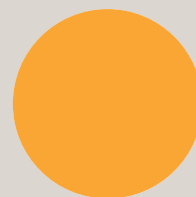


states**ervices**authority  
a guide to succession risk management  
for Victorian public sector leaders



The Victorian Government has vested the State Services Authority (SSA) with functions designed to foster the development of an efficient, integrated and responsive public sector which is highly ethical, accountable and professional in the ways it delivers services to the Victorian community.

The key functions of the Authority are to:

- identify opportunities to improve the delivery and integration of government services and report on service delivery outcomes and standards;
- promote high standards of integrity and conduct in the public sector;
- strengthen the professionalism and adaptability of the public sector; and
- promote high standards of governance, accountability and performance for public entities.

The Authority seeks to achieve its charter by working closely and collaboratively with public sector departments and agencies.

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## foreword

The management of succession is a fundamental activity for any leader.

This guide has been written for leaders in the Victorian public sector.

It advocates approaching succession management as an exercise in risk mitigation, rather than simply as a process of identifying and grooming individuals for specific roles.

This risk management approach encourages you to cast your net more widely in terms of where to focus attention and the strategies you can use. It also encourages strong reliance on evidence and directing resources to where they will have greatest tangible impact at a given point in time.

This guide has been created as a 'touchstone' document. It seeks to help you, as a leader, initiate, direct and contribute to the effective management of succession risk in your organisation.

It sets out the core principles and fundamental ideas about succession risk management.

We have created a number of fact sheets, checklists and templates to accompany this guide. These materials, which can be adapted for your organisation, provide more information and will help implement the approach outlined in this guide. They are available to download from our website **[www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)**

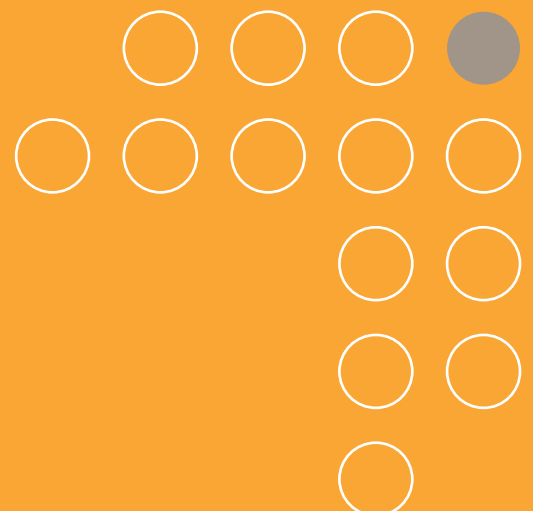
The online materials will be revised and expanded in response to feedback from organisations as they face and address particular succession risk situations. So if you would like to share tools or strategies you have used, or you have any suggestions for improvements, please let us know.

**Bruce Hartnett**

Chair, State Services Authority

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## our approach to succession risk

Succession risk management addresses the possibility that a vacancy in a critical role will not be filled satisfactorily within an acceptable timeframe.

The aim of succession risk management is to mitigate the risk of vacancies in critical roles.

Staff currently performing critical roles will inevitably leave. When they do, it is important to minimise the period of time when the role is vacant. Also, new types of critical role will be created and it will be important to fill these quickly and with appropriately qualified staff.

The aim of succession risk management is to ensure that inevitable vacancies in critical roles have minimal negative impacts on the organisation and its work.

### The traditional approach

The 'traditional' way of managing succession risk is to identify specific individuals for specific roles, often senior leadership roles, and actively 'groom' these people to step into the roles when they become vacant.

On the surface, this approach — often called 'replacement planning' — makes some sense. However, in practice, it can be exceptionally risky, especially in an environment characterised by frequent changes in role demands.

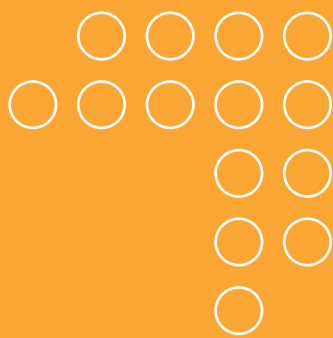
Replacement planning carries other significant risks. For example, there is a chance that there will be a perceived (or actual) breach of merit principles and, possibly, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) obligations as well.

### Our approach

The approach described in this guide does not dismiss replacement planning although it does advocate an enhancement to this approach. Building a *pool* of people with potential to undertake a particular *type* of critical role is generally a more effective strategy.

Addressing the way in which roles are designed and the experience of moving into, and working in, a critical role are also important aspects of the risk management process.

This guide proposes a systematic, evidence-based approach in which strategies and activities are used in a targeted way to address the possibility that a critical role vacancy cannot be filled satisfactorily within an acceptable timeframe.



## components of succession risk management



The core task in the management of succession risk is for leaders to conduct regular and structured discussions about succession planning.

This includes leaders of departments, organisations, divisions and work units.

These discussions need to focus on the five key steps<sup>1</sup> involved in succession risk management.

- 1. Understand context:** the significant work that needs to be undertaken, the types of roles that are critical to this work and the organisation, and the potential of the workforce to undertake these roles.
- 2. Identify possible risks:** what might happen in the future when critical roles need filling (taking into account the potential of the internal workforce and external labour market).
- 3. Prioritise risks:** which scenarios are most likely and least desirable.
- 4. Target mitigation activities:** what can be done to minimise the risk of these scenarios occurring or the impacts if they do occur.
- 5. Review:** reassessing risks identified previously and evaluating whether mitigation strategies remain effective and appropriate.

Given that the focus is on the future, succession risk management can never be exact.

However, if hard evidence is brought to these discussions, and if the conversations are structured so that assumptions are tested through debate, then there is a greater chance that the risks will be identified correctly and that mitigation efforts will be targeted appropriately.

To increase effectiveness, the time horizon for speculation should be no greater than two to three years. Beyond this, the number of variables and unknowns increases to the point that meaningful discussion or planning is unlikely.

The discussions should take place on a regular basis: at least twice a year and every time there are significant changes in the work of the organisation or its workforce.

As a leader, you have unique insight into the organisation's current work, capacity, environment and future. Therefore, work around succession risk management rests with you and must be initiated and directed by you and your peers.

Of course, many other people within your organisation will be instrumental in the successful identification and mitigation of your succession risks. They will have information you need to understand the potential of the current workforce, what might happen when different types of critical role need filling, and what can be done to address particular risks.

Fact sheets, checklists and templates to help support your discussions around succession risk and mitigation are available from the State Services Authority website: [www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)

<sup>1</sup> The approach advocated in this guide broadly aligns with the Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand approach to risk management (third edition, 2004)



## understand context



### Identify critical roles

Succession risk management focuses on critical roles.

'Critical roles' are types of role currently crucial to the achievement of organisational outcomes or operations.

A vacancy in a critical role will have a significant tangible impact on the ability of the organisation to deliver outputs, achieve milestones, or meet budget requirements. In terms of succession risk, a lengthy vacancy, underperformance, or high turnover in a critical role are 'worst-case' scenarios.

Senior leadership roles are often identified as a type of critical role. It is common, therefore, for succession management activities to focus on leadership roles to the exclusion of other roles.

However, critical roles can be framed in many ways:

- operational relationships (for example, roles with the greatest spans of control or number of staff);
- organisational relationships (for example, roles with greatest Ministerial, cross-departmental or public interface);
- specific capabilities (for example, technical specialist roles); or
- particular types of responsibilities (for example, managing a major project).

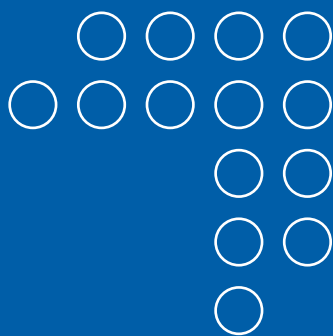
As organisational focus and priorities shift, different types of role may become more or less critical to current outcomes. A type of role identified today as 'critical' may not be so critical in the future.

As such, focusing on critical accountabilities can be a better approach. However, because roles are more tangible than accountabilities, a focus on roles is often more practical.

Once identified, the different types of critical role need to be understood in terms of the:

- **work** that is undertaken in the role (purpose and principle accountabilities) and the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes required to succeed in this type of role;
- **complexity and uniqueness** of the role;
- **challenges and attractions** of the role;
- **experiences and achievements** that assist with mastering the role and performing in it; and
- **performance expectations** including how quickly full performance will be required by a new incumbent.

This information does not have to be precise, as no role or its environment is ever static. But, the description of the different types of critical role needs to be detailed enough to help assess the potential of internal and external labour markets to fill a type of role should a vacancy occur.



## understand context (continued)

### Identify staff potential

When considering the potential of existing staff to undertake particular types of critical role, consideration should be given to six attributes.

1. **Capability:** skills, knowledge, and personal attributes (such as resilience) appropriate for a particular type of critical role, as well the capacity to change, learn and grow into the role.
2. **Aspiration:** the desire and drive to progress their career through different roles and, especially, the type of critical role for which you are assessing potential.
3. **Engagement:** the commitment to building a career with, and continue to contribute to, the success of the organisation.  
  
While capability, aspiration and engagement can each indicate potential, none is sufficient in isolation to predict success in particular roles.<sup>2</sup>
4. **Experiences** that will assist with mastering a particular type of critical role.
5. **Achievements.** Achievements should be considered from the perspective of providing the credibility that an individual needs to succeed in a particular type of critical role.

It is important to note that while an individual's performance in current or past roles can provide some evidence of potential, past performance does not guarantee success in a different role in the future. Also, some experiences and achievements that may be considered essential for a particular type of critical role can only be obtained by *undertaking* that role; an opportunity that many potential successors are unlikely to have had.

6. **Time to readiness:** the time (and effort) it will take for an individual to become ready to succeed in a particular type of critical role.

Evaluating staff potential for success in a role some time in the future can never be precise. However, several activities can be used to gather information about potential in broad terms, including:

- assessment centres (combining a number of the following activities);
- acting in the role or undertaking tasks from the role;
- simulated business interactions and exercises;
- cognitive ability tests;
- interview panel with behaviour based questions ('What did you do?');
- 360 degree feedback / manager assessments reviewed and contested by other managers;
- experience inventories / experience reviews;
- personality tests;
- opinion (manager assessment / referee reports);
- interview panel with scenario questions ('What would you do?'); and
- self assessment (opinion).

<sup>2</sup> This approach is based upon research undertaken by the Corporate Leadership Council. See Corporate Leadership Council, 2005, 'Realizing the Full Potential of Rising Talent: A Quantitative Analysis of the Identification and Development of High-Potential Employees'.





## Assess the external labour market

For many critical roles, there is a reasonable chance that an appointee will come from among existing employees (typically a promotion or a move sideways).

For some roles it is likely that the appointee will come from outside the organisation.

There are different reasons why this may be the case. For example, capabilities required for certain types of critical role cannot be obtained by working within the organisation; there may be significant skill and capability gaps in the internal workforce; or the organisation may be in a particular business cycle (such as needing to change its organisational culture).

Commonly, with the exception of the organisation's alumni (previous employees), individual members of the external talent pool will not be known to an organisation until applications for a particular role are actively sought.

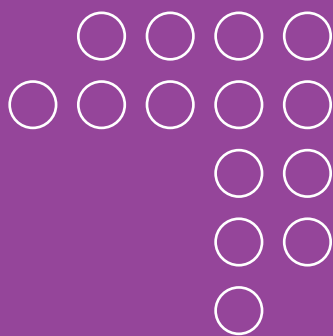
It is important that organisations collect and maintain relevant, current information about the size, depth (level and nature of skills) and trends of the external talent pool as early as possible before a vacancy in a critical role necessitates testing the market.

It is useful to maintain an evidence-based understanding of whether:

- the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes required for different types of critical role are commonly available in the external labour market;
- people from the external labour market will want to work for your organisation;
- people who have not worked for the organisation will have access to the experiences and achievements deemed necessary to master the role; and
- people coming from outside the organisation may find the transition into a particular type of critical role difficult.

Important information about the strength of the external talent pool can come from:

- collecting and analysing trend information from applications received for similar types of roles in the past;
- gaining intelligence from the organisational alumni and working networks;
- reviewing trends in vacancies of similar roles across the labour market; and
- labour market analysis undertaken by professional associations and specialist commentators.



## identify possible risks



In terms of succession risk, there is one undesirable situation you are seeking to avoid: inability to fill a vacancy in a critical role within an acceptable timeframe.

This situation can emerge when there is a misalignment between:

- the demands of critical roles; and
- the potential of the workforce to meet these demands.

This typically occurs in terms of:

- **capability, experience and record of achievement** required for success in the role and held by potential candidates for the role;
- **timing** of a critical role vacancy and the readiness of potential candidates to fill this vacancy;
- **expectations** for example, the expectations a potential appointee has about the role benefits, or the expectations the organisation has for performance in the role; and / or
- **support** required by a new appointee and support received.

Lack of alignment commonly results in one of three scenarios<sup>3</sup>.

1. A critical role becomes vacant and no candidates can be found with the relevant qualities who are willing to take on the role. As a consequence, the role remains vacant longer than is acceptable. This is called **vacancy risk**.
2. A critical role becomes vacant and none of the members of the internal talent pool are ready, willing or able to move into the role, or perform at the level required. As a consequence, the role remains vacant longer than is acceptable. This is called **readiness risk**.
3. A critical role becomes vacant and a person is appointed to it. However, they fail to perform in the role and leave shortly after their appointment because they did not have the right qualities or because the role was not what they expected. The failure to perform, or early departure, has a negative impact similar to (and possibly worse than) the impact if the role had remained vacant. This is called **transition risk**.

The three different types of succession risk are introduced here to assist with your discussions, prioritising risks and framing mitigation strategies.

<sup>3</sup> This approach is based upon that adopted by the Corporate Leadership Council. See 'High Impact Succession Management: From Succession Planning to Strategic Executive Talent Management', 2007



## prioritise risks

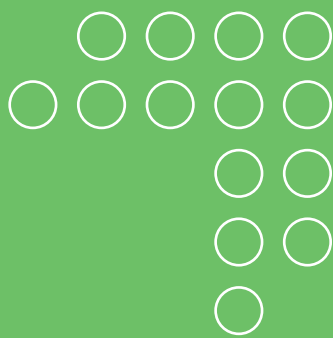


Once you have given thought to which of the risks are more likely for your organisation, you need to decide which you want to address as a priority.

The risks you wish to tackle first, or at all, is a judgement that you and your colleagues need to make through discussion and debate.

This discussion needs to take into account:

- **the extent to which you believe the risks to be real.** This will relate to the extent to which your assessment of risk has been based upon credible information and how convinced you are that the assessment of the likelihood or impact of the risk is sound;
- **you and your stakeholders' tolerance for risk;**
- **the resources you have available to mitigate risks;** and
- **the costs involved in addressing the risks.** Sometimes the activity required to address a risk can cost more, and create more risks, than the risk it is trying to address. You need to decide whether the costs of addressing the risk are appropriately offset by the benefits to be achieved.



## target mitigation activities



Succession risks stem from misalignments between roles, skills, time, expectations and support. Organisations always have control over at least one of these factors, for example, the way critical accountabilities are packaged into a role.

Often organisations have control over many of these factors, as in the case of the alignment between the development of internal staff and the requirements of particular types of critical roles.

In most cases mitigation of succession risk does not require significant 'stand-alone' initiatives. Everyday management activities can be used in a focused way to address the misalignments that are contributing to the organisation's succession risks.

The everyday management activities include:

### Organisational planning and design

Business plans, organisational structure and role design all contribute to creating and shaping critical roles.

### Retention management

Strategies to manage the ongoing engagement, productivity and retention of staff have a direct impact on the management of succession risk through reducing the likelihood that critical roles will become vacant.

### Departure practices

Organisational practices and protocols for departing employees have a direct impact on the timing of vacancies and on the opportunity to pass tacit knowledge about the role to a new appointee.

### Organisational alumni

The way the organisation interacts with its past employees impacts on its ability to leverage this network to gain intelligence about the external labour market, employment competitors and possible candidates. Word of mouth from past employees cannot be underestimated to promote the organisation as a desirable place to work and to support the transfer of tacit knowledge about working in the organisation and critical roles.

### Targeted staff development

For most organisations, a targeted program to build talent for different types of critical role will be the single most effective strategy for mitigating succession risk as it will ensure a ready supply of suitably prepared candidates for critical roles when they become vacant.

### Knowledge of the external labour market

The extent to which the organisation understands and monitors trends within the external labour market, and maintains contact with key individuals within it, has a direct impact on the organisation's ability to shape critical roles; create succession strategies; and target recruitment promotions effectively.

### Attraction activities

The extent to which the organisation actively promotes compelling and competitive reasons why preferred candidates should work for it, and conveys reasons to potential candidates for critical roles, impacts the ability of the organisation to attract strong candidates for a critical role at the right time.



### Recruitment activities

An organisation's recruitment processes for critical roles are in direct competition with the processes of other organisations seeking to attract the same candidates. Recruitment processes that are clear, competitive and 'fit for purpose' increase the opportunity for engaging a preferred candidate at the right time and assist in the management of expectations of both the candidate and the organisation as the appointee commences in the critical role.

### Role on-boarding

Role on-boarding encompasses all the activities undertaken to help a new appointee reach optimum performance as soon as possible after commencing in the role. Structured role on-boarding involves introducing the new appointee to the people, resources, processes and tacit knowledge essential for success in their new role. The process is tailored to take into account the skills and previous experience of the new appointee as well as the demands of the role, especially the role's inherent challenges. Role on-boarding contributes directly to mitigating the risk of under performance or high turn over in critical roles.

### Performance management

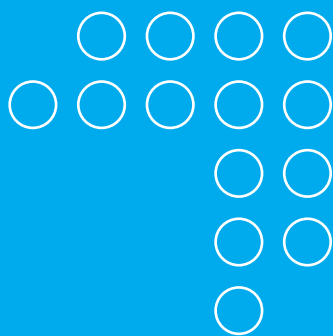
Every manager within an organisation can contribute to either increasing or decreasing the organisation's exposure to succession risk, through their contribution to organisational culture, employee engagement and support for the development of staff. As such, reward and recognition for positive contributions to the management of succession risk should be incorporated within management performance plans.

Performance management conversations and processes also provide insight into the potential of the current workforce and the opportunity to influence staff aspiration and engagement towards different types of critical role.

### Organisational climate

Organisational climate encompasses how individuals feel in their role. Organisational climate and behaviours impact succession risk generally as they influence when, and under what circumstances, an incumbent in a critical role will leave, how attractive the role will be to prospective candidates, and how difficult it will be to transition into the role.

See Appendix A for more ideas for action or go to **[www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)** for fact sheets on mitigation strategies.



## review



### Reviewing risks

It is important that you reassess the succession risks to which your organisation may be exposed on a regular basis.

This can be achieved simply by running through the process advocated in this guide once or twice a year. Better still, having succession risk management as a standard agenda item at senior team meetings provides an opportunity to identify and respond to changes as they become apparent.

As a minimum 'best practice', a succession risk management discussion should be scheduled when there are significant changes to the organisation's operations, workforce or external environment.

### Reviewing mitigation strategies

The best approach to reviewing the effectiveness of strategies is to benchmark the performance of any programs or initiatives against a set of key performance indicators.

You need to decide which measures of effectiveness are feasible for your organisation. Some examples of succession risk management indicators are provided here:

#### Succession risk generally

- reduction in the time that critical roles remain unfilled

#### Vacancy risk

- increase in the number of credible candidates on shortlists to fill critical role vacancies
- increase in the number of staff formally identified as having potential for particular types of critical roles

#### Readiness risk

- increase in the number of staff formally identified as being ready to apply for, and succeed in, particular types of critical roles
- increase in the number of appointments to particular types of critical role from existing staff

#### Transition risk

- decrease in underperformance of new appointees
- decrease in early departures of new appointees.



## succession risk management and merit

The assessment of succession risk requires consideration of which roles are more critical than others, speculation about which roles may become vacant, and an assessment of who may be able to fill these vacancies.

The mitigation of risk can involve the identification of, and targeted development for, existing staff who have potential to succeed in a particular type of critical role.

It is important to stress that, at no time, does succession risk management require:

- forcing anyone to vacate a role (the focus of succession management is on being prepared for when a critical role inevitably becomes vacant, not creating role vacancies);
- explicitly or implicitly guaranteeing anyone a role (identified successors still need to prove the ability to perform the role); or
- excluding anyone from applying for a role (people not formally identified as successors may still apply for a role).

The Public Sector Standards Commissioner provides guidelines for the identification and development of potential successors from among existing staff, as follows.

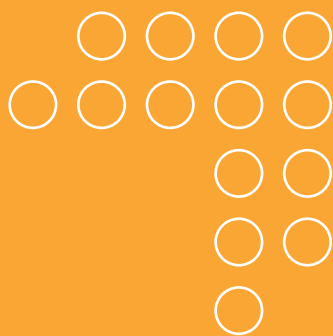
‘Organisations need to manage employee succession effectively to ensure that they have the necessary future leadership, management and technical capacity. Effective succession management:

- is an integral component of strategic and workforce planning, and should receive visible support from senior management;
- focuses on identifying a robust field of potential candidates;
- incorporates employee input;
- requires an assessment that is objective, free from discriminatory bias and based on defined criteria;
- is transparent and accountable; and
- does not preclude other employees from accessing development opportunities.

The best available employees should be selected for advancement in the public sector based upon their skills, knowledge and abilities, demonstrated good conduct consistent with the public sector values, and potential for further development in the organisation. Decisions to promote employees must be based on merit.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Public Sector Standards Commissioner, Merit in Employment Guidelines. Available from: [www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)



## further resources

### Fact sheets, checklists and templates to support this guide

This guide has been created as a touchstone document. It sets out the core principles and fundamental ideas about succession risk management. It deliberately avoids going into great detail about how to undertake and implement the process.

A series of fact sheets, checklists and templates have been created to support this guide. These provide more information about key ideas conveyed through the guide and have been written for anyone who will play a role in the management of succession risk in your organisation.

This online material has been designed so that it can be adapted for use within different organisations and modified to suit particular needs.

All the supporting materials are available from the SSA website: **[www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)**

### Corporate Executive Board memberships

Victorian Public Service departments jointly hold a membership to three Corporate Executive Board memberships:

- Corporate Leadership Council:  
**[www.clc.executiveboard.com](http://www.clc.executiveboard.com)**
- Recruitment Roundtable:  
**[www.rr.executiveboard.com](http://www.rr.executiveboard.com)**
- Learning and Development Roundtable:  
**[www.ldr.executiveboard.com](http://www.ldr.executiveboard.com)**

These organisations undertake best practice research and present this through easy-to-read reports, business cases, case studies, templates and tools, all available free-of-charge from the websites as part of the membership fee.

Anyone with a 'vic.gov.au' email address can log on to any of the sites and obtain a password that will provide access to all three sites and the resources available from them.

### Further references and acknowledgements

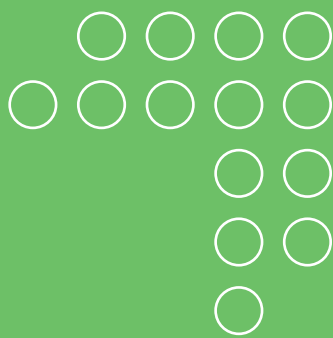
A list of further references, including materials used in the preparation of this guide, can be found at the SSA website: **[www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)**





	This guide	Fact sheets	Checklists/templates
<b>Process</b>	Our approach to succession risk	1. Basic principles 2. Contents Map (this table) 3. Glossary	
	Components of succession risk management	4. Establishing the process 5. Facilitating the discussions	1. Checklist: Supporting succession risk management discussion
<b>Step 1: Context</b>	Understand context	6. Identifying critical role types 7. Identifying staff potential 8. Assessing the external labour market	2. Template: Critical role profile 3. Template: Assessing internal potential 4. Template: External labour market profile
<b>Step 2: Possible risks</b>	Identify possible risks	9. The different risks	5. Template: Current risks
<b>Step 3: Prioritise risks</b>	Prioritise risks	10. Prioritising the risks you face	
<b>Step 4: Target mitigation activities</b>	Target mitigation activities	Risk mitigation matrix (under development) 11. Organisational plans and design 12. External labour pool 13. Departure practices 14. Attraction activities 15. Organisational alumni 16. Targeted development 17. Role on-boarding 18. Retention management 19. Recruitment activities 20. Performance management	6. Template: Individual development plan
<b>Step 5: Review risks and mitigation strategies</b>	Review	21. Review risks and mitigation strategies	7. Template: Strategy evaluation
<b>Other information</b>	Succession risk management and merit		
	Further resources	22. Resources and references 23. Case studies (forthcoming)	

Toolkit contents including fact sheets, checklists and templates available from the website: [www.ssa.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au)



## appendix A: ideas for action

Here are some specific actions you can implement to address the greatest succession risks you face.

### Succession risk generally

To address succession risk generally, an organisation can:

- Include succession risk management responsibilities in the performance plans of all managers. For example, make the identification and development of staff with potential for different types of critical role a key performance indicator.
- Share or duplicate critical tasks and accountabilities across two or more roles.
- Actively address aspects of the organisational climate and behaviours that impede performance or the attractiveness of the organisation as a place to work.
- Provide clear guidance for managers of incumbents in critical roles about options for negotiating a delayed or staged departure to create more time to fill roles, allow time for hand-over and reduce the amount of time critical roles are vacant.

### Vacancy risk

To address the possibility that no candidates can be found to fill a critical role vacancy, an organisation can:

- Create and target the development of internal talent pools for particular types of critical role.
- Establish a process for sharing information across the organisation (as appropriate) about people who have potential for success in a particular type of critical role, encountered through:
  - previous recruitment processes (for example, shortlisted candidates not offered the role for which they applied);
  - everyday business activities (such as meetings and conferences);
  - personal or professional networks of current employees or alumni; or
  - an active expression of interest in working for the organisation.

- Create opportunities to build and sustain relationships with people who may, one day, apply for a critical role. Activities such as seminars, workshops and launches provide an opportunity to establish and maintain contact with potential employees and share knowledge about your organisation and critical roles within it.
- Re-design critical roles so that capability requirements align with skills and knowledge sets commonly available in either the internal or external labour markets.
- Implement communication strategies to position the organisation as a desirable place to work in the minds of preferred candidates for particular types of critical role.
- Make hard-to-fill critical roles more desirable. For example, by changing the breadth of role accountabilities, profile of the role, reporting lines, or access to key resources.
- Ensure recruitment processes are clear, engaging and competitive.

### Readiness risk

To address the possibility that none of the potential successors are ready, willing or able to move into a critical role when needed, an organisation can:

- Influence the timing and nature of departures from critical roles, so that the organisation has sufficient time to prepare potential successors.
- Redesign critical roles so that they align more readily with skills and attributes easily found in the internal talent pools.
- Assess, with greater accuracy, the potential of internal candidates to succeed in particular types of critical role and assess how long it might take until internal candidates will be ready to apply for, and succeed, in the roles.

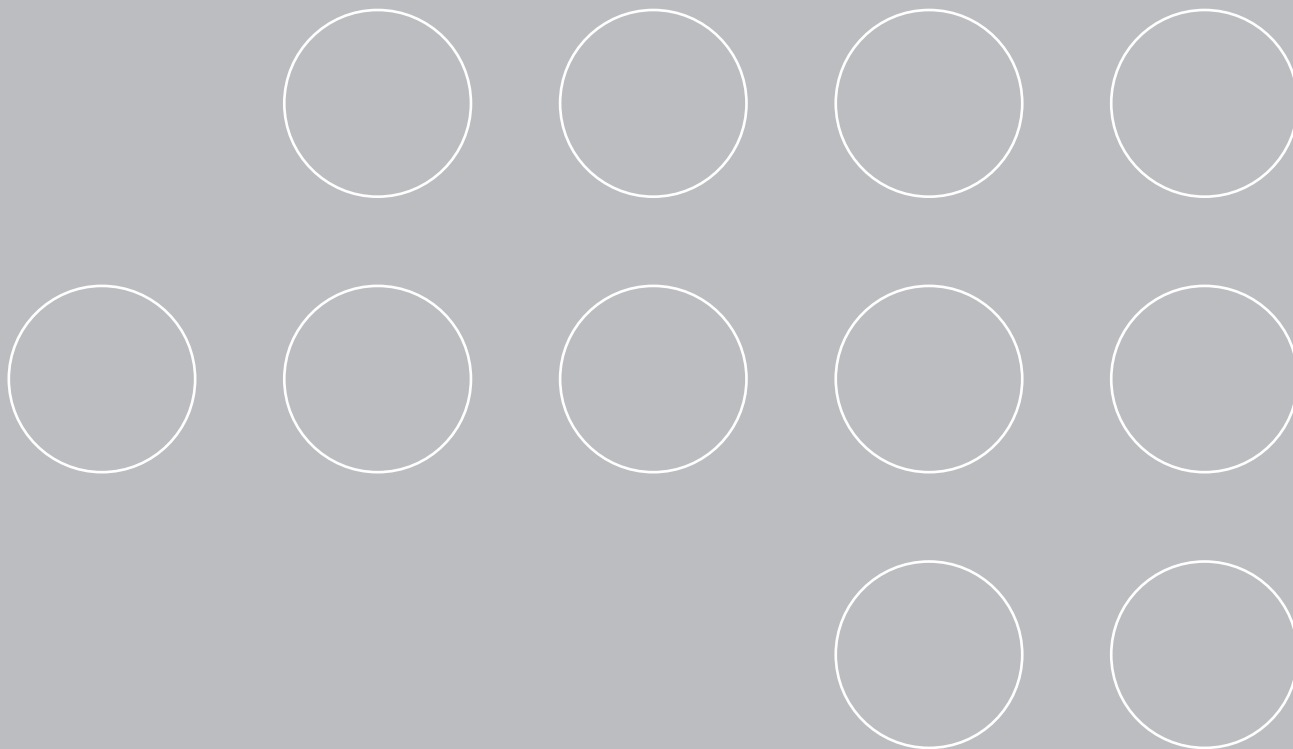


- Increase the range of activities to develop staff, especially opportunities for direct experience of the type of role (for example, through placements and secondments, opportunities for acting in the role, project work similar to that performed in the role) and learning through peer groups and mentors (for example, current and past incumbents in critical roles).
- Establish processes for gaining and documenting tacit knowledge for different types of critical role, including information about enablers and derailers, and building this knowledge into staff development activities.
- Establish the capacity to speed up the development of staff in light of potential vacancy risks.
- Use a range of activities to develop internal talent, especially opportunities for direct experience of a particular type of critical role and learning through peer groups and mentors.
- Establish mechanisms for an ongoing relationship with the employees after they leave (for example, establishing and maintaining an organisational alumni).
- Review performance expectations of different types of critical role and, especially, the speed with which these should be reached, to ensure they are reasonable.

#### Transition risk

To address the possibility that a new incumbent will fail to perform in a critical role, or will leave shortly after their appointment, an organisation can:

- Establish processes for gaining and sharing tacit knowledge about critical roles (hand-over notes, pre-departure meetings and exit interviews).
- Identify barriers to optimum performance in different types of critical role (inherent difficulties and complexities) and actively manage these by either removing the barriers or increasing employee skills to deal with them effectively.
- Communicate the performance expectations clearly to the new incumbent in a critical role and other people in the organisation as appropriate.
- Establish a clear induction and role on-boarding process to support transition into critical roles. This process should systematically provide new incumbents with the resources, contacts, knowledge and cultural understanding they require to reach optimum performance within the required timeframe. These activities typically include establishing a mentor; opportunities to shadow the previous incumbent; coaching for specific skill development; hand over notes, and a series of meetings with all key stakeholders.



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