

Partnership Priorities Committee

Terms of Reference

1. The Partnership Priorities Committee (the Committee) is convened as a sub-committee of Secretaries Board.
2. The purpose of the Committee is to steer better policy and delivery outcomes for Australians by further embedding partnership culture and behaviour in the public service so that engagement and co-design with communities, states and territories, business, unions, NGOs and the tertiary sector is consistently a natural and early impulse in how we do our work.

Without limiting the scope of matters to be considered, the Committee will:

- a. Strengthen how the Commonwealth works in genuine partnership with other sectors to solve complex policy issues and achieve more together.
 - b. Oversee the development of a new whole-of-government Charter of Partnerships and Engagement, and related partnership models, strategies and policies to embed a culture of partnership and behaviours that ensure community needs are fully understood, and people have a genuine sense of control over their lives.
 - c. Strengthen transparency to enable genuine partnerships and build trust in Government by stating what information is collected and why and publishing more data related to the Citizen Engagement Survey and case studies.
 - d. Initiate pilots to test new ways of collaborating and co-designing with people external to Government, including bringing more external perspectives into Secretaries Board (or potentially Cabinet).
 - e. Work with partners to develop Long-term Insights Briefings for emerging issues, future trends and long-term opportunities by strengthening how on-the-ground perspectives inform policy formation and delivery decisions.
 - f. Share best practice across the APS and build capability in how the APS partners with First Nations Peoples, communities, business, unions, the not-for-profit sector, states and territories, Ministers and staff, and the tertiary sector, to find solutions.
3. The Committee will support the National Indigenous Australians Agency to fulfil its whole-of-government leadership role driving and embedding ways of working in genuine partnership with First Nations communities, organisations and people, in line with the Priority Reforms agreed under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and more broadly.
 4. The Committee will report to the Secretaries Board on a quarterly basis (or as otherwise determined) to provide advice on significant issues, trends and opportunities.

Membership

5. The Committee will comprise:

- The CEO of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (Co-chair)
- The Secretary of the Department of Social Services (Co-chair)
- The Secretary of the Department of Education
- The Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- The Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
- The Australian Public Service Commissioner
- The Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- The Secretary of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources
- The Secretary of the Treasury
- The Secretary of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- The CEO of Services Australia

Committee participation will be solutions focussed. Committee Co-Chairs can co-opt additional members to temporarily sit on the Committee in order to help solve specific priorities and fast track projects. Participation and co-option of other Secretaries and external parties (such as representatives from Coalition of Peaks) will be decided in the first Committee meeting.

Attendance

6. It is expected that Members will be available for committee meetings. A quorum of at least three Members (including temporarily co-opted Members) is required for each meeting.
7. At least one Co-Chair must attend each meeting or nominate an acting chair.
8. Attendance beyond Members will be determined by the Co-Chairs in consultation with Members who are leading strategic discussions.
9. If a Member is unable to attend, they may nominate a deputy (or equivalent rank) as an acting member.
10. If a Co-Opted participant is unable to attend, they may nominate another participant (of equivalent rank or knowledge) within their organisation to attend in their place.

Meeting frequency

11. The Committee is expected to meet at least four times per year.
12. The Committee may consider matters out-of-session, as appropriate.

Committee performance

13. The Committee will report each 6 months to Secretaries Board against agreed metrics.
14. The Committee will be supported by the Better Services Leadership Group, the Business Engagement Leadership Group, the Future of Work Sub-committee (on capability related issues) and other Secretaries Board Sub-committees as appropriate.
15. The Term of the Committee is 3 years, ending February 2026, unless otherwise agreed.

Secretariat

16. Secretariat services will be jointly provided by the Department of Social Services and the National Indigenous Australians Agency, with support from the APS Reform Office as required.
17. Agenda will be provided to Co-Chairs at least 14 working days before each meeting to approve the agenda items.
18. Agenda will be provided to Members at least 12 working days before each meeting.
19. Item papers will be provided to Members at least 5 working days before each meeting.
20. Draft minutes and communicate of meetings will be provided to Members for review within 5 business days. The final communicate will be published online within 10 working days after each meeting.

Date: Updated May 2025