Australian Government
Department of Social Services

DSS 2026 Census Action Plan

At the Department of Social Services, we are building a workplace where our people can work together to contribute to meaningful outcomes for Australians; where wellbeing and sustainable ways of working are shared priorities; and where trust and integrity shape relationships and decisions.

Informed by 2026 census insights, employee feedback and ongoing engagement, the DSS Census Action Plan identifies 3 action areas to respond to feedback and focus efforts on driving positive, inclusive and cohesive workplace culture where our people can connect, grow and deliver great outcomes together.

Action area 1
Clarify priorities, resourcing and workload expectations

We will embed clearer prioritisation and more sustainable workloads through strengthening business and workforce planning and supporting regular conversations about workloads, capacity and wellbeing.

For example: Supporting regular team conversations on priorities, workloads and wellbeing; investing in technology and innovation to streamline processes; empowering staff to focus on agreed priorities.

Outcome

Staff have greater clarity on priorities and resourcing and feel better supported to manage workloads sustainably.

Action area 2
Strengthen collaboration, connection and knowledge sharing

We will strengthen collaboration through regular opportunities for employees to connect, share knowledge, access expertise and contribute to decisions, building stronger connections across DSS.

For example: platforms to share data and insights across DSS; facilitating issue-based networks and promoting collaboration at the staff level.

Outcome

Staff feel more connected to colleagues, can more easily access information and expertise and are better supported to collaborate across DSS.

Action area 3
Improve communication, consultation and change management

We will improve communication, consultation and change management through timely information sharing, transparent decision-making, meaningful engagement and regular updates on progress and outcomes.

For example: early consultation on significant changes; manager-led engagement on impacts and expectations, avenues for staff and SME input into decisions; sharing consultation feedback across DSS.

Outcome

Staff feel informed, engaged and consulted through change, with more confidence that decisions are transparent and guided by integrity.

Our strengths

Our people value flexible ways of working at DSS, our strong technology and digital investments, and the support of immediate supervisors. These strengths provide a solid foundation as we continue building a connected, capable and high-performing workplace.

Building our future workforce

Consultation highlighted the importance of career development, mobility and capability building, which will continue to be progressed through workforce initiatives that support a capable, agile and future-focused workforce.

Continuous improvement

Achieving our vision will require sustained focus and ongoing engagement. Progress will be regularly reviewed through employee feedback, implementation reporting, APS Employee Census results and governance through the People Committee.