is necessary to manage risks to health and safety, meet legal obligations or ensure procedural fairness.

Workplace Contact Officers

68. Workplace Contact Officers (WCOs) are trained to provide information and pathways for assistance and are an important first contact for workers who are experiencing inappropriate workplace behaviours, discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
69. WCOs do not act as an advocate, or investigate, mediate or resolve complaints.
70. The WCO may provide advice regarding the process, options for resolving the concerns and support mechanisms. Further information on the role of WCOs is contained on the department's intranet pages.

Health and safety representatives

71. Health and safety representatives (HSRs) are workers who are elected to represent the health and safety interests of their work group and can be contacted with concerns about health and safety issues, including psychosocial safety risks and hazards such as those concerning workplace behaviour.
72. The role is legislated under the WHS Act and representatives are required to undertake training in relation to legislative requirements.
73. HSRs may escalate WHS concerns on the work group's behalf to local leadership or to People Branch. Further information on the role of HSRs is contained on the department's intranet pages.

People Support team in People Branch

74. The People Support team in People Branch, assist workers with concerns raised about the workplace behaviour of other workers. The team will:
    - provide initial guidance and support to both managers and workers on how to respond to and manage concerns of inappropriate workplace behaviour through local management action
    - support managers and workers to effectively resolve concerns of inappropriate workplace behaviour through informal measures such as self-managed resolution or with manager intervention in the first instance
    - where the statutory threshold under the Regulations is met and reasonable grounds exist arrange a fitness for duty assessment with an independent medical examination, , if there is evidence for the delegate to believe that the state of an employee's health is affecting their standard of conduct or has caused, or may cause, the employee to be a danger to others or members of the public
    - assist in offering alternative dispute resolution services to help resolve concerns of inappropriate workplace behaviours or reports of workplace conflict

- provide communication, education, guidance and advice to workers and managers about appropriate workplace behaviour
- maintain records relating to allegations of inappropriate workplace behaviour and advises the department on continuous quality improvement measures, and act as a contact point for information and guidance on workplace behaviour matters.
- Contact People Support via ServiceNow or email s22 @industry.gov.au

Guidance for dealing with allegations

75. Concerns about behaviour that may constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying should be raised as early as possible and addressed, where appropriate, through timely advice and support to enable effective local management. However, workers are not restricted from reporting incidents or behaviours that occurred in the past.
76. In some situations, it may be preferable for workers to attempt resolving issues through local processes initially. However, there is no requirement to exhaust these options before lodging a formal complaint. Where local processes are unsuitable or ineffective, a formal approach should be pursued.
77. All allegations must be managed in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and treated with the highest level of confidentiality permitted by the process.
    - When a formal complaint is received, the People Support team will provide advice and support managers and workers and may conduct preliminary enquiries to clarify the nature and seriousness of the matter. These enquiries may involve gathering information from relevant parties and reviewing available evidence to determine whether the issue can be managed locally or requires referral for an integrity assessment.
    - Local management action: For less serious matters, resolution may occur through informal or local management processes.
    - Integrity assessment: If the matter is complex, sensitive, or may involve a potential breach of the *APS Code of Conduct*, the People Branch may refer the matter to the Integrity Branch for an integrity assessment. The Integrity Branch will then determine if a formal Code of Conduct investigation is warranted.
    - Formal Code of Conduct investigation: If the integrity assessment finds sufficient grounds, a formal investigation will be conducted in accordance with the department's *Code of Conduct guidelines and procedures*.
    - Where concerns may involve suspected criminal behaviour, appropriate referrals to external authorities may be considered in accordance with legal requirements and departmental processes.

Stage	**Who manages it?**	**What happens?**
Local/preliminary enquiry	People Branch	Gather information, clarify issues, decide on next steps
Integrity assessment	Integrity Branch	Assess seriousness, decide if Code investigation is needed
Formal Code investigation	Integrity Branch	Conduct formal investigation under the Code of Conduct

Local processes

78. Local processes involve resolving issues informally at the workplace level through consultation between the affected parties and their managers. Managers and workers are encouraged to seek advice from People Support or a Workplace Contact Officer where guidance is needed.

79. In certain situations, it may be appropriate to address issues using local measures, as they can offer several benefits:

    - clarify expectations around acceptable behaviour, supporting positive future working relationships
    - enable managers and supervisors to take proactive steps to prevent harassment, including referrals to counselling or other interventions to support behaviour change
    - support individuals to take constructive action to adjust or improve their behaviour
    - enable managers to seek assistance from the department's WCO Network and the People Branch to support resolution efforts
    - enable escalations where local actions are unsuccessful or inappropriate, with managers seeking guidance from the People Branch on appropriate next steps, including lodging a formal complaint

80. When concerning behaviour is directed at a worker by someone outside the department, the appropriate response will depend on the nature of the behaviour and the identity of the external individual involved.

81. When workers are engaged through a third party, the employer agency may be notified and involved in the resolution process or asked to take appropriate remedial action.

Formal processes

82. If local processes have not successfully resolved an issue, or are not suitable, formal procedures may be initiated to address the allegations. Workers may submit a formal complaint in writing to the People Branch, by submitting a request in Service Now.

83. When a formal complaint is received, the People Branch will initiate preliminary enquiries to determine the appropriate course of action. This may include supporting actions and resolution at a local management level.

84. Where a workplace behaviour concern may involve a potential breach of the *APS Code of Conduct*, or is otherwise complex or sensitive, the People Support team may refer the matter to the Integrity Branch. The Integrity Branch will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine appropriate next steps, which may include a formal Code of Conduct investigation, provide advice or recommendations, or referring the matter back to People Support for local management action. All referrals and investigations are managed in accordance with the department's Code of Conduct procedures and integrity policies.

85. If allegations are made against a worker engaged through a contract or third party, any further action will be managed in accordance with the terms of the relevant contractual agreement.

86. Possible actions following the assessment of a formal complaint may include, but are not limited to:

    - providing counselling on behaviour
    - issuing a formal direction to comply with expected behavioural standards
    - addressing concerning behaviour through the department's *Performance and Development Policy* and *Underperformance Policy*
    - directing the individual to undertake relevant education, such as counselling, training, or coaching

- implementing processes to support conflict resolution or rebuild working relationships, such as mediation, conflict coaching, or facilitated discussions
- initiating a formal investigation under the department's procedures for investigating suspected breaches of the *APS Code of Conduct*

87. The delegate will decide whether it is appropriate to inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation.

Guidance for workers during complaints processes

88. The complaints process can present additional challenges for a work area, potentially affecting all parties involved. This includes complainants, respondents, managers, and other workers who may be asked to provide statements during preliminary enquiries or a formal investigation.
89. Support options for workers are outlined in the useful contacts section and may include:
    - access to counselling services through the *Employee Assistance Program* (EAP)
    - having a support person of their choice accompany them to interviews
    - seeking advice from an WCO or a case manager from the People Support Team, People Branch
90. Being the subject of allegations can be distressing and confronting for a worker. If a complaint proceeds to formal investigation, the principles of procedural fairness will apply. This ensures the worker is given a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations made against them.

Reporting to external authorities

91. In certain limited circumstances, the department may be legally required or authorised to disclose allegations and related information to an external authority, such as the police.
92. Where possible and appropriate, the individual to whom the information relates will be consulted before any disclosure is made to an external authority.
93. If a worker believes it is necessary to report information to the police or another external authority, they should first raise the matter with the People Support Team, People Branch. The People Support Team, in consultation with the Chief Counsel and Integrity Division, will assess the situation and determine the appropriate course of action, including whether a formal report should be made.
94. People Support and Integrity are unable to provide urgent response services, if the matter is urgent, for example if someone is physically in danger, it is important to obtain urgent critical assistance and raise the matter with People Support as soon as practicable.

Support and Reporting Contacts

95. Workers seeking advice about potentially inappropriate behaviour can contact the People Support Team, People Branch. The team can provide guidance on appropriate response options, including informal resolution, escalation pathways, and available support services:
    - People Support
        - s22 @industry.gov.au
        - People Support Service Now Ticket
96. Workers wishing to raise integrity questions or concerns can contact the Integrity Branch by:
    - submitting an enquiry through ServiceNow 'Report an integrity issue' form
    - Reporting an issue anonymously through Whispli, or

- s22 @industry.gov.au

97. The department implements a range of initiatives to support workers' wellbeing. Information is available from the Wellbeing Support page on the department intranet.

98. To contact an WCO please refer to the list on the Workplace Contact Officer page on the department intranet.

99. Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) – for WHS-related concerns.

100. Support is also available from the department's *Employee Assistance Program* (EAP). Please call 1300 307 912 to access the service.

External Resources

101. Further information on discrimination, harassment and bullying, including external complaint mechanisms available to workers can be accessed from the following websites:

- for APS employees, the Australian Public Service Commission (www.apsc.gov.au)
- Comcare (www.comcare.gov.au)
- the Australian Human Rights Commission (www.humanrights.gov.au)
- the Fair Work Ombudsman (www.fairwork.gov.au)
- the Fair Work Commission (www.fwc.gov.au)
- The People Support Team in People Branch is available to discuss options for resolving concerns, and workers are encouraged to discuss these options before making an application externally.

Other Relevant Policies and Frameworks

- *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- *Performance and Development Policy*
- *Underperformance Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Guidelines*
- *Code of Conduct Procedures*

DISR – for release under the FOI Act

Document 4 - FOI 300794

Media engagement

s22

Personal media requests

Occasionally, media may approach staff to discuss aspects of their personal life.

If this happens, discuss it with your supervisor and decide if you want to participate.

We recommend you always state your comments are made in a personal capacity. It's important to avoid creating the impression that you speak on the behalf of the department or the government.

We also suggest you avoid identifying specific past or current agencies in public forums, whenever possible.

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Working with integrity

Integrity brings ethics and values to our work. Working with integrity means we earn the public's trust to deliver the best outcomes for Australia. Integrity means pursuing the highest standards of professionalism in what we do and how we do it.

Several concepts shape integrity at DISR:

- **Frameworks and policies** set standards and obligations for the conduct, performance and behaviour of staff, agencies and the APS. They support us to make ethical decisions, identify and manage risks, and work with integrity.
- **Assurance and governance** help the department and staff to meet integrity standards. Examples include anti-corruption and anti-fraud measures, investigations and reporting.
- **People and culture** help the department and staff commit to upholding and championing integrity. The APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct set the expectation that staff are accountable for decisions and act consistently in the public interest.

Integrity success story

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Integrity success stories:

3:07

Upholding integrity

All APS employees must:

- understand and uphold the APS Values and Employment Principles
- maintain departmental values
- follow the APS Code of Conduct
- show integrity and ethical behaviour.

In addition to these obligations, employees in certain positions have specific responsibilities to uphold integrity:

- **Managers and supervisors** must support employees to act with integrity and understand and apply the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct.
- **SES and Agency Heads** must model integrity and create and champion an environment where employees to do the right thing.
- **People & Integrity branches** must support psychologically safe workplaces and address systemic issues.

Read the **APSC fact sheet: Upholding Integrity** for more information.

Integrity culture

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Integrity is the pursuit of high standards of professionalism to deliver the best outcomes for Australia. We share information and build capability to nurture an integrity culture.

Probity is the evidence of integrity, uprightness and honesty in a particular process.

Learn more about how we're building an integrity culture.

Integrity strategy

The Integrity Strategy 2026-29 (DOCX 757KB) details how the department creates an integrity culture where everyone feels safe to speak up about integrity concerns.

While integrity is at the forefront of all our work, there are specific activities that require greater integrity focus.

- Conflict of interest: staff must take reasonable steps to avoid conflict of interests in connection with their employment and disclose details of material conflicts of interest in connection with their employment.
- Procurement: our processes must be transparent, accountable and impartial to give all suppliers and providers a fair opportunity.
- Grant delivery: funding decisions must be transparent, fair and according to established criteria and guidelines, preventing misuse and fostering trust.
- Recruitment: hiring decisions must be transparent, fair and based on merit, promoting equal opportunities for all candidates.
- Portfolio appointments: proposed nominees are subject to due diligence checks, fostering confidence from both the government and the public.
- Gifts and benefits: staff must follow our Gifts and benefits policy (DOCX 174KB) , including declaring gifts given or received.
- Record keeping: staff must ensure documents are accurate, complete and maintained in compliance with legal and ethical standards.

If you face a complex integrity challenge, use the:

- APS Values and Code of Conduct: Decision-making model
- department's Probity Guidance.

Social media

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As a private citizen, you have a right to use social media and express your views on matters of social, cultural or political significance. However, you need to balance this with your obligations to be a trusted and impartial public servant.

Your public comments and participation in activities outside of work must not call into question your professionalism or impartiality. Your actions must not undermine trust in the integrity of the APS.

Your behaviour on social media could breach the APS Code of Conduct. The higher the risk that a post could undermine trust in the APS, the more likely it is to be inconsistent with the Code.

Read our **Social media policy** and **Social media: Guidance for Australian Public Service Employees and Agencies** for more information.

How the integrity branch can help

The integrity branch works with our legal team to provide clear and consistent advice. We can help with questions, concerns or other issues about integrity and probity. While it may not always be possible to give direct answers, we offer:

- support and advice on the department's probity frameworks, including helping decision-makers think through risk-based management options, and
- resources to help you make an informed decision.

Reporting concerns

- To raise integrity questions or concerns, submit an enquiry through **ServiceNow**
- For complex issues and advice, request information through **Integrity inquiries**.
- Report an issue anonymously through **Whispli**.

Probity advisers

You can contact external probity advisers to provide advice and to support decision-making on emerging or complex issues. The department has panels of external probity advisers advisers to help business areas. Seeking independent advice can help you look at probity and integrity issues from different perspectives.

Probity advisers can work with line areas to:

- create new or review existing probity plans, including compliance with probity plans
- deliver and provide input on probity training

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- give advice to committees and panels
- advise on the conduct of your project's structure and design
- develop a probity framework, including a probity plan for a program
- advise and support the implementation of the project as requested
- conduct probity briefings for staff members on probity obligations for programs or projects
- advise on eligibility and compliance issues and proposed courses of action.

If you'd like to engage a probity adviser, contact the Integrity Branch by submitting a **Integrity inquires form** in ServiceNow.

Business areas cover the cost of the service delivered by the probity advisers and the Integrity Branch will handle the contract management of the engagement.

You can't use probity advisors for procurement probity advice. Please contact the procurement team at s22 @industry.gov.au if you'll need an external adviser for the procurement process.

The business area must act on advice given from either their own probity advisor or the integrity branch's probity adviser. The integrity branch doesn't review, assess, endorse, quality assure or approve advice given by a probity adviser.

Appointing external probity advisers doesn't remove the department's accountability for these processes. Our role is to support informed and defensible decision-making. The decision-maker or delegate are responsible for decisions.

Training

To ensure staff are aware of their obligations, you must complete mandatory integrity training on **HireRoad Learn**.

In addition to mandatory integrity training, the integrity branch can organise and present general and bespoke training on subjects including:

- probity
- public interest disclosures
- conflict of interest
- APS Code of Conduct

More information and courses about probity are on the **training page**. To discuss specific training requirements please contact the integrity branch at s22 @industry.gov.au.

Risk management

Applying risk management processes ensures good probity. It also helps to protect you, your staff and the public.

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Read more about Risk management.

Risk assessments

General risk assessments evaluate the department's risk against the enterprise strategic and operational risks from our Corporate Plan. The level of tolerance for different risks allows the chance for innovation.

Fraud and corruption risk assessments (FCRA)

Our FCRAs identify areas that may be vulnerable to criminal exploitation. This helps us better understand the risks to our programs, divisions and functions.

It requires us to:

- Develop a control plan to address the fraud and corruption risks. We must revise this for every key departmental function at least every 2 years.
- Evaluate our overall fraud and corruption risks at least once every 2 years or when there's a substantial change in the department's structure, functions, or activities.
- Assess fraud and corruption risks in response to specific events, such as substantial or emerging changes in the structure, activities or functions of the department, natural disasters, or stimulus measures.

Read more about Fraud and corruption.

Security

Understanding and complying with your security responsibilities is essential to protect our work. These responsibilities keep our buildings and information secure and our staff safe. Your small actions can have a big impact.

Read more about Security.

Further information

- Email s22 @industry.gov.au if you have any questions.
- Read the Australian Public Service Commission's Integrity resources.
- Australian Public Service (APS) Values.
- APS Code of Conduct.
- Probity Guidance.

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- Integrity Strategy 2026-2029.

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