



Commissioner for Public Administration

Report on the Agency Survey for the 2008 Calendar Year



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1. Background

In recent years the Commissioner for Public Administration (Commissioner) has sought information from agencies about people management practices across the ACT Public Service (ACTPS). This has taken the form of a short agency survey covering areas such as values and ethics, workplace equity and diversity, workforce planning and human resource management.

In 2007 the survey instrument was reviewed and redesigned, incorporating additional questions, for example in relation to issues of attraction and retention. Similarly, the 2008 survey instrument was reviewed in response to outcomes from the 2007 survey and in order to capture data in relation to new and/or particular human resource management issues.

1.1 Methodology

The 2008 Agency Survey was distributed to 14 ACTPS agencies. The survey requested both quantitative and qualitative responses to questions across four main areas:

- Values, Ethics and Culture
- Workplace Equity and Diversity
- Workforce Planning – Attraction and Retention
- Human Resource Management

In 2008 the Survey retained a number of core questions that were similar to those asked in previous Surveys. In addition, several new questions in relation to matters of specific interest to the Commissioner were added for the first time. These questions covered organisational culture and the use of consultants and contractors across the surveyed agencies.

Further to this, a number of questions around learning and development priorities, inserted in the 2007 Survey, for the purpose of informing attraction and retention programs, were removed from the survey following implementation of the ACTPS Attraction and Retention Framework.

2. Values, Ethics and Culture

In this section, the survey asked agencies to provide information about:

- the integration of values and ethics into learning and development activities and performance management systems
- formal investigations into breaches of section 9 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (PSM Act)
- systems for reporting on and addressing bullying and harassment behaviour
- systems for examining the organisation's culture and promoting a positive organisational culture.

As public officials holding positions of trust, ACT public servants are subject to special obligations and duties. Living up to the requirements of office and sustaining the confidence of the public requires agencies and their employees to make decisions and exercise power in an accountable manner. To do this, the conduct of

public employees must conform to appropriate laws, values, principles and procedures.

The PSM Act, together with the Public Sector Management Standards 2006 (PSM Standards), set out Service-wide values, principles and obligations for public employees. All persons employed under the PSM Act are subject to these values, principles and obligations.

Agencies were asked a series of questions on the extent to which they have embedded ACTPS values and section 9 of the PSM Act, General obligations of public employees, into their culture and practice. The survey results reveal an ACTPS, committed to the promotion of, and adherence to, both Service-wide and agency specific values and ethics (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of agencies undertaking specific learning and development activities on the ACTPS Values and/or section 9 of the PSMA and/or on any Agency-specific values in 2008

Learning and Development Activity	Number of Agencies	
	ACT PS Values and/or Section 9	Agency-specific Values
Awareness-raising as part of induction / orientation	13	12
Information on the intranet/website (other than on-line training)	12	12
Formal sessions on how the Values and section 9 should operate in practice	9	7
Use of internal promotional material (e.g. bookmarks, brochures, posters) other than that used as part of induction / orientation	2	4
On-line training	3	2
Other <i>Discussion/awareness raising at meetings: 1</i> <i>Staff written to by Executives reminding of obligations: 1</i> <i>Corporate Management presentations to business unit meetings: 1</i> <i>Values launched with strategic plan – logon screen features values: 1</i>		

Survey responses indicate that all agencies are providing learning and development opportunities for their staff on ACTPS values and/or section 9 of the PSM Act and/or Agency-specific values. Agencies reported that they incorporated values and ethics awareness raising into their learning and development programs through the use of induction/orientation programs and intranet/web-site material that is made available to all staff.

Relative to 2007 results an increased number of agencies reported conducting formal sessions on values and ethics throughout the 2008 calendar year. Similarly, agency responses indicate a small increase in the number of agencies providing on-line training in these areas.

Finally, agencies were asked if section 9 of the PSMA was formally linked to the agency's performance management system. Just over half of all agencies surveyed reported that these links are currently in place, with a further three agencies reporting that these links were being developed. These figures represent a proportional increase on the results of the 2007 survey.

Table 2: Number of agencies reporting that section 9 of the PSMA is linked to the agency's performance management system 2003-04 to 2008

	Number of Agencies				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2007	2008
Section 9 of PSMA is linked to Performance Management System	2	9	7	5	8
Links are being developed	9	5	4	4	3
Section 9 of PSMA is not linked to Performance Management System	4	4	4	4	3

2.1 Breaches of the ACTPS Code of Ethics

In 2008, there were 108 formal investigations into alleged breaches of the section 9 of the PSM Act¹. Of these, some 100 were commenced in 2008. As shown in Table 3, the number of investigations was similar to the 2007 and less than the 2005-2006 period, but substantially higher than the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 reporting periods.

Table 3: Formal Investigations into Breaches of Section 9 of the PSM Act² 2003-2004 to 2008

	Number of Breaches				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2007	2008
Total	48	64	127	111	108
Commenced during year	42	57	120	107	100
Finalised during year	43	47	103	87	88

As in previous years, individual agency responses showed that there was substantial variation in the number of investigations conducted by each agency. Two agencies conducted 20 or more investigations, three agencies conducted between 13 and 18 investigations and six agencies conducted seven or fewer investigations. Three agencies had no investigations during the reporting period. Generally, the number of investigations conducted by agencies is proportionate to the size of the agency.

Primarily, investigations into alleged breaches of section 9 of the PSM Act were for alleged failures in relation to the following obligations:

- (a) exercise reasonable care and skill (34 investigations)
- (d) treat members of the public and other public employees with courtesy and sensitivity to their rights, duties and aspirations (25 investigations)
- (h) comply with the Act, the management standards and all other Territory laws (23 investigations)
- (c) act with probity (20 investigations).

Agencies were asked to report on the outcomes of investigations into alleged breaches of section 9 of the PSM Act that were finalised in 2008, these results are reported in Table 4. As in previous years, the most frequent outcomes for substantiated breaches were admonition and reprimand; separation of the employee (through dismissal or resignation) and formal or informal counselling. In 2008, 21

¹ Individual cases may involve investigation of alleged breaches of multiple parts of section 9 of the PSM Act.

² In previous years, this question referred to 'breaches of the Code of Ethics'.

investigations resulted in no breach being found. The outcomes in relation to investigations into alleged breaches of section 9 of the PSM Act are generally consistent with outcomes from the previous reporting period.

Table 4: Outcomes of investigation into alleged breaches of section 9 of the PSMA, 2008

Outcomes of Investigations into Alleged Breaches of section 9 of the PSMA	Total
Admonished / Reprimanded	27
No Breach Found	21
Formal investigation discontinued – Employee resigned	10
Dismissal	6
Formal investigation discontinued – Employee informally counselled or warned	4
Formal investigation discontinued – Employee formally counselled or warned	4
Transfer to other duties	3
Reduction in employment classification	3
Breach found, but no sanction imposed	3
Reduction in salary	2
Fine imposed	1
<i>Other:</i>	
<i>Removal from registration – 2;</i>	
<i>Official Warnings (first and final) – 4,</i>	
<i>Cessation of probation (not employed) – 2</i>	

Agencies were also asked to report on any action taken by the agency to ensure consistency in the processes used to investigate alleged breaches of section 9 and the sanctions imposed as a result of those investigations. Tables 5 and 6 summarise the actions that have been taken by agencies to ensure consistency in the processes used to investigate and the sanctions imposed as a result of investigations of section 9 of the PSM Act.

Table 5: Actions taken to ensure consistency in processes used to investigate suspected breaches of section 9 of the PSMA, 2008

Actions Taken to Ensure Consistency	Number of Agencies		
	Taken	Being Developed	Not Taken
HR/Employee relations provides guidance and support to people conducting investigations	14	0	0
Use of Shared Services Centre	12	0	2
Detailed procedures available to people conducting investigations	11	1	2
Central unit conducts all investigations	9	1	4
Service/Client Charters	7	1	6
<i>Other:</i>			
<i>All investigations advised to SERBIR – 1</i>			
<i>Specific policies available – 1</i>			
<i>Exclusive use of SSC – 1</i>			

As shown, all agencies provide guidance and support for investigations through their Human Resource / Employee Relations areas and the majority of agencies also use the Shared Services Centre and have detailed procedures available to people conducting investigations.

In determining appropriate sanctions, most agencies reported that the delegation for applying sanctions is strictly limited and that central areas are consulted when deciding on the sanction. These results are very similar to those reported for the 2007 period.

Table 6: Actions taken to ensure appropriate and consistent application of sanctions for breaches of section 9 of the PSMA, 2008

Actions Taken to Ensure Consistency	Number of Agencies		
	Taken	Being Developed	Not Taken
Delegation for applying sanction is strictly limited	13	0	1
Central HR and/or legal area consulted when deciding sanction	13	0	1
Guidelines provided include considerations to be taken into account when deciding sanction	9	1	4
Sanction recommended by central unit responsible for all investigations	9	1	4
Database of sanctions maintained and referred to as part of process for deciding sanction	2	1	10
<i>Other:</i> <i>Provisions in Collective Agreement – 1;</i> <i>Application of procedure determined by Shared Services – 2,</i> <i>Officers referred to previous cases – 1</i>			

2.2 Bullying and Harassment

Agencies were asked a series of questions on the incidence of bullying and harassment in the workplace, and the steps that agencies were taking to minimise the incidence of bullying and harassment within their organisation.

Almost all agencies (13 out of 14) had a system in place for employees to report bullying and harassment. These systems include a mix of procedural and preventative measures such as:

- the option of additional support from an external provider (14)
- procedures and policies in place to ensure appropriate confidentiality (13)
- specialised training for contact staff (13)
- awareness-raising with staff about bullying and harassment procedures and policies (12)
- identified contact person/s for reporting matters (12)
- use of promotion materials e.g. posters, brochures (11)

A total of ten agencies (up by 4 from the 2007 period) surveyed had record keeping systems in place to monitor the incidence of bullying and harassment. In all, a total of 54 reports of bullying and harassment were recorded during the reporting period, with 20 of these resulting in formal investigations. Half of these investigations resulted in a finding of bullying and harassment occurring.

Of those agencies that kept records, eight reported that the incidence of bullying and harassment had remained at the same rate since 2007. There were no reports of the incidence of bullying and harassment increasing compared to 2007 levels, where this information was available.

Most agencies reported that they had taken specific action to address the incidence of bullying and harassment. Table 7 summarises the extent to which different agencies took particular types of action to address these behaviours.

Table 7: Action taken to address bullying and harassment behaviour, 2008

Action taken to Address Bullying and Harassment Behaviour	Number of Agencies
Inclusion of information on bullying and harassment in induction program	12
Training and awareness raising for all staff	10
Training for contact officers	8
Inclusion of information on bullying and harassment in staff survey with appropriate follow up	4
<i>Other:</i> <i>Policy development – 1</i> <i>Pilot program on prevention for managers – 1</i> <i>Culture Survey – 1</i> <i>Specific training for managers – 1</i> <i>Training and awareness raising sessions conducted in targeted workplaces plus CE visits – 1</i> <i>Materials developed for induction program - 1</i>	

2.3 Organisational Culture

For the first time, agencies were asked to respond to a number of questions examining organisational culture and what if any initiatives had been undertaken to promote positive organisational culture. Eight agencies reported that they had formally examined their organisational culture within the reporting period and nine agencies reported that they had taken action to align the organisational culture with the goals of the organisation. A further two agencies reported that they were in the process of developing a way to formally examine their organisational culture.

Agencies were also asked which services would assist them in promoting a positive organisational culture if these services were offered by Chief Minister's Department. Responses from agencies indicated strong support for the suggested services and identified some further services which may assist with organisational culture issues at a whole of government level:

- leadership development program
- whole-of-government positive culture framework and toolkit
- support for an agency-specific culture change program
- targeted training in identified areas of need
- People Management and Development Strategy
- Human Capital Plan
- scholarship and other funding for continuing development

Finally, agencies were asked to report on staff recognition awards. Nine agencies reported that they had a staff recognition awards program in operation, while one agency reported that this was in development. Of those agencies that did have a staff recognition awards program, five reported that the program recognised long-term service and eight that the program recognised excellence.

3. Workplace Equity and Diversity

In relation to Workplace Equity and Diversity, agencies were asked to report on:

- equity and diversity plans
- employment of Indigenous staff
- employment of staff with a disability.

3.1 Equity and Diversity Plan

Nine agencies reported that they had an equity and diversity plan in place and all nine agencies reported that the equity and diversity plan had been evaluated (five of these agencies reported that the plan was currently under review). One agency reported that the ACTPS Equity and Diversity Framework was used, in place of an agency specific plan, to address equity and diversity in that agency.

All agencies with an equity and diversity plan reported that the following groups were included in the plan:

- Aboriginal people, being people who are descended from, identify as, or are accepted by an Aboriginal community as, Aboriginal people
- Torres Strait Islanders, being people who are descendants of an indigenous inhabitant of the Torres Strait Islands
- people who have migrated to Australia and whose first language is a language other than English, and the children of such people
- people who identify as having a disability
- women.

3.2 Employment of Indigenous Staff

Agencies were asked about strategies to recruit and retain Indigenous Australians. The most common strategies used to recruit Indigenous Australians were:

- participation in the whole of government Indigenous Traineeship Program, managed by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services
- employment measures which effectively limit some employment opportunities to Indigenous applicants
- identification of some positions as requiring specific knowledge, understanding and ability.

Two or fewer agencies had a formal Indigenous Employment Strategy; used Agency-based Indigenous traineeships or cadetships; or provided opportunities for Indigenous people under an agency-based Indigenous employment scheme. These results are similar to those reported in the 2007 period. Table 8 presents information about agencies' use of strategies to recruit Indigenous Australians.

Table 8: Strategies used to recruit Indigenous Australians, 2008

Strategies to Recruit Indigenous Australians	Number of Agencies		
	Used	Being Developed	Not Used
Use of a Whole of Government based Indigenous Traineeship Program	6	0	8
Identification of some positions as requiring knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture and issues and ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with these issues	6	0	8
Employment measures that effectively limited certain employment opportunities only to Indigenous applicants	7	0	7
Advertisement of employment opportunities in Indigenous media	5	0	9
A formal Indigenous Employment Strategy	2	0	12
Use of Agency-based Indigenous traineeships / cadetships	2	0	12
Provision of opportunities for Indigenous people to gain skills and experience under an Agency-based Indigenous employment scheme	1	0	13
<i>Other:</i>			

Reflecting an effort to retain Indigenous Australians, almost all agencies had special leave conditions, such as ceremonial leave, in place and three agencies provided Indigenous cultural awareness programs to all staff. Relative to 2007, proportionally fewer agencies reported providing cultural awareness programs to all staff. Four agencies reported providing culturally specific training programs and one agency reported that Indigenous staff could apply for Equity Scholarships.

3.3 Employment of Staff with a Disability

Over recent years there has been a reduction in growth of employment for people with a disability with the ACTPS. This reduction has primarily been a consequence of changes in Commonwealth funding arrangements from late 2006 which removed subsidies payable to brokers assisting employers, including the ACTPS, in employing people with disabilities.

On 1 March 2010 the Federal Government will introduce the new national Disability Employment Services. The new model will remove caps on services and provide jobseekers with a disability access to suitably tailored, individual, employment services. The program will also provide greater support to employers of people with a disability. It is expected that the improvements described in the new federal scheme will assist the ACTPS in achieving employment outcomes for Canberrans with disabilities.

In the meantime the ACT Government has recently joined the Australian Employers Network on Disability (AEND) as a gold member. AEND is a leading employer organisation in the Australian disability employment sector. Membership benefits include access to a pool of potential recruits with disabilities, the provision of advice and support to employers as required in relation to management of disability issues, and the capacity to publicly identify the ACTPS' commitment to disability employment.

Recently, ACTPS agencies have been requested to identify administrative / clerical positions across the ACTPS for possible inclusion in a pilot Traineeship program being facilitated by AEND for people with an intellectual disability.

During 2008, only three agencies reported that they worked with a Disability Employment Network³ to place people identifying with a disability in employment in their agency. Of these, one agency employed one staff member identifying with a disability through a Disability Employment Network and the remaining two agencies placed no staff identifying with a disability (one agency reporting that this information was not readily available). Disability Employment Networks reported to have been used were:

- Advance Personnel
- Dysaran Consulting

Agencies were also asked to respond to a series of questions about their implementation of specific strategies to support people with a disability. These questions were derived from the ACTPS Framework for the Employment of People with a Disability (launched by the Chief Minister on 9 September 2004).

Table 9 reports on agencies’ responses to these questions. As shown, the majority of agencies have the capacity to modify operational policies and procedures on a case-by-case basis to assist people with a disability, but only three agencies currently have a formal support framework in place to support people with a disability in the workplace. Seven agencies reviewed their policies and procedures to ensure they supported inclusive work practices in 2008 and four agencies have conducted a review of the workplace to assess the level of accessibility for people with a disability in accordance with the Access to Government Strategy within the past two years.

Table 9: Implementation of specific Disability Employment Framework Strategies, 2008

Questions	Number of Agencies		
	Yes	Being Developed	No
During 2008, did your Agency review operational policies and procedures to ensure that they support inclusive work practices for people with a disability?	7	0	7
Does your Agency have a formal support structure for people with a disability in the workplace?	3	0	11
Do you have a workplace orientation and induction strategy that includes supporting people with a disability in the workplace?	7	2	5
Does your Agency have flexibility to modify operational policies and procedures to assist and support people with a disability?	13	0	1

4. Workforce Planning – Attraction and Retention

The Workforce Planning – Attraction and Retention section of the survey asked agencies to report on:

- performance management and employee development
- workforce challenges and workforce planning
- attraction and retention
- use of contractors

³ Disability Employment Networks are organisations that specialise in placing people with a disability in employment

4.1 Performance Management

The Agency survey asked agencies to report on links between performance management plans and agency business plans. All agencies reported that a formal performance management/development framework was in place and 13 of the 14 agencies reported that performance management plans were linked to business plans with one agency reporting that this was being developed. Thirteen agencies also reported formal feedback sessions as being part of their performance management frameworks and four agencies monitor staff participation in these systems.

4.2 Workforce Challenges and Workforce Planning

Agencies were asked to report on the extent to which they faced a series of workforce challenges in 2008. As shown in Table 10, the primary challenge that faced agencies was difficulty recruiting people with the required skills. Almost all agencies reported that ensuring employees' skills and/or knowledge meet the agency's requirements was a major or minor challenge while around half of the agencies surveyed had problems with loss of mature age employees and recruiting sufficiently strong leadership skills within the executive feeder group.

The top four workforce challenges reported by agencies in 2008 are consistent with results from the previous reporting period.

Table 10: Workforce challenges faced by agencies in 2008

Workforce challenges	Number of Agencies		
	Not faced	Minor challenge	Major challenge
Difficulty recruiting people (other than for a formal graduate program) with required skills	1	4	9
Ensuring that employees' skills and/or knowledge meet the Agency's requirements	1	10	3
Difficulty in recruiting sufficiently strong leadership skills and/or potential within the Executive feeder group	5	8	1
Loss of mature-aged employees*	3	7	1
Difficulty in recruiting sufficiently strong leadership skills at the Executive levels	6	6	2
Higher than acceptable** employee turnover	6	4	4
Difficulty recruiting graduates with required skills as part of a formal graduate program	10	2	2
Loss of employees recruited as part of a formal graduate programme	11	2	1
Loss of Indigenous employees	12	2	0
Lower than acceptable** employee turnover	12	2	0
Loss of employees with a disability	13	1	0
<i>Other: One agency reported high turnover for younger employees but low turnover for mature age with correspondingly less opportunity for younger employees. This agency also reported difficulty in finding suitable replacements for mature age employees who did leave the organisation.</i>			

*Mature aged employees' means employees over the age of 45.

** 'Acceptable' means acceptable to the agency.

Further to identifying their primary workforce challenges, agencies were asked to indicate what if any measures they had in place to address these challenges. Table 11 summarises the extent to which agencies undertook specific workforce planning activities in 2008.

Table 11: Workforce planning activities undertaken in 2008

Workforce Planning Activity	Number of Agencies		
	Yes	Being Developed	No
Obtaining information on your Agency's demographics and characteristics	13	0	1
Planning for changes that are likely to impact on your Agency's business (e.g. technological change)	11	1	2
Obtaining information to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and development	10	3	1
Identifying the capabilities required for your agency to deliver services in the future	9	4	1
Succession planning for critical positions	5	6	3
Obtaining information on your Agency's workforce skills sets (e.g. qualifications)	4	3	7
<i>Other:</i> Identification of office-based staff training needs by TNA - 1			

Finally, agencies were asked to report on the measures that they had in place to deal with workforce challenges. As shown in Table 12, almost all agencies had recruitment strategies aligned with identified workforce requirements and measures to attract and retain people with critical skills. In comparison to the 2007 reporting period substantially more agencies also had performance management strategies and learning and development strategies aligned with workforce requirements.

Table 12: Measures in place to deal with workforce challenges, 2008

Measures to deal with Workforce Challenges	Number of Agencies		
	In Place	Being Developed	Not in Place
Recruitment strategies aligned with identified workforce requirements	11	3	0
Measures to attract and retain people with critical skills (e.g. enhanced and/or more flexible pay and conditions, development opportunities)	13	1	0
Performance management strategies specifically aligned with identified workforce requirements	10	4	0
Learning and development strategies aligned with identified workforce requirements	11	3	0
<i>Other:</i>			

Those agencies who reported that they had measures in place to attract and retain people with critical skills were also asked to report on the specific measures used to attract and retain people with critical skills (Note: Agencies who reported that these measures were in development also responded to this question). The most common measures used to attract and retain staff with critical skills were:

- commencement at above base salary
- Special Employment Arrangements (SEAs)
- development opportunities (study awards, fellowships, secondments)
- work placements/rotation

4.3 Attraction and Retention

Attraction and retention has been identified as an area of specific interest to the ACTPS and agency chief executives. As a result, a number of specific questions on attraction and retention were introduced into the 2007 agency survey to identify strategies and specific interventions that agencies were planning or had implemented to address the skill shortages and small applicant pools for advertised vacancies.

Table 13 describes the groups that were targeted by attraction and retention practices in 2008 by the surveyed agencies. The most common group to be targeted by attraction practices was entry-level employees, while the most common group to be targeted by retention practices were young employees. It should be noted, however, that five of the surveyed agencies reported that they did not have any specific attraction or retention practices that targeted any of these groups.

Table 13: Groups targeted by specific attraction/retention practices, 2008

Groups Targeted by Attraction/Retention Practices	Number of Agencies	
	Attraction	Retention
Entry level employees	7	5
Young employees *	5	7
Part-time employees	4	4
Mature employees **	4	4
Women	2	4
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	1	3
Men	0	0
Other		

*'Young employees' means employees under the age of 35.

** 'Mature aged employees' means employees over the age of 45.

Agencies who indicated that they did have a specific attraction or retention practice for a specific group were asked to provide further information on the key features of these practices. The responses are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Key features of attraction and retention practices for targeted groups, 2008

Targeted Groups	Key Features of Attraction Practices
Entry level employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better co-ordination and HR support case manager for trainees & apprentices • University scholarships
Part-time employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint applications accepted for job sharing • Advertisement of fractional load positions • Flexible workplace arrangements to accommodate staff • Home-based work
Young employees *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate program • Active Social Club with regular social events • Support and promotion of Young Professionals Network • University scholarships
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement of fractional load positions • Specific wording in job advertisements to attract target group • "Family friendly" conditions contained in Certified Agreements • Flexible working arrangements • Nursing mothers' room • University scholarships

Mature employees **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific wording in job advertisements to attract target group • Temporary Employment Register • Grandparental leave • Support for Transition to Retirement
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement and support of business practices that foster and promote cultural diversity
Other: Indigenous Trainees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two trainees engaged by an agency through DHCS pilot program
Other: Nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for re-training especially over-45's to re-enter workforce
Other: Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target pre-service teachers at university
All targeted groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of studies assistance and learning and development opportunities • Health and Wellbeing program and Staff Awards program • Carers' room

Table 15 reports on the specific strategies that were used by agencies to identify high performing individuals for further development. Eleven agencies reported that specific strategies for identifying high performing individuals were in place with a further two agencies stating that these strategies were in development. The primary strategies used for the identification of high performers were manager/supervisor identification, leadership development programs and participation in development opportunities.

Table 15: Specific strategies to identify high performing individuals, 2008

Specific Strategies to Identify High Performing Individuals	Number of Agencies	
	Yes	No
Manager/Supervisor identification	12	2
Leadership development programs	10	4
Participation in development opportunities	10	4
Performance management/development system	9	5
Agency Head identification	7	7
Individuals self identified	1	13
Career development assessment centres	0	14
<i>Other:</i>		
<i>Mentoring pilot - 1</i>		

Table 16 reports on the specific retention strategies that were used by agencies to reduce the turnover of key staff. The primary strategies used for the retention of key staff were support for further study and tailored employment conditions and benefits.

Table 16: Specific retention strategies to reduce the turnover of key staff, 2008

Specific Retention Strategies to Reduce the Turnover of Key Staff	Number of Agencies		
	Yes	Being Developed	No
Support for further study (e.g. Study leave)	14	0	0
Tailored employment conditions and benefits	12	0	2
Conducting exit interviews with separating staff with the aim of reducing further separations	12	2	0
Prioritised learning and development	11	2	1
Enhanced career development opportunities	11	2	1
Promoting networks for specific groups (e.g. Indigenous peoples)	7	0	7
<i>Other:</i>			

4.4 Contractors and Consultancies

For the first time, in 2008 agencies were asked to specify how many contractors the agency engaged throughout the reporting period, how these numbers compared with the number of contractors engaged in 2007, and whether it was envisaged that the 2009 contractor numbers would be more than, about the same or less than 2008. Twelve agencies were able to provide data in relation to contractor/consultant numbers and these aggregate figures are provided below.

Table 17: Contractor numbers, 2008

Contractor Type	Total Number of Contractors 2008
Consultants (individuals engaged to undertake an identified project/task and/or to provide high-level, professional or expert advice)	256
Contractors (individuals engaged through an employment service to fill vacant offices that could not otherwise be filled by standard ACTPS recruitment mechanisms)	225
Labour Hire Contractors (individuals employed by a service provider who enters into a contract with the Territory to deliver services)	244

Most agencies reported that these figures were about the same as in the 2007 reporting period and that the number of contractors in all categories could be expected to stay about the same in 2009. Only one agency reported a predicted increase in one category (Labour Hire Contractors) in the 2009 period and five agencies reported a predicted drop in contractor numbers for one or more categories.

Agencies were also asked to identify the types/areas of employment where Labour Hire Contractors were used. Reasons for employing Labour Hire Contractors were:

- back fill for reception and counter staff
- nursing, medical and allied health professionals used to cover planned and unplanned leave/absences and as frontline roster backfill
- infrastructure development
- short term vacancies at lower levels
- schools' maintenance and capital works
- agency wide testing and surveying
- pre-employment checks
- training
- employee assistance services.

5. Human Resource Management

During 2008, a total of 18 underperformance actions were commenced and 11 actions were finalised (including those commenced prior to 2008). This represents a decrease in the number of underperformance actions commenced and finalised compared with 2005-2006 and an increase in comparison with the 2007 period (Table 18). It should be noted, however, that survey results for the 2007 and 2008 calendar years exclude underperformance actions for executive staff, while the results for previous reporting periods include underperformance actions for all staff i.e. both executive and non-executive.

Table 18: Number of underperformance actions: 2003-04 to 2008

Underperformance Actions	Total				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2007	2008
Commenced during year	7	15	27	7	18
Finalised during year	3	9	19	11	11

Table 19 summarises the outcomes that applied to finalised underperformance actions.

Table 19: Outcomes of finalised underperformance actions, 2008

Outcome	Total
Underperformance action not finalised due to underperforming staff member resignation	6
Termination of employment	4
Development program instituted	3
Assignment to other duties	1
No action taken	2
Satisfactory performance standard attained	0
Deferral of increment	0
Reduction in classification	0

5.1 Grievance / Complaint Investigations

A majority (10 out of 14) of agencies reported that they had a system in place for undertaking grievance/complaint investigations with a further one agency reporting that procedures were in development. In 2008, there were a total of 10 grievance/complaint investigations, down from 24 in 2007. However, this reduction is most likely to be as a result of the question being refined to specifically exclude matters covered by Section S, Internal Review⁴, of the ACTPS Template Collective Agreement. Of the 10 grievance/complaint investigations commenced in 2008 and nine were finalised.

Table 20 summarises the features that applied to grievance/complaint investigations finalised in 2008. It is notable that no investigations were referred to the Commissioner for Public Administration, the Human Rights Commission or to the ACT Ombudsman.

Table 20: Features of grievance investigations, 2008

Features of grievance investigations	Total
Investigation was undertaken internally by the Agency	5
Investigation was undertaken by the Shared Services Centre	5
Investigation was undertaken by Independent Reviewer	2
Investigation was referred to the ACT Ombudsman	2
Investigation was referred to the Commissioner for Public Administration	0
Investigation was referred to the Human Rights Commission	0
Other:	

Finally, agencies were asked to provide comments on the investigation and resolution of grievances within the agency. No agencies provided comments to this question.

⁴ Commonly referred to as grievance procedures, arising from their origins within the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and historical practice.

6. Concluding Remarks

The Agency Survey for the 2008 calendar year collected a wealth of information relevant to the administration of the ACTPS.

Survey responses indicated that, on the whole, agencies in the ACTPS are:

- committed to providing training and development both on ACTPS values and section 9 of the PSMA and on Agency-specific values
- committed to ensuring that process for investigating and applying sanctions for breaches of section 9 of the PSMA are applied in a consistent manner
- committed to awareness-raising with staff about bullying and harassment procedures and policies
- committed to aligning recruitment strategies with workforce requirements and with implementing measures to attract and retain people with critical skills and in particular groups and categories
- committed to using specific strategies to identify high performing individuals.

Responses to the 2007 survey indicated that only half of the agencies surveyed had a formal reporting mechanism to capture the incidence of bullying and harassment. This matter was subsequently referred to the Human Resources Council for further discussion and results from the 2008 survey indicate a significant increase in the number of agencies with record keeping systems in place to enable monitoring and reporting on incidence of bullying and harassment.

For the first time agencies were asked to respond to a number of questions examining organisational culture initiatives and were invited to comment on services which would support agencies in promoting positive organisational culture. A majority of agencies reported that they had undertaken a formal examination of their organisational culture with a similar number of agencies having taken action to align the organisational culture with the goals of the organisation. Exploration of support services to enhance the promotion of positive organisational culture across the ACTPS will be discussed with agencies at the Human Resources Council.

All agencies reported having a formal performance management/development program in place with almost all agencies linking performance management/development plans to organisational business plans and including a level of formal feedback through the performance management/development plan cycle. Compared with 2007 substantially more agencies had performance management/development strategies and learning and development aligned to their workforce requirements.

Similar to the results from the 2007 survey, in 2008 a relatively small proportion of agencies reported that they had a formal Indigenous Employment Strategy; used agency-based Indigenous traineeships or cadetships; or provided opportunities for Indigenous people under an agency-based Indigenous employment scheme. However, it is anticipated that following the establishment of a framework within the PSM Standards for the Indigenous Traineeship Program managed by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, the prospect of continuing traineeships will contribute to increased levels of Indigenous recruitment in the ACTPS.

During 2008, attraction and retention of appropriately skilled staff was again identified as the key workforce issue faced by ACTPS Chief Executives. Half of the surveyed agencies also identified problems in the areas of the loss of mature age employees and recruiting sufficiently strong leadership skills within the executive feeder group. To this end, a feature of the ACTPS Attraction and Retention Framework are several strategies which directly address these matters including professional development programs for executives and future leaders, both of which have commenced during 2009.

Employment Policy Section
Public Sector Management Group
Chief Minister's Department

on behalf of

Commissioner for Public Administration

September 2009