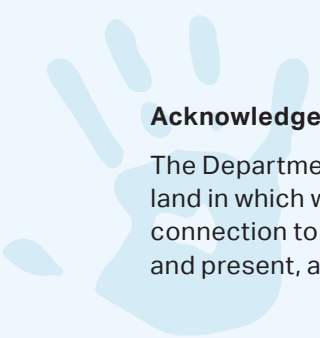




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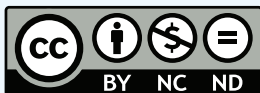
APS Procurement and Contract Management Profession **Strategy**



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Foreword

As the co-Heads of the Procurement and Contract Management Profession (PCM Profession), we are pleased to present the Australian Public Service's (APS) first Procurement and Contract Management Strategy (the Profession Strategy).

In an era marked by rapid change and growing challenges, the APS stands at the forefront of driving economic and social change to build a better future while delivering value for money for all Australians.

A role in procurement and contract management in the APS is not just about a job; it is a commitment to serving the public with integrity, excellence and dedication and an opportunity for a rich and fulfilling career, one that can have a lasting impact on Australia.

The Profession Strategy outlines our vision for the future of the PCM Profession. It emphasises the importance of meeting the growing demands for public procurement and contract management through a highly skilled and adaptive workforce.

As we navigate through the complexities of a modern world, it is imperative that we equip our workforce with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet evolving demands.

The Profession Strategy is action-focused and can be implemented across the range of entities that vary in size, internal structure and value of contracts handled. It is set out over three key phases for the PCM Profession; its establishment, its development and its lasting impact. Key initiatives within the Profession Strategy are designed to enhance the professionalisation of procurement and contract management.

We are confident the Profession Strategy will serve as a guiding framework for the PCM Profession, helping to build a more agile, capable, and forward-thinking workforce. As that workforce grows, so too will the Profession Strategy.

We ask you to join our commitment to foster a culture of excellence and resilience.



Julia Pickworth
Deputy Secretary
Industry and
Commercialisation Group
Department of Industry,
Science and Resources



Richard Windeyer
Deputy Secretary
Commercial Group
Department of Finance

Context

The past few years has seen increased focus, scrutiny and commentary on procurement and contract management undertaken by the APS. This focus has been in parallel with increased year on year contractual commitments by Commonwealth entities, reaching almost \$100 billion in 2023-24.

Both the Independent Review of the APS and the recent Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit Report 498: *'Commitment issues' - An inquiry into Commonwealth procurement* recommended the use of the APS professions model to increase procurement and contract management professionalisation.

Procurement and contract management is an avenue for achieving policy outcomes. The Commonwealth Procurement Framework establishes the Government's requirement for entities when undertaking procurement and contract management. These policies require officials to make decisions that look beyond compliance to achieve a broader range of positive outcomes.

In this context, there is the need and support for the PCM Profession to uplift specialist procurement and contract management capability. The establishment of the PCM Profession was approved by the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister on 6 May 2024. The PCM Profession will provide opportunities for practitioners to improve their competencies throughout their careers.

As there is no dedicated funding for the PCM Profession, its activities are reliant on the collective effort of staff and resourcing from entities. The Departments of Finance (Finance) and the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) provide administrative support for the PCM Profession.

As part of Finance's role as steward of the Commonwealth Procurement Framework, Finance provides a range of support to the APS and industry. Whilst not specifically part of the PCM Profession, these initiatives support the PCM Profession's objectives. Finance provides:

- Resources to support officials including web-based material, the Commonwealth Contracting Suite, ClauseBank, the Contract Management Guide and communication channels.
- Outreach to entities to discuss procurement and contract management issues.
- Free foundational procurement and contract management training for all APS officials. The Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Training Suite is available on APS Academy's APSLearn.
- The Procurement and Contract Management Awards for Excellence, recognising good procurements and initiatives to support procurements.
- Support to industry to understand the Commonwealth Procurement Framework including the SellingToGov website and training.

DISR engages with industry stakeholders and local suppliers to bring their insights and experiences to support implementation of reforms for suppliers and customers. This includes:

- Management and delivery of the government's Australian Industry Participation policy.
- Developing industry sector scans with targeted industry stakeholders identifying procurement barriers when supplying to government.
- Holding Ministerial Roundtables on Procurement with industry stakeholders.

DISR also supported the delivery of multiple points of the Buy Australia Plan and had responsibility for the delivery of point 7: support industry sectors through the government's purchasing power.

Approach

The PCM Profession seeks to build a professional workforce for the APS by establishing networks and communities, supporting specialist career development, leveraging innovative technologies, and collaborating with Australian and international organisations to share knowledge and best practice.

The PCM Profession will provide structure and guidance to ensure there are clear pathways to advance specialist skillsets for employees who want to become procurement and contract management professionals. These professionals will have the skills, confidence and knowledge to implement procurement and contract management activities for Government.

In doing so, the PCM Profession will leverage off work undertaken within Australia and overseas in professionalising procurement workforces. This will include work undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

It is the aim of the PCM Profession to target an uplift of procurement and contract management professionals rather than a general uplift of capabilities of all APS officers. Most APS entities have a central procurement area, but have varying levels of decentralisation of procurement responsibilities, and particularly contract management. The audience for this profession is central procurement and contract management teams, and any other officer whose primary role is within the procurement and contract management function, including managers.

These are the current and potential leaders in procurement and contract management for their entity. These officers are most likely responsible for strategic, high-risk, high-value procurements; and whose responsibility extends to assisting the general uplift of procurement and contract management within their own entity through working with line areas and delegates. The goal is attraction, development and retention of sophisticated and specialist capabilities in these teams.

This audience may be broadened in a future iteration.

The Profession Strategy

The Profession Strategy is a deliberate way of setting and promoting expertise for procurement and contract management roles in the APS. It outlines how the APS can recruit, develop, grow and retain talent in the procurement and contract management workforce, and will guide the creation of career pathways to ensure the right balance of breadth and depth of experience.

The Profession Strategy will be implemented in 3 phases (Establish, Define and Develop, Embed), each with a number of practical initiatives. This aligns with the APS Professions maturity model, developed by the APSC. This Profession Strategy will be revisited in a year to examine it against the maturity model.

Establish the Profession

1. Identify and support the co-Heads of PCM Profession

Timeframe: Support ongoing.

Each of the newly established APS Professions will comprise of two senior leaders (co-Heads) and a core profession support team. The role of the co-Heads is to champion the PCM Profession and work with entities across the APS to realise the capability uplift objectives of the Profession Strategy. The co-Heads of PCM Profession will not have authority over Accountable Authority decision making.

The co-Heads of the PCM Profession are:

- Richard Windeyer, Deputy Secretary, Finance
- Julia Pickworth, Deputy Secretary, DISR.

Finance and DISR will provide the profession support team to the PCM Profession, assisting the co-Heads of PCM Profession by undertaking ongoing administrative and secretariat activities. This will allow a close linkage between the co-Heads of PCM Profession, the Commonwealth procurement and contract management framework and capability uplift work managed by Finance.

2. Establish a working group

Timeframe: Completed.

The Chief Procurement Officers Round Table (CPORT) is an existing governance structure that will be leveraged to support the PCM Profession.

A sub-group of the CPORT, a SES Band 1 / EL2 working group has been established to assist in the development of the primary PCM Profession documents, including finalisation of the Profession Strategy, capability and workforce frameworks, and ongoing initiatives. This working group is co-chaired by Finance and DISR.

The working group leverages off the experience and initiatives undertaken across the Commonwealth as several entities already have internal professionalisation strategies. The working group will also learn from broader international experiences noting that Australia is not alone in its attempts to professionalise the procurement and contract management workforce. The working group will report to the co-Heads of PCM Profession through CPORT.

3. Refine the Profession Strategy

Timeframe: Current.

A more detailed Profession Strategy will be developed to underpin the PCM Profession and to support the strengthening of procurement and contract management capability within the APS workforce. The Profession Strategy will include a communication plan to support key messages and articulate the importance of procurement and contract management capability in the APS.

After the establishment of the PCM Profession, further consultation on the Profession Strategy will be sought through the working group (point 2).

Progress against the Profession Strategy will be reviewed at the 12-month mark to ensure it continues to deliver on the PCM Profession's intended outcomes.

4. Establish a professional network

Timeframe: This program of work has commenced and will be completed approximately 6 weeks after Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) finish the build of the new Members Community Platform.

A procurement and contract management professional network will be established to build professional capability through shared experience and knowledge across entities. The network will have a national reach and be open to all APS employees in procurement and contract management roles. It aims to promulgate knowledge, learnings, experiences, technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in GovAI, and professional behaviours across the APS procurement and contract management workforce.

This network will build on the work already undertaken by Finance through the Procurement Capability Branch (including the Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Community of Practice).

5. Whole of Australian Government professional memberships

Timeframe: this program has commenced and will be reviewed from July-September 2025.

In support of the PCM Profession, Finance has established relationships with industry professional bodies the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, and World Commerce and Contracting Association, through a whole of Australian Government professional membership program to grow the procurement and contract management capability through internationally recognised qualifications, training, and professional development.

In addition to professional memberships, Finance will continue to be the lead conduit into the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council and the OECD's Leading Party of Procurement Practitioners.

PHASE 2

Define and develop

Timeframe: End 2025 with points 6-10 undertaken concurrently according to the prioritisation from the working group. Work to be led by Finance and DISR, overseen by CPORT and the working group.

These initiatives combine for the goal of attracting the right talent, developing sophisticated and specialist capabilities, and embedding a professional workforce.

6. Develop an APS profile and workforce strategy

A map of the current APS procurement and contract management workforce will be undertaken to inform workforce planning, recruitment, development, and talent and succession management. This map will include an assessment of the current levels, skills, development needs and the type of work undertaken (e.g. transactional, advisory, problem solving, strategic, etc.). The map will also plot roles with relevant skills and expertise against the APS Job Family Model to provide a baseline profile.

Following this mapping exercise, a workforce strategy will be developed to coordinate plans to attract, recruit and retain a capable workforce. Part of the workforce strategy could be a Commonwealth secondment and mentoring program for procurement and contract management practitioners to gain broader experience and exposure of practices in different entities. The workforce strategy will also be informed by other elements of Phase 2 of the Profession Strategy.

7. Develop a capability framework

A capability framework will be developed as a benchmark to define the capabilities and competencies needed for a professional procurement and contract management workforce. It is a foundational tool that will support the workforce strategy.

The capability framework will assist entities with workforce planning, identifying capability gaps and implementing knowledge sharing and capability development opportunities. It can also, as a guide, assist employees to identify career paths and professional development needs.

A key function of the capability framework is to highlight that there will always be different proficiency levels amongst professionals. It will also enable specialists to reach the highest proficiencies across certain capabilities. For example, a purchasing officer may meet competency in compliance and contracting but seek to enhance market engagement and risk management to progress to a strategic procurement area.

Part of the capability framework could be an employee self-assessment tool to map their skills and capabilities against the framework and identify opportunities for growth and potential career paths.

As Phase 2 is implemented, further learning and development opportunities may be identified. Lessons gained from the PCM Profession may also be used for continued alignment of the foundational (non-Profession) training suite.

8. Define professional standards

Standards and credentials will be established for a professional procurement and contract management workforce in the public sector.

Certification of the workforce will be investigated to ensure growth and retention of a professionalised workforce aligns to national and international standards and broader capability needs. This may incorporate existing knowledge around standards gained from the professional memberships to align with the private sector.

9. Specialist Employee Value Proposition

An employee value proposition specific to procurement and contract management will be developed outlining the benefits an employee receives in return for the skills, capabilities, and experience they bring to the APS, in order to better attract and retain talent.

10. Entry level and re-skilling programs

Timeframe: The pilot of the Pathways to Procurement pilot program commenced in February 2025 and will be assessed for future delivery.

Finance has developed the Pathways to Procurement program. The program establishes a structured and sustainable pathway that supports APS officials who are new to procurement and contract management roles, enabling them to quickly build the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

The program incorporates procurement and contract management training modules developed and delivered by Finance, undertaking a Certificate IV in Procurement and Contracting delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, and exposure to additional professional development content.

The program has 2 target streams:

1. Upskill stream – targeting entry level officials new to the APS. This stream will enable APS entities to better attract and retain new talent by upskilling entry level staff in a focused manner.
2. Reskill stream – targeting APS officials with transferable experience to support a smooth and effective redeployment into a procurement and contract management roles.

PHASE 3

Embed initiatives

Timeframe: Ongoing once activities in Phases 1 and 2 are complete.

11. Create a forward implementation plan and program of work

Implementation of the Profession Strategy will be under the guidance of the co-Heads of PCM Profession.

Finance and DISR, with the APSC, will support implementation of a program of work by encouraging strong collaboration across entities to maintain momentum. This work plan will draw from the lessons learned in Phase 2, and amplify the outcomes from those initiatives for attraction, training and retention. For example, the training and professional standards will be adjusted to the outcomes from the workforce strategy and capability framework.

Further opportunities may also be considered in Phase 3 dependent on results of Phase 2 such as mentorships; graduate rotations; network programs.

12. Transition key initiatives to business-as-usual functions

Key initiatives developed and delivered for the PCM Profession will be transitioned to a business- as-usual delivery model. This will include ongoing learning and development programs, workforce strategy initiatives and initiatives to promote best practice.

Under the APSC Professions Model the final stage is 'Leading', which indicates a capacity to deploy highly capable professionals. The specific goals for this phase will be articulated at a later stage.

