



Communique

Secretaries Board

Date: Wednesday, 14 December 2022

The Secretaries Board met at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

APS Reform

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Finance, Minister for Women and Minister for the Public Service addressed the Board to discuss APS Reform. Minister Gallagher emphasised the Government's priorities to have an APS that is pro-integrity, accountable and transparent, that focuses on, reflects and works with the community it serves, and is an attractive and dynamic place to work. Minister Gallagher also highlighted ongoing digital and data work as central to delivering public services.

Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM, Secretary for Public Sector Reform, also provided an update for Secretaries on key current and planned APS Reform activities. This included discussion and agreement on key initiatives and implementation principles (to ensure the program is fit-for-purpose and can provide support for greater impact across the APS), advice on the status of the Capability Reinvestment Fund (with applications closing on 17 February 2023), and consideration of ways to increase talent and capability by attracting staff at the SES level through different mechanisms (such as advancing the SES100 program to attract First Nations SES, secondments with state and territory governments, and lateral recruitment exercises from the academic, private and not-for-profit sectors).

Closing the Gap

Ms Jody Broun, Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency, updated Secretaries Board on progress to accelerate the four Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.

Ms Pat Turner, Lead Convener of the Coalition of the Peaks, presented to the Board on progress towards achieving the Closing the Gap targets, focusing on the progress against the Priority Reforms. Whilst recognising some progress in this regard has been made, Ms Turner called on the Board to work more urgently on addressing the Priority Reforms. She will be invited to attend the Board again in the first half of 2023 for an update on progress Secretaries, departments and agencies are making.

Bell Inquiry

On 26 August 2022, the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General released the *Inquiry into the Appointment of the Former Prime Minister to Administer Multiple Departments*, conducted by former High Court Justice, the Hon Virginia Bell AC.

Professor Glyn Davis AC, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, updated the Board on implementation of the Bell Inquiry's recommendations which have all been accepted by the Government.

Australian Government Security Vetting Agency (AGSVA) Annual Performance Update

Secretary of the Department of Defence, Mr Greg Moriarty, provided the AGSVA Annual Update, as previously endorsed by the AGSVA Governance Board.

The Board endorsed the AGSVA Annual Update for FY 2021-22. This report measures and summarises AGSVA's performance for the financial year, including performance indicators and demand for security clearances.

Economic and Budget Update

Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, Ms Roxanne Kelley provided a verbal update on the economic outlook into 2023. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Finance, Ms Cath Patterson provided a verbal update on budget process and priorities leading up to the 2023-24 Budget.

Investing in the full potential of the APS Academy

The Australian Public Service Commissioner, Mr Peter Woolcott AO, provided an update on the work of the APS Academy. The Board agreed to investment to support four transformational initiatives delivered through the APS Academy in 2022-23 and noted the importance of continued investment in the APS Academy to support APS reform and continued uplift in APS workforce capability.

COVID-19 Review

Mr Peter Varghese AO, Chancellor, University of Queensland joined the meeting virtually to present an overview of the findings of the recently published *Fault Lines – An independent review into Australia's response to COVID-19*. The Board thanked Mr Varghese and his colleagues for their work.

Commonwealth Cyber Security Incident Response Coordination

Secretary of the Department of Social Services, Mr Ray Griggs AO CSC, and Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs, Mr Michael Pezzullo AO, updated the Board on the Commonwealth's response to recent cyber security incidents.

Next Meeting

The next Secretaries Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 8 February 2023.