



**Victorian
Public Sector
Commission**

Strategic Plan 2020-23



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Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to share the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Strategic Plan 2020-23. Since joining the Commission in July 2020, I have enjoyed working with a collaborative and passionate team. Our people want to shape a dynamic, contemporary public sector workforce that is trusted by the community because it acts with integrity and delivers exceptional outcomes for Victorians.

I envision a public sector that is diverse, responsive, digitally engaged and community focused. When we wrote this strategy in 2020, Victoria, Australia and the world was dealing with a critical outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The COVID-19 outbreak represented a significant challenge for us all. It highlighted the importance of a resilient and adaptive public sector as we respond, recover and rebuild across our economy and society. The Commission will play an important role in this as we support the Victorian public sector to adapt and respond.

We updated this strategy in 2021 to reflect the work we will do on Recommendation 76 of the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry: that the Public Sector Commissioner examines the evidence that emerged in this Inquiry as to the lines of accountability and responsibility as between Departmental heads and Ministers and gives guidance across the public service as to the obligations, both in law and in practice, on heads of departments and senior public office holders.

Over the last three years, the Commission has been through a period of renewal. We invested in our people, processes and technology. We have made changes to what we do and the way we work. We listened to our stakeholders and adjusted our course to meet their needs. We increased our engagement, refocused existing activities and grew our capabilities.

Our new strategic plan builds on the sensibility of the last. Our vision remains clear and unchanged: a trusted public sector that delivers exceptional outcomes for the Victorian community. We retain the same outcomes approach, building on priorities set in our previous strategy and maintaining our core functions in accordance with the Public Administration Act 2004 (PAA).

Our outcomes span four domains:

- an integrated and future-focused public sector
- an inclusive, high-performing and engaged workforce
- empowering and engaged leaders
- Victorians trust the public sector.

Over the next three years our strategic priorities will be:

- promote workforce reform
- support a positive employee experience
- develop outstanding leadership and stewardship
- promote public trust.

I look forward to implementing the initiatives in this strategic plan alongside my colleagues here at the Commission and more broadly out in the sector.

Adam Fennessy PSM

Commissioner
Victorian Public Sector Commission



The Commissioner's role

The Commissioner acts as an independent steward of the public sector, providing counsel on difficult ethical and integrity issues to leaders. The Commissioner has the power to issue binding codes of conduct and employment standards to the sector, and to make recommendations to agencies about adherence to them.

The Commissioner's role is established under the Public Administration Act 2004 (PAA) and is appointed for up to five years by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Premier. The Commissioner has statutory independence in respect to several functions. For administrative and all other functions, the Commissioner reports to the Minister for Government Services, Hon Danny Pearson MP.

The Commissioner is a member of the Victorian Secretaries' Board (VSB) which coordinates policy initiatives and promotes leadership and information exchange. VSB is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and comprised of Secretaries of all other departments and the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police.

Message from the Minister

The Victorian public sector is driven by a strong moral purpose to improve the lives of all Victorians. It delivers high quality services that meet the community's needs.

The community relies on the public sector to be efficient, effective and capable. People rightly expect public sector workers to conduct themselves with professionalism and act with integrity.

My role is to oversee the public sector, cyber security and citizen digital transaction reform. The Victorian Public Sector Commission's Strategic Plan envisions a workforce that is customer focused, connected and working together, steered by accountable leaders who embody public sector values and drive service excellence.

Most importantly, the Commission's strategy positions the community at the centre, putting people first in everything we do. I look forward to working with the Commissioner to achieve our shared vision: a trusted public sector that delivers exceptional outcomes for the Victorian community.

Hon Danny Pearson MP

Minister for Government Services





**The Commission is uniquely
positioned to guide the way.**

Our context

Challenge

Victoria's public sector delivers a wide range of services and support for the community. Its workforce includes 323,220 people, employed by Victorian Government departments and agencies. That's around 9% of the total Victorian labour force. They provide health, education, transport, emergency services and more. The community trusts the public sector to serve them effectively, help grow the economy and keep people safe.

In this time of unprecedented challenge, our workforce is responding to:

- COVID-19
- the impacts of climate change, including natural disasters like bushfires and floods
- population growth, demographic shifts and changing community needs
- rising customer demand for joined-up, personalised online government services
- digital disruption and transformation
- declining trust in institutions.

The public sector supports and is responsive to the government of the day. Our workforce is implementing government directives, strategies and policies in a complex operating environment that is fast-paced, dynamic and under fiscal constraint.

Opportunity

The Commission sees an opportunity to think strategically about how our workforce might adapt. We are uniquely positioned to guide the way.

The Commission can:

- convene departments and agencies to accelerate tangible progress in workforce management, public administration and service delivery
- provide consolidated, trusted data that enables evidence-informed decision making
- lead from the centre to implement whole of Victorian Government (WOVG) people initiatives
- support the Victorian Government's commitment to advance Aboriginal self-determination by working with the Aboriginal community in new ways
- shape and ready a diverse and inclusive Victorian public sector workforce to deliver for the community in years to come.

When we wrote this strategy, Victoria, Australia and the world was dealing with an outbreak of COVID-19. The Commission reacted immediately. We established an Executive relief pool, mobilising leaders across the Victorian Public Service to assist with the government's COVID-19 response. We also published guidance on remote recruitment to support remote management of the employee lifecycle.

COVID-19 has changed the way we work today. Its impact will unfold over 2020 and beyond. The Commission is anticipating implications for our workforce. As our context changes, we will respond practically and strategically to support a resilient public sector.

Governance

The Commission is a statutory authority accountable to the Premier in accordance with the Public Administration Act 2004.

For administrative arrangements, we are supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Our work is complementary, and we align in pursuit of providing central coordination, leadership and stewardship of the public sector.

The Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet serves as Chair of the Commission's Advisory Board.

Stakeholders

We worked with the Secretaries of each Victorian Government department to devise our strategic plan. We will continue working in partnership to deliver on our strategy, recognising that our stakeholders have knowledge, insight and experience that will help us now and into the future.

We are evolving our engagement from basic models of inform and consult to more participative models of collaborate and empower. We convene and participate in several interdepartmental groups and committees to co-design initiatives with the people most relevant to them.

The principles we follow are set out in our engagement strategy:

1. plan and coordinate with others
2. put people at the centre
3. engage for impact.

Like our peers, we are influenced by contemporary practice in human-centred design, evidence-based decision making and agile ways of working.

Meaningful and inclusive engagement will create better outcomes for our stakeholders and the community we serve.

Who we are

Our vision

A trusted public sector that delivers exceptional outcomes for the Victorian community.

Our purpose

Our purpose is set out in Section 38 of the Public Administration Act 2004. It is described as two objectives, each with supporting functions.

Objective A:

Strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and capability of the public sector to meet existing and emerging needs and deliver high quality services.

We do this by:

- assessing, advising and supporting on issues relevant to public sector administration, governance, service delivery and workforce management and development
- researching and disseminating best practice in relation to public sector administration, governance, service delivery and workforce management and development
- collecting and reporting on whole of government data
- conducting inquiries as directed by the Premier.

Objective B:

Maintain and advocate for public sector professionalism and integrity.

We do this by:

- advocating for an apolitical and professional public sector
- issuing and applying codes of conduct and standards
- monitoring and reporting to public sector body Heads on compliance with the public sector values, codes of conduct, and public sector employment principles and standards
- reviewing employment related actions and making recommendations following those reviews
- maintaining a register of lobbyists and a register of instruments.

Our identity

As a Commission, we share one identity, built on our role and attributes. It guides the way we work.

Role	The way we work	Attributes	The way we work
Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think long term• Remain apolitical• Be stable amidst change	Ambitious	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aspire to excellence• Maintain high standards• Strive to improve
Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amplify good practice• Show integrity and professionalism• Provide useful and practical advice	Contemporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver at pace• Apply leading practice• Modernise and update
Convenor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote collaboration• Make connections• Share what works	Trusted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop reliable expertise• Communicate deep knowledge• Be approachable
Thought leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider wider context• Research and disseminate• Model and influence		



**We live the public sector
values set out in the Public
Administration Act 2004.**

Our values

As a Commission, we live the public sector values set out in the Public Administration Act 2004.



Responsiveness

We provide frank, impartial and timely advice to the government. We provide high-quality services to the Victorian community, identifying and promoting best practice.



Integrity

We are honest, open and transparent in our dealings. We use powers responsibly, report improper conduct, and avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest. We strive to earn and sustain public trust of a high level.



Impartiality

We make decisions and provide advice on merit without bias, caprice, favouritism or self-interest. We act fairly by objectively considering all relevant facts and applying fair criteria. We implement government policies and programs equitably.



Accountability

We work to clear objectives in a transparent manner, accepting responsibility for our decisions and actions. We seek to achieve best use of resources and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.



Respect

We treat others fairly and objectively, ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying. We use the community's views to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis.



Leadership

We actively implement, promote and support these values.



Human Rights

We make decisions and provide advice consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. We actively implement, promote and support human rights.

Our strategy

Our approach

We use an outcomes approach to focus on what matters most to the community. We translated our vision and purpose into a clear set of outcomes. We will partner with departments and agencies to focus on four priorities that contribute to achieving those outcomes. Our initiatives are the specific programs or projects we plan to deliver over three years, understanding that our annual work plans must allow flexibility during this time of uncertainty.

Vision

A trusted public sector that delivers exceptional outcomes for the Victorian community.

Outcomes

An integrated and future-focused public sector

A public sector that is:

- committed to excellence
- innovative and adaptive to changing circumstances
- connected and works together.

An inclusive, high-performing and engaged workforce

A workforce that:

- is capable and flexible
- is inclusive and diverse
- is digitally enabled and customer focused
- embodies public sector values.

Empowering and engaged leaders

Leaders who:

- embody public sector values
- are strategic and accountable
- drive service excellence
- support and develop their people.

Victorians trust the public sector

A public sector that:

- is transparent and accountable
- has strong governance
- is trusted and acts with integrity.

Priorities

Strategic priority 1

Promote workforce reform

- Provide WOVG people data analytics and insight
- Support a digitally enabled and flexible workforce
- Provide workforce planning advice

Strategic priority 2

Support a positive employee experience

- Promote diverse, inclusive and healthy workplaces
- Support employment and career pathways
- Develop leading practice to support WOVG people initiatives

Strategic priority 3

Develop outstanding leadership and stewardship

- Support high quality leadership development and strengthen Executive leadership capability
- Promote a connected and collaborative Senior Executive Service
- Support Executive mobility and career pathways

Strategic priority 4

Promote public trust

- Promote and advocate for an impartial and professional public sector
- Drive a preventative approach to integrity and governance issues
- Strengthen integrity and governance capability
- Review and enquire into critical issues



**Our strategic priorities
explain what the
Commission will do.**

Strategic priority 1

Promote workforce reform

We will:

- provide WOVG people data analytics and insights
- support a digitally enabled and flexible workforce
- provide workforce planning advice.

We collect a rich set of data about the Victorian public sector workforce. It provides a holistic view of the public sector and its people. It shows the size, structure and composition of our workforce and provides an evidence base to inform continuous improvement. We will continue to publish the State of the Public Sector in Victoria report and run the People Matter Survey, sharing useful, actionable insights with public sector employers.

The State of the Public Sector in Victoria report is enhanced every year. It now includes findings from the employee opinion survey, comparative data and case studies of good practice. In future it will include deep dive analysis into current workforce issues.

Access to timely, trusted data helps the sector collectively build and maintain an inclusive, high-performing and engaged workforce. We will open access to public sector data by listing it on data.vic.gov.au, creating a workforce data hub and integrating it with the human capital management system.

Over the next three years, we'll work closely with the Department of Premier and Cabinet to apply what we have learned from the data to shape and ready the public sector workforce for the future. We will develop strategies to support new ways of working and public sector reform. Remote, digital work environments and flexible work arrangements will underpin a workforce that is mobilising and adapting to sustain service delivery.

Provide WOVG people data analytics and insight

1. Collect data, deliver evidence, informed advice and reports on people, leadership, culture and inclusion across the sector (e.g. monitoring of diversity targets and their impact on inclusion outcomes)
2. Provide insights on employee wellbeing/ resilience and monitor trends
3. Plan for an integrated data warehouse that works with the human capital management system
4. Design better People Matter Survey reports and establish a new, user-friendly survey platform
5. Keep improving the State of the Public Sector in Victoria report (e.g. digital first, data dashboards and deeper insights)
6. Create a workforce hub and dataset register for high value data sets

Support a digitally enabled and flexible workforce

7. Develop innovative approaches to support new ways of working and public sector reform including the Suburban Hubs initiative
8. Develop WOVG policy and initiatives to support flexible and hybrid work for the VPS workforce
9. Develop specialised training for priority cohorts to support new ways of working

Provide workforce planning advice

10. Develop learning and development strategy and frameworks
11. Develop leading practice in workforce planning and provide tools and methodologies to support it
12. Convene departments and agencies to share and develop strategic workforce planning initiatives

Strategic priority 2

Support a positive employee experience

We will:

- promote diverse, inclusive and healthy workplaces
- support employment and career pathways
- develop leading practice to support WOVG people initiatives.

A diverse workforce that is digitally enabled and customer focused will understand and deliver for the Victorian community. We want people of all abilities, backgrounds, genders and cultures to feel safe and empowered working in the public sector. Each of us has different ideas, perspectives and skills to share. The more we share, the more we understand each other. When our workforce is reflective of the community, government services work better for everyone.

To date we have focused our inclusion efforts on Aboriginal people and people with disability. We will continue to lead Barring Djinang, the public sector's five-year Aboriginal employment strategy, partnering with the Aboriginal community to evaluate its impact and set the next phase from 2022 onwards. We will continue to lead Getting to Work, the public sector's disability employment action plan, strategising with department champions to accelerate progress.

Over the next three years we will widen scope to develop a whole of Victorian Government diversity and inclusion strategy that supports a broader range of groups such as LGBTIQ and people from culturally, linguistically, economically and socially diverse backgrounds.

We will continue to support employment and career pathways, managing careers.vic.gov.au as the community's front door to public sector jobs. We will expand the number of professional streams in the Victorian Government graduate program, maintaining inclusive participation pathways and targeting recruitment to grow workforce capability in areas of future need. In this way, we will work to position Victorian Government as an employer of choice.

The Jobs and Skills Exchange was established in 2019 to provide Victorian Public Service employees with priority access to all jobs across the Victorian Public Service. We will work together to make sure the public service has the right people in the right place, at the right time. We will develop a Victorian Public Service professions model and find the most efficient way to meet surge demand for specific skills and expertise across departments.

Promote diverse, inclusive and healthy workplaces

13. Implement the Getting to Work disability employment action plan and develop the next phase, including employment policies, guidance and resources
14. Develop a WOVG diversity and inclusion strategy
15. In partnership with the Aboriginal community, deliver and evaluate the Barring Djinang Aboriginal employment strategy, then set the next strategy

Support employment and career pathways

16. Attract high quality candidates to public sector roles and pathways
17. Deliver the VPS graduate and early career programs and further develop professional streams for graduates
18. Promote inclusive participation pathways for Aboriginal and disability graduates
19. Deliver and enhance the Jobs and Skills Exchange and Careers.Vic to support skills development, workforce mobility and career opportunities

Develop leading practice to support WOVG people initiatives

20. Modernise merit-based practices and resources to support inclusion outcomes
21. Develop and support implementation of a VPS capability framework, including VPS professions model
22. Through the Jobs and Skills Exchange, establish a flexible employment model to meet surge demand for expertise across departments



Strategic priority 3

Develop outstanding leadership and stewardship

We will:

- support high quality leadership development and strengthen Executive leadership capability
- promote a connected and collaborative Senior Executive Service
- support Executive mobility and career pathways.

The public sector needs accomplished leaders who can steer transformational change and deliver professional, impactful service to Victorians. Our role is to support design and delivery of leadership programs that support Executives to embed new ways of thinking, leading and working, and build clear development pathways in the Senior Executive Service.

The Victorian Leadership Academy will continue to develop Executives, focusing them on leader mindsets, stewardship, people and performance. We will work with departments and leading institutions to ensure a bespoke experience, tailoring our services to identified department needs and the Victorian Public Service context.

Leaders thrive when they're connected to each other. We will continue to connect the Senior Executive Service, providing opportunities to share knowledge, build peer networks and advance trusted relationships across the Victorian Public Service. We will support the Victorian Secretaries' Board to convene the Senior Executive Service, encouraging leaders to collaborate beyond traditional boundaries to deliver joined-up government services for the community.

Over the next three years we will make it easier for Executives to move around the public sector. We will partner with departments to co-design and pilot an Executive mobility strategy.

Support high quality leadership development and strengthen Executive leadership capability

23. Work with departments to identify Executive leadership capability development needs
24. Map and curate VPS and external Executive leadership development programs
25. Build strategic partnerships with leading institutions and organisations to shape programs for the VPS context
26. Develop and implement a leadership capability framework for the Senior Executive Service aligned to the Senior Executive Classification Framework
27. Develop, deliver and evaluate leadership programs/modules to optimise investment and strengthen capability

Promote a connected and collaborative Senior Executive Service

28. Support the Victorian Secretaries' Board to convene the Senior Executive Service as a collective leadership group
29. Connect Senior Executive Service leaders to build networks and advance trusted relationships

Support Executive mobility and career pathways

30. In partnership with departments, co-design an Executive mobility strategy and pilot approach
31. Build, maintain and share data (insights, feedback and evaluation) to support the Executive mobility strategy and pilot approach



Strategic priority 4
Promote public trust

We will:

- promote and advocate for an impartial and professional public sector
- drive a preventative approach to integrity and governance issues
- strengthen integrity and governance capability
- review and enquire into critical issues.

The community's trust in the Victorian public sector depends on how well our workforce embodies its values. Upholding a values-based culture is also key to providing a positive workplace culture and experience for our employees. Our role is to model and promote the values as set out in the Public Administration Act 2004 and the Code of Conduct. There are seven values: responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights. The values underpin the behaviours that the government and community expect of all public sector employees.

Trust is challenged when integrity failures happen. For this reason, we will drive a preventative approach to integrity and governance issues. We will analyse the data the Commission collects to identify and address areas of high integrity risk, and proactively target guidance material. We will continue to perform our legislative functions such as reviews of employment-related actions, maintaining a register of lobbyists, and monitoring and reporting on compliance with public sector codes of conduct, public sector employment principles and standards. The Commission will also continue to implement Senior Executive Classification Frameworks for the VPS and public entities.

We will act on reports, reviews and recommendations undertaken by the Commission or other agencies across Victoria's integrity system, including the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission and the Victorian Ombudsman.

Importantly, we will act on Recommendation 76 of the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry: that the Public Sector Commissioner examines the evidence that emerged in this Inquiry as to the lines of accountability and responsibility as between Departmental heads and Ministers and gives guidance across the public service as to the obligations, both in law and in practice, on heads of departments and senior public office holders

Over the next three years we will strengthen governance capability across the sector and focus our advocacy work on impartiality and professionalism. Specifically, we will develop guidance on board inductions, employment principles and standards, and provide practical materials to help people interpret and apply the impartiality value in their work.

Promote and advocate for an impartial and professional public sector

32. Finalise and communicate guidance on lines of accountability, responsibility and obligations between Departmental heads and Ministers (i.e. recommendation 76 of COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry)
33. Develop guidance on employment principles and standards
34. Develop additional material and guidance to support code of conduct with a focus on impartiality
35. Convene communities of practice to share new practice and learning
36. Support and maintain Executive employment matters (e.g. contractual terms and conditions, handbook, classification framework and performance management, and compliance oversight)

Drive a preventative approach to integrity and governance issues

37. Undertake research, develop guidance and issue or revise policies to promote integrity and best practice governance in the sector (e.g. pre-employment screening)
38. Develop a data driven integrity risk model to proactively identify and address areas of high integrity risk
39. Perform legislative functions including reviews of action, maintaining the lobbyist register and monitoring and reporting on compliance

Strengthen integrity and governance capability

40. Maintain a comprehensive resource kit to support induction of public sector board members
41. Design and deliver targeted initiatives to support board governance, including for regional agencies

Review and enquire into critical issues

42. Undertake detailed capability, governance and integrity reviews as requested

Our delivery

Our people are fundamental to our success. We seek to maintain a versatile and ambitious team who work collaboratively with the sector to deliver on our strategy and achieve our vision. In line with our people strategy, the Commission will continue to develop its capabilities, enrich its culture and connect its people.

We will optimise our internal systems and processes and make better use of digital tools to find efficiencies in the way we work. We will practice good governance through responsible risk management, compliance and reporting.

We will implement our performance framework, measuring, monitoring and reporting on our performance from 2020 onwards. It reflects our commitment to pursue innovation and productivity improvements in our operations and spend public funds prudently. We will use the framework to hold ourselves to account, ensuring our strategy delivers value to our stakeholders and the Victorian community we serve.

We will measure both operational and financial performance. Our framework is adapted from the Report on Government Services 2017 published by the Australian Government Productivity Commission.

We measure our operational performance using key indicators for effectiveness and efficiency across our services. Our effectiveness measures reflect how well the outputs of a service achieve our objectives. Our efficiency measures reflect how our capabilities or resources are used to produce outputs for the purpose of achieving desired outcomes.

We measure financial performance across three dimensions: operating position, liquidity and efficiency. Our operating position shows our financial position measured against the balance on our net results. Liquidity is a measure of our ability to pay liabilities on time and is an assessment of our accounts receivable relative to accounts payable. Financial efficiency is a measure of how well we manage our cash flow.

We will report on our performance in parallel with our annual plan at vpssc.vic.gov.au



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Currency

This is Strategic Plan, version 1.1 published in June 2021.

Subsequent versions may be published from time to time. Always check for updates at:

www.vpsc.vic.gov.au/strategic-plan/

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