

2025 APS Employee Census Action Plan

AUSTRAC continued to have high engagement from employees in our 2025 APS Employee Census survey. This valuable feedback has been analysed and reviewed by our executive leadership group who have endorsed this action plan. The progress of the plan will be tracked and reported to the executive board on a triannual basis.

DCEO Enterprise Enablement Division and GM Transformation sponsor the 2025 Census Action Plan. People and Business Solutions branch is the owner with the Capability Committee providing oversight.

The 2025 Action Plan builds on the foundation set in 2024, refining key themes into practical, process-focused actions. Our goal is to embed improvements into everyday practice, strengthen accountability, and deliver measurable outcomes for AUSTRAC and our people. The focus is on fewer, sharper and future focused initiatives, that will not overload staff but will build the systems, processes and capabilities needed for sustained improvement in the years ahead. It is about introducing simpler, more consistent ways of working and clarifying expectations, so staff experience real improvement over time without added pressure. We want to create a more transparent, responsive, and empowered environment where teams are better equipped to navigate complexity and drive meaningful progress.

Communication and Administration

As our workplace undergoes significant growth and change, improving communication and administrative practices is critical to ensuring alignment, agility, and trust. This is not simply a matter of trimming the length of documents or streamlining memos — it requires consideration of how information flows, how decisions are made, and how much context is shared across different levels of the agency, and ensuring information is shared in clear and accessible ways. As we transform our tools and technology, we also need to reconsider and simplify our workflows and decision-making processes, appropriate to the level of risk being managed.

You told us

Overall, communication is still positive at 74%, but we’ve seen it decline over the past five years. Only 41% of you feel **decision-making** is clear and efficient, and 70% say **administrative processes** are not streamlined and impact you doing your best work. While local communication from supervisors and managers is seeing positive improvement, many of you flagged **internal communication** and **change management** as sticking points — 52% see internal communication as a barrier, especially at the EL levels. We also heard from **neurodivergent** staff and those with **disabilities** who feel less included in consultations and change efforts. Even though **leadership communication improved** from 2024, challenges remain. Processes still feel slow and decision-making too layered, making change harder to manage. You want a clearer understanding of expectations and processes to empower you to make decisions without multiple and layered approvals.

Our Commitment

- Workshops with EL1 and EL2 staff to identify pain points and improvements to streamlining business processes, approvals and clearances and understand what better “internal communication” means across the agency.
- Introduce a clear approach to standardise upward communication (both papers and emails) and run short sessions for staff on writing for executives (pyramid principle, headline first, details later).
- Introduce simplified, risk-tiered approval models and behavioural tools to empower employees to make decisions within defined authority levels and ensure consistency and accountability across the agency.

Workload and Wellbeing

As we continue to grow and evolve, improving workload and wellbeing practices is essential to sustaining performance, engagement, and resilience. 2025 is about embedding sustainable workforce support mechanisms — building capability pipelines and ensuring leadership wellbeing is prioritised — so that long-term pressure on staff is eased and you feel supported, valued, and equipped to contribute effectively during this period of growth.

You told us

You are proud to work at AUSTRAC and committed to the agency’s goals, but 64% of you still feel your **workload is slightly or well above capacity**, with EL1 and EL2 cohorts experiencing the highest levels of **stress and burnout**. The EL1 cohort feel less recognised and empowered, with **decreasing autonomy, clarity, and consultation**, and EL1s in some divisions feel less empowered than others. 92% of staff believe their **immediate supervisor cares** about their health and wellbeing, and where there are differences in wellbeing sentiment these are related to workload/process realities. Workload stress is impacted by technology, with only 41% of staff feeling that you have the tools and technology you need to do your jobs effectively. While progress has been made you want **clearer prioritisation** and more **visible support** to help you manage your workload. You want wellbeing initiatives that are **inclusive and adaptable, co-designed** with diverse cohorts to better reflect different work experiences.

Our Commitment

- Establish and maintain a surge workforce skills register and provide clear communication templates to use when surge activation is required.
- Establish a dedicated AML/CTF graduate pipeline to relieve workload pressure, strengthen long-term workforce capability, and create future leaders who understand reforms.
- Deliver targeted wellbeing support for EL1 and EL2 staff, including peer forums and tools to manage decision load and change, with divisional-specific issues identified.
- Continue with agency-wide meeting-free Fridays once per month and encourage local time management practices to support staff within the operational requirements of their work area.

Tools and Technology

As the agency grows, our tools and technology must evolve with it. While projects to deliver new and updated systems and tools are underway, progress takes time and hasn’t matched expectations or the demands of change. We need an approach that not only delivers updated, inclusive systems but also improves how they’re rolled out, supported, and embedded into everyday work. To support a modern, high-performing workplace, we need tools that are designed to meet the diverse needs of all staff to enable better collaboration, clearer communication, and greater confidence in how we work together.

You told us

Satisfaction with technology has more than halved in five years, with staff increasingly seeing **technology as a barrier** rather than an enabler of performance. While technology results have improved slightly since 2024 and 80% of staff are optimistic that current **technology investments will improve work** in future, you still experience daily frustration. **Technology uplift** is not felt evenly across the agency with some divisions feeling significantly less empowered by the tools they have to complete their work. You want modern technology systems that **reduce manual effort and allow for greater collaboration**. You want improvements that are sustainable, visible, and reduce pressure, with **access to smarter tools**. 2025 saw a huge improvement in **recognising that failure is a part of innovation**, but you want to see the agency more **encouraging of innovation** and **less risk averse**.

Our Commitment

- Address divisional technology pain points (e.g., VPN stability, case management, O365 tools) with visible progress updates showing tangible wins and lessons learned from failures.
- Pilot AI and smart automation tools to reduce repetitive tasks and free staff for higher-value work.
- Provide practical training (starting with EL1/EL2 leaders) on effectively using new tools and AI capability and confidence, tied directly to everyday tasks to build skill and capability and assist with workload management/pressures.