



Central and State Government Administrations

Federal and state government administrations operate within legislative frameworks. All tiers of government are currently undergoing significant reforms.

Industry Developments and Workforce Issues

The Australian Public Service Commission.¹ The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) is a central agency within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio. The Commission supports two statutory office holders: the Australian Public Service Commissioner and the Merit Protection Commissioner (whose functions are set out in the Public Service Act 1999). It operates under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013. Priorities include modernising the employment framework, shaping the APS workforce, building workforce capability and promoting integrity. Collection of data is a core function used to inform and shape the structure and management of the APS workforce. An annual APS Employee Census provides views of APS employees on workplace issues such as leadership, learning and development, and job satisfaction.²

The Public Sector Commission. The Public Sector Commission (PSC) is a statutory agency which operates under various pieces of legislation to enhance the integrity of public authorities and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector in Western Australia.³ Core functions focus on the provision of public sector leadership, assistance and support, and oversight and reporting.⁴ In 2018, the Commission underwent an independent review which focused on its capability, functions and structure to ensure it had the ability to meet government reform objectives and future challenges.

The Public Sector. The public sector encompasses Commonwealth and state/territory governments, statutory authorities and state-owned corporations. In Western Australia, it comprises public sector bodies that come under the jurisdiction of The Public Sector Commissioner as listed in the Public Sector Management (PSM) Act 1994 and includes government departments/agencies, State Emergency Services (SES) organisations, non-SES organisations and ministerial offices. This report applies to Central and State Government Administration and excludes (where it can) profiling of local governments, public universities and other public authorities such as government trading enterprises, WA Police, electorate offices and state-owned utilities.⁵ Although part of the Public Administration and Safety industry, separate industry profiles will be developed for Local Government Administration, Justice and Public Order/Safety Services.

Data Limitations. Public Sector Commission's collection of data is governed by different Acts which determine the areas of reporting jurisdiction and public sector bodies being represented. As such, depending on the Act, some data used in this report comprises a range of broader entities, including public universities, local governments, SES and non-SES organisations. Similarly, information and statistics derived from reports and data sources also tends to represent a broader public sector with Central and State Government Administration being part of the greater whole.

Australian Public Service Reform. Various legislative changes and national strategies have been implemented by the Australian Government to improve public trust, the integrity and transparency of the public sector, including: a new Australian Government Agencies Privacy Code; an International

¹ Australian Government, [Australian Public Service Commission](#).

² Australian Government, Australian Public Service Commission, [2018 APS Employee Census Data](#).

³ Government of Western Australia, [Public Sector Commission](#).

⁴ Government of Western Australia, Public Sector Commission, [Annual report 2018/18: Bringing leadership and expertise to WA public sector](#).

⁵ Government of Western Australia, Public Sector Commission, [State of the Sector 2018](#).



Open Data Charter; and the establishment of Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) bodies across jurisdictions.⁶ In 2018, the Australian Government commissioned an independent review of the Australian Public Service to ensure its operating model, capability, and culture is fit-for-purpose for the coming decades, able to serve the Australian government and people, and support future reform activities.⁷ The initial report⁸ has identified four priorities for change: strengthening the culture, governance and leadership; building a flexible APS operating model; improving capability and talent development; and developing stronger internal and external partnerships. It proposes several initiatives to support implementation of identified changes. Feedback from APS stakeholders will be reflected in the final report once released and inform final recommendations.

Australian Public Service Workforce Strategy. A new whole-of government workforce strategy is being developed by the APSC and the Department of Jobs and Small Business. Due for release by the end of 2019, the Strategy will incorporate findings of the independent APS review and include a new framework to guide workforce development (produced by a cross-agency workforce led by the APSC). Reportedly, a secondment pilot will be conducted during 2019 with public servants being rotated through state governments and organisations outside the public sector to build depth of understanding and improve the quality of advice to Government.⁹ Aligned to this, SkillsIQ point to a number of recent initiatives introduced to strengthen performance management frameworks, entry level programs and induction to APS frameworks, values and cultures.¹⁰

Public Sector Reform (Western Australia). The State Government is undertaking a major reform of the public sector reform to strengthen efficiency and accountability, create a collaborative working environment between agencies and drive high-performance in the sector to deliver better services to the community. It is shaped by the findings of three independent reviews of the public sector (Service Priority Review; Special Inquiry into Government Programs and Projects; and Sustainable Health Review) and two Chief Executive Officer Working Group reports. Of the 300 plus recommendations, approximately 40 reform initiatives are being undertaken across whole-of-government.¹¹ One of these is the review of governance arrangements of Government Trading Enterprises (GTEs)¹² to strengthen their connection with other areas of government and ensure informed decision making and cohesive long-term planning. These sit on the back of the 2017 Machinery of Government structural changes which saw WA's public sector departments reduced from 41 to 25 and the Government's Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme. This resulted in more than 2300 employees taking a severance, primarily in corporate and support roles across the public sector.¹³

Technology. A recent global report on human capital trends anticipates a rapid increase in use of artificial intelligence, cognitive technologies, robotic process automation and robotics, pointing to tomorrow's jobs being more digital, more multidisciplinary and more data/information driven.¹⁴ The trend towards a mixed cloud environment,¹⁵ system integration and automation of routine tasks continues as companies look to improve cloud-based visitor management, streamline cross-operational processes, boost efficiency and cut costs.¹⁶ Increasingly we are seeing a shift towards use of central data management systems, application of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software for common business process management, automated AI customer relationship management platforms and growing reliance on social media channels to maximise client engagement and connectivity. The public sector will rely on such technologies to support reform activities. These will shape how agencies operate, enabling automation of processes, digitisation of data collection, cloud-based processing, data storage and service delivery. The recent Innovation and Science Australia report, *Australia 2030: prosperity through innovation*, concluded the Australian Public Sector must transform to meet the challenges of a digitally enabled economy. This means improving the capacity of the APS to innovate, collaborate, and to use data and technology more effectively.¹⁷ Central to WA's public sector reform,

⁶ SkillsIQ, Public Sector Industry Reference Committee, *2019 Industry Skills Forecast DRAFT*.

⁷ Australian Government, Independent Review of the APS, [website](#).

⁸ Australian Government, *Independent Review of the APS*.

⁹ The Mandarin, *Federal Budget 2019: incoming APS workforce strategy to have regard to APS Review*, 2 April 2019.

¹⁰ SkillsIQ, Public Sector Industry Reference Committee, *2019 Industry Skills Forecast DRAFT*.

¹¹ Government of Western Australia, About public sector reform, [website](#).

¹² Government of Western Australia, Department of Treasury, GET Reform, [website](#).

¹³ Government of Western Australia, Public Sector Commission, *State of the Sector 2018*.

¹⁴ Deloitte Insights, 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, *Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with human focus*.

¹⁵ Forbes, *Modern Digital Workplace: 5 Current Trends Making Waves In The Office*, 26 September 2018.

¹⁶ The Receptionist, *7 Trends in Modern Office Management*.

¹⁷ Australian Government, Independent Review of the APS, [website](#).



there is a growing focus on system implementation to streamline workflow and business processes, improve agency capability and performance, and strengthen whole-of-government direction and outcomes. A review of systems and structures can drive efficiencies and improve governance, accountability and transparency for agencies. Sector wide digital reform will improve service delivery, support infrastructure planning and enhance public sector procurement. A key focus for government, changes to systems and structures will inform decision making and strategic direction, strengthen budget systems, and improve data sharing, ICT performance and cyber security. At a broader level, the WA Government has launched a new State STEM skills strategy to build a globally competitive and innovative workforce for a technological future.¹⁸ Funding supports STEM-based initiatives across WA Schools and the workforce¹⁹, including the Digital and Technology Skills Program to foster digital and technology engagement and skill building amongst people under-represented in STEM, as well as those living in regional and remote communities in WA.

Public Sector Workforce.²⁰ The most recent national labour market outlook estimates an employment growth of 4.5% and 2.1% for State and Central Government Administrations, respectively, over the five years to 2023.²¹ In WA the public sector is the State's largest employer (10%) having close to 140,000 employees across 83 agencies. At a more granular level, recent ABS figures indicate there are 10,400 people employed in WA's Central Government Administration and 35,200 in State Government Administration, of which a total of 81% are full-time employees.²² More broadly, the State's public sector employs people from a wide range of occupational groups with public servants and government officers making up the largest portion of the WA public sector workforce (28%). More than two thirds are employed across education, health, and law and order; many of whom occupy frontline, service delivery roles. Often agencies across these three sub-sectors have strong professional identities based on the backgrounds of their employees, the structure of their agencies and the sections of the community they serve.²³ Almost 70% of the State's public sector workforce is permanent and, while predominantly female (72%), only 34% of women hold senior executive service roles.²⁴ Further diversity is reflected in employment of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (13%), Aboriginal people (2.7%) and people with disability (1.6%). With a median age of 45, 26% of WA's public sector workforce is aged 55 and over, and 24% is aged 34 and under (of which only 4.3% represent those under 25 years of age). At a national level, almost half of the Australian Public Service workforce is aged 45 years and over with many agencies looking to attract and develop skilled workers to address the effects of an ageing workforce. Effective succession planning, flexible working conditions and the retention of staff across all levels of employment can minimise the loss of skills and knowledge due to retirements. Career options, mentoring, leadership development programs and exchanges with other agencies are aimed at addressing staff attrition and promoting lifelong learning, while initiatives such as the Federal Government's Collaborative Partnership on Mature Age Employment initiative encourage more mature-age friendly environments and employment of mature workers.²⁵

Demand. The latest State of the Sector report points to increases in service delivery in nursing, medical, public transport, prisons and teaching. It is anticipated health, education and public safety sectors will continue to grow as WA's population increases. The public transport sector is also expected to grow on the back of infrastructure initiatives such as Metronet and a focus on improving the public transport experience.²⁶ McGowan Government's commitment to the development of a 20-year infrastructure strategy²⁷ flags a pipeline of projects, as does the \$1.6 billion allocation of Federal Government funds for road and rail infrastructure across WA.²⁸ According to Hays, a wide range of skills is being sought to fill job vacancies across the nation's public sector, particularly in accountancy and finance,

¹⁸ Government of Western Australia, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, Future Jobs, Future Skills, [website](#).

¹⁹ Government of Western Australia, [Future jobs, future skills](#).

²⁰ Government of Western Australia, Public Sector Commission, [State of the Sector 2018](#).

²¹ Australian Government, Department of Jobs and Small Business, Labour Market Information Portal, Employment Projections, [Occupation projections five years to May 2023](#).

²² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Australia Detailed Quarterly, [Data Cube EQ06 Employed persons by industry group of main job \(ANZSIC\), Sex, State and Territory](#), May 2019.

²³ Government of Western Australia, [Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA. Service Priority Review, Final Report](#), October 2017.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ SkillsIQ, Public Sector Industry Reference Committee, [2019 Industry Skills Forecast DRAFT](#).

²⁶ Government of Western Australia, Public Sector Commission, [State of the Sector 2018](#).

²⁷ Media Statements, [Infrastructure WA Bill next step to growing the economy and creating jobs](#), 19 February 2019.

²⁸ Infrastructure Magazine, [Major investment in WA transport infrastructure](#), 29 March 2019.



engineering and IT (projects, business change management/transformation and business analysts).²⁹ Management accountants, finance business analysts, project and systems accountants are all in demand. With the process becoming manual, NDIS is driving demand for accounts payable and receivable. Demand for accounts payable officers and accounts assistants is also being driven by system upgrades to ensure smooth transition of data.³⁰ Infrastructure projects and transport upgrades are driving a growing demand for qualified civil engineers experienced in the design and delivery of road infrastructure and road safety projects, as well as road and traffic engineers, traffic modellers and environmental engineers. Other than technical skills, understanding of governance and knowledge of agency-specific software, candidates need to be able to manage multiple stakeholders, solve problems and communicate effectively. Increasingly, government departments are screening candidates with extensive private sector experience.³¹ Lawyers are also in demand specifically around contracts and procurement and construction/property law due to Public Private Partnerships. Paralegals are needed to support Royal Commission findings, as are legal policy officers with strong legislative development experience and experienced freedom-of-information officers in response to increasingly complex/sensitive requests received by government agencies.³² In human resources, public sector vacancies exist for internal recruiters to manage the transition of temporary/contract roles to permanent, learning and development professionals, and ER specialists.³³ Roles also exist for graphic and digital designers, communication officers/managers and community engagement officers.³⁴ People in office support roles undertake important functions supporting projects, teams and business operations. Office support roles in demand include executive and personal assistants, project officers/administrators, legal administrators and records officers. TRIM, Lotus Notes, MIBs and Oracle are all common requirements.³⁵

Industry Workforce Priorities

WA's Roadmap for Reform. The Service Priority Review identified four directions for reform: building a public sector focused on community needs; enabling the public sector to do its job better; reshaping and strengthening the public sector workforce; and strengthening leadership across government.³⁶ Together with other public sector reviews, this provided a blueprint for the State's Roadmap for Reform aimed at changing the way government works. The Roadmap focuses on five key areas for reform: community; system and structures; transparency and accountability; people and leadership. These are underpinned by core values identified to support the reform agenda, relying on a workforce focused on being curious, open, collaborative, committed, responsible and impactful.³⁷ In its latest report, the PSC points to a sector focused on ensuring consistencies in governance standards, ethical conduct and accountability. Agencies are continuing to look for efficiencies, consolidating systems and procedures, and putting measures in place to shape a workforce focused on service delivery and better outcomes to the community.³⁸

Growing Capability Requirements. A 2019 global survey of CEOs identify a skills shortage amongst their workers as the third largest threat to their growth.³⁹ Human skills such as creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, empathy and imagination are critical in balancing technology with person-to-person connection. People need to be able to adapt to a fast-changing work environment, be proactive in finding solutions, resilient to ambiguity and uncertainty. Evolving work demands and skill requirements are creating a new capability frontier beyond a combination of technical and soft skills

²⁹ Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [IT: Projects and Business Change](#).

³⁰ Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [Accountancy & Finance: Public Sector](#).

³¹ Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [Engineering](#).

³² Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [Legal](#).

³³ Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [Human Resources](#).

³⁴ Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [Marketing and Digital](#).

³⁵ Hays, Hotspots of skills in demand, [Office Support](#).

³⁶ Government of Western Australia, [Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA. Service Priority Review, Final Report](#), October 2017.

³⁷ Government of Western Australia, [Roadmap for Reform](#).

³⁸ Government of Western Australia, Public Sector Commission, [State of the Sector 2018](#).

³⁹ Business News, [Time team human put tech to work](#), 5 April 2019.



within a given role. Deloitte point to an emerging formation of *superjobs* which combine responsibilities from multiple traditional jobs and use technology to expand scope of work performed to encompass a number of work domains.⁴⁰ The cost constrained public sector environment has put pressure on agencies which are needing to adjust the skills composition of their teams to ensure outcomes are achieved with reduced resources.⁴¹ Increasingly, changing job roles will rely on hybrid skill sets across occupations. Capability deficits have been identified in relation to policy, strategic human resources and industrial relations, ICT, procurement, data analysis and contract management.⁴²

Employee Capability Framework. A recent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers explores workforce planning in the public sector. It points to a need for strategic longer-term workforce planning based on reliable workforce data and analytics, insights into current workforce capability and future requirements, and an understanding of demand drivers and external trends. Factors critical to success include effective training, accelerated development of critical capabilities and workforce mobilisation. Career pathways showing how people can be retrained and redeployed can motivate development of skills, ensuring sustainable employment options as roles are affected by change.⁴³ The reform agenda recognises the need to ensure a capable, high performing workforce to deliver on government and community priorities in a changing landscape. The WA government is focusing on building a talented, diverse and agile workforce, providing a more stable workforce by offering permanencies to experienced staff and managing the temporary workforce to achieve value for money.⁴⁴ Capability building will require a shift in culture and ethos based on a shared public sector workforce identity to support purposeful collaboration, a systematic approach to workforce capability development and talent management and greater mobility across the sector for employees. A more consistent, straightforward and flexible employment framework and workplace practice is needed to encourage a high performing, professional and engaged workforce. A redesign of the current employee capability framework will lead to improved recruitment outcomes, targeted learning and development, clarity in performance management, increased mobility, effective career planning, and more strategic workforce planning.⁴⁵

Skill Needs. Flexibility and adaptability are core skills needed to apply knowledge and broaden capability across emerging technologies and processes. Digitisation of products, platforms and services will increasingly require proficiency in the use of current technologies and systems being adopted across the sector. As the volume of sector-wide, outcome-related data becomes more readily available, it will broaden the scope for measuring and evaluating whole-of-sector performance and outcomes.⁴⁶ Increasingly, there will be a need for data skills which rely on the ability to deploy data, distil information, analyse applicability and determine cross-sector relevance. Similarly, workers need to be equipped with soft skills to meet the challenges of changing community expectations, accelerating social and technological change and a workforce expecting more flexibility and mobility. Priority skills include: teamwork and communication; critical thinking and complex problem solving; research and analytical thinking; and emotional intelligence.⁴⁷

Leadership. A key reform focus for government is strengthening leadership across the public sector to drive coordination and collaboration. It is critical that agency leaders have the skills to deliver sustainable reform, adjusting workforce composition and improving agency capability and performance to meet government priorities, operational needs and budgetary requirements.⁴⁸ Building capacity and establishing positive cultures in teams undergoing reform will rely on highly developed skills in change management, workforce planning, people management, learning and development, problem solving and project management. Effective leadership will rely on the ability to work in an increasingly digital world of work. A number of reform activities are based on the recommendations of the final Service Priority Review Report. These include designing a CEO performance system that enhances

⁴⁰ Deloitte Insights, 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, [Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with human focus](#).

⁴¹ SkillsIQ, Public Sector Industry Reference Committee, [2019 Industry Skills Forecast DRAFT](#).

⁴² Government of Western Australia, [Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA. Service Priority Review, Final Report](#), October 2017.

⁴³ PwC, [Workforce Planning in the Public Sector: Balancing capability and affordability](#), August 2018.

⁴⁴ Government of Western Australia, [Roadmap for Reform](#).

⁴⁵ Government of Western Australia, [Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA. Service Priority Review, Final Report](#), October 2017.

⁴⁶ Government of Western Australia, [Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA. Service Priority Review, Final Report](#), October 2017.

⁴⁷ World Economic Forum, [Insight Report: The Future of Jobs Report 2018, Centre for the New Economy Society](#).

⁴⁸ Government of Western Australia, [Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA. Service Priority Review, Final Report](#), October 2017.



accountability and leadership capabilities and strengthening leadership across common government functions such as human resource management, procurement and information technology. The report also supports the development of leadership at all levels to serve the public interest. This aligns to a changing leadership culture being adopted by organisation outside of the public sector, seeing a shift away from a traditional leadership hierarchy towards adopting a team model of engaging with each other and developing many leaders.⁴⁹

Modern Learning. Deloitte anticipates a greater focus on mobilising and developing people internally for enterprise-wide moves between functions, jobs and projects. Companies are increasingly directing efforts into innovative work-centred learning programs through a range of flexible platforms for targeted skill set acquisition and shifting to build a culture that supports lifelong learning in a modern world. Seen as a shared responsibility, effort is being concentrated on motivating people at all levels to *take advantage of learning opportunities and a focus on helping individuals identify and develop new needed skills.*⁵⁰ Modern learning is becoming more personal and more integrated with work, consumed in smaller doses and more accessible formats. Technology such as cloud connected mobile and wearable devices, video, voice activation and augmented reality are enabling new approaches to real-time and virtual learning, giving people choice of how and when they learn. These tangible methods are shifting the way people view acquisition of learning and personal development. As they consume information and develop skills in the natural course of their work (both as individuals and in teams) barriers start to shift and they become more receptive to further learning and more able to transform their skills and capabilities to meet changing organisational needs, critical in a changing landscape. This is particularly relevant when trying to foster a culture of lifelong learning to an ageing workforce across traditional roles being impacted by significant change. Benefits can be gained from blending innovative learning solutions with targeted skilling modules to support changing work environments. Micro-credentialing, using short pieces of training delivery and skill-set acquisition can support up-skilling and cross-skilling of public sector staff to address skill-gaps in a flexible, affordable and timely manner.

Vocational Education and Training. As outlined in the latest draft skills forecast, VET plays a critical role in supporting employers and employees to adapt to technologies and changes in the workplace. A review of qualifications will ensure training products are current and can support relevant and emerging skill acquisition for individuals wanting to enter the workplace or for those wanting to transition into different roles. Technological advancements, digital and data skills, and ICT developments are shaping the needs of entry-level positions. SkillsIQ have identified several projects in their review of the PSP Public Sector Training Package and their initial scoping of industry needs. Proposed work will incorporate areas of radiation safety, trade measurement, governance, government investigations, government security and finance and performance-based consulting.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Business News, [Time team human put tech to work](#), 5 April 2019.

⁵⁰ Deloitte Insights, 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, [Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with human focus](#).

⁵¹ SkillsIQ, Public Sector Industry Reference Committee, [2019 Industry Skills Forecast DRAFT](#).