



Secretaries Board Communique

Date: 19 February 2025

The Secretaries Board met at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to discuss the following matters.

Strategic Outlook

The Board discussed government priorities, emerging risks and strategic issues including preparing for the 2025 general election.

The Board received an update on geostrategic issues from Ms Jan Adams AO PSM, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Mr Matt Yannopoulos PSM, Associate Secretary, Department of Defence.

The Board received an economic and budget update from Ms Jenny Wilkinson PSM, Secretary of the Department of Finance, and Dr Steven Kennedy PSM, Secretary of the Treasury.

Strategic Policy Priorities

The Board discussed collaboration on cross-cutting strategic policy priorities.

Social Cohesion

The Board received an update on social cohesion including the establishment of the Office of Community Cohesion from Ms Stephanie Foster PSM, Secretary, Department of Home Affairs.

Amendments to the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Direction 2022

The Board discussed the application of the APS Code of Conduct and Values to APS employees on leave without pay to undertake employment under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984. The Board noted the proposed amendment to the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022 and new guidance to be provided by the Australian Public Service Commission to provide certainty to APS employees, agencies and parliamentary employers.

Agency Head Leadership and Development Support

The Board discussed a portfolio-based approach to stewardship and leadership support for APS Agency Heads

State of Evaluation: Final Report Insights

The Board noted the main insights from the State of Evaluation in the Australian Government report and that the Department of the Treasury will develop a whole-of-government Evaluation Action Plan for 2025-2030 for consideration and endorsement later in 2025.

Secretaries discussed the importance of high-quality evaluation in informing policy design and decision making, and the need for better planning, and increased capability and resourcing to support this.

SES Performance Leadership Framework review recommendations

The Board endorsed enhancements to the SES Performance Leadership Framework. The enhancements were recommended by Chief Operating Officers Committee (COO Committee) following a review of the Framework. The review reflects a commitment made to review the Framework twelve months after commencement.

COO Committee Bi-Annual Update

The Board noted the COO Committee's key strategic priorities for the 2025 calendar year and the minutes from the Committee's meeting of 27 November 2024.

Partnership Priorities Committee

The Board noted a progress report from the Partnership Priorities Committee.

Next Meetings

The next Secretaries Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19 March 2025.