

# 2023 APS Employee Census Action Plan - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

The AIHW continues to achieve excellent census results, with positive responses generally much higher than other comparable agencies and the overall APS results. Our high response rate (this year 89%) also means our results provide a good representation of employee opinions.

Our 2023 results demonstrate that the AIHW is a supportive and inclusive workplace, where staff enjoy coming to work to do their best.

- 91% of employees are proud to work at the AIHW, and 95% of employees would recommend the agency as a good place to work.
- 94% of employees are happy to go the ‘extra mile’ at work when required, and 89% agree their job gives them opportunities to utilise their skills.
- 94% of employees agree that the agency supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture, and 92% of employees believe their supervisor cares about their health and wellbeing.

Action	Continue to prioritise employee wellbeing	Strengthen communication between our leaders and employees	Enable an environment of innovation
What does the data tell us?	<p>Our wellbeing index score of 81 is well above that of the APS and ranks 6th out of 100 agencies. However, given the turbulence of the past couple of years, it's vital that we retain our focus on employee wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of employees shared they feel burned out by their work.</li> <li>• 23% of employees indicated that relationships at work are strained sometimes, or more often.</li> <li>• While 93% of employees believe their immediate supervisor cares about their health and wellbeing, 14% of employees do not feel comfortable discussing their mental health and wellbeing with their supervisor.</li> <li>• 68% of employees indicated that they find their work stressful at least sometimes.</li> <li>• 46% of employees responded that their work is somewhat, or more, emotionally demanding.</li> <li>• 2% of employees indicated that they ‘always’ have unrealistic time pressures, with 10% indicating ‘often’, and 34% ‘sometimes’.</li> </ul> <p>Free-text comments highlighted concerns with resourcing not meeting the workload demands and described the impacts to employee wellbeing.</p>	<p>Our results across most questions relating to supervisors and SES managers are generally much higher than the APS and comparable agencies; however, there are some areas for improvement.</p> <p>As a highly technical agency, some of our leaders have a strong technical background but limited leadership experience prior to stepping into management roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19% of employees do not agree that their supervisor can delivery difficult advice whilst maintaining relationships.</li> <li>• 17% of employees do not agree that their supervisor engages with employees on how to respond to future challenges.</li> <li>• 68% of employees agree that the SES work as a team; however, 23% were unsure, potentially indicating a lack of visibility.</li> <li>• 27% of employees do not agree that communication between SES and other employees is effective.</li> </ul> <p>Free-text comments identified some leadership capability gaps in our middle management (EL) cohort, and highlighted the need for greater collaboration across groups.</p>	<p>Eighty-nine per cent of employees agree that one of their responsibilities is to continually look for new ways to improve the way we work, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only 49% of employees agree that the agency recognises and supports that failure is a part of innovation, and 15% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.</li> <li>• 26% of employees do not agree that employees are recognised for coming up with new and innovative ways of working.</li> <li>• only 69% of employees agree that the agency inspires them to come up with new or better ways of doing things, and 25% of employees neither agree nor disagree with this statement.</li> <li>• the ‘Enabling Innovation’ index is the agency’s lowest scoring index at 71.</li> </ul> <p>Free-text comments also highlighted that our employees would like to receive greater support for innovation, collaboration, and process improvements</p>
What is our aim?	<p>We want to maintain our workplace culture where our employees feel motivated to come to work every day and do their best. We will achieve this through continuing to prioritise the health and wellbeing of all our employees and providing them with access to a range of tools and resources that support their wellbeing.</p>	<p>We want to strengthen communication between our employees and leaders to ensure a strong level of engagement from our teams. SES and EL cohorts will work together to provide clear objectives and direction to better support their teams to achieve the agency’s goals.</p>	<p>We want to create an environment where all our employees feel empowered and inspired to challenge the status quo. We want to better recognise that learning from approaches that don’t work is an important part of innovation, and to support our employees in generating new ideas and creative solutions.</p>
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey our employees to explore drivers and potential solutions for burnout.</li> <li>• Prioritise management and leadership training for newly appointed supervisors.</li> <li>• Ensure our flexible work policy meets the needs of our employees, and our managers understand how they can best apply the policy within their teams.</li> <li>• Increase confidence levels of our managers and leaders in having necessary conversations to support more cohesive team environments.</li> <li>• Embed psychosocial risk assessments within our risk management framework.</li> <li>• Help reduce burnout levels through encouraging appropriate leave usage and monitoring excess leave balances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders will have discussions with their Groups and Units to communicate the agency’s vision and ensure our employees understand how their role contributes to our strategic directions.</li> <li>• We will invest in our leaders through offering relevant and targeted development opportunities to improve communication skills.</li> <li>• SES will improve the visibility of cross-agency collaboration by seeking opportunities to work together on joint communication of activities and outcomes.</li> <li>• SES will increase the level of informal communication and engagement with all employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO and Group Heads explicitly encourage, recognise, and reward innovation.</li> <li>• Unit Heads encourage their teams to identify and implement process improvements.</li> <li>• Supervisors normalise mistakes and failures through open discussions, focusing on lessons learned.</li> <li>• Leaders identify internal and external collaboration opportunities with a focus on innovation.</li> <li>• Introduce forums which focus on recent internal and external innovative success stories.</li> <li>• Continue to formally recognise and reward innovation through the Institute Awards.</li> </ul>