



Australian Government  
Geoscience Australia

# People and Culture Strategy 2028

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Who we are, and how we work

Earth sciences for Australia's future | [ga.gov.au](http://ga.gov.au)



## **Cover image**

A group of Geoscience Australia employees in the repository at the Symonston office in Canberra, ACT.



Australian Government  
Geoscience Australia

# People and Culture Strategy 2028

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Who we are, and how we work

**Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources**

Minister for Resources, and Minister for Northern Australia: the Hon Madeleine King MP

Secretary: Ms Meghan Quinn PSM

**Geoscience Australia**

Chief Executive Officer: Dr James Johnson

Geoscience Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.



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# Acknowledgement of Country

Geoscience Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities and their contributions as Australia's first scientists, mappers, miners, and navigators. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present.



ViaSat antenna featuring the artwork of Arrernte artist called Caterpillar Tracks

## **Our vision**

To be a world leading organisation informing evidence-based decisions through integrated Earth sciences to secure Australia's future.

## **Our purpose**

To be the trusted advisor on Earth science to inform government, community and industry decision-making.

## **Our impacts**

We are inclusive, innovative, respectful and collaborative in leading Earth sciences for government, communities and industry.

# Executive Board Foreword

As the Executive Board, we are proud to introduce our People and Culture Strategy 2028 (the Strategy), which is our commitment to fostering and empowering a safe, resilient and high performing workforce.

As the nation's trusted advisor on Earth sciences, our purpose is to inform government, industry and community decision-making for Australia's future, contributing to a strong economy, resilient society and sustainable environment.

Our people and culture are our foundation for, and greatest assets in, achieving this purpose.

Aligned with the priorities of Australian Public Service (APS) Reform and our organisational Strategy 2028, this Strategy articulates our long-term vision to support our workforce to be capable, empowered and collectively safe through strategic people and culture principles. This will position us to secure the people and culture we need to continue to foster innovation, collaboration and excellence in everything we deliver.

The Strategy recognises that our strength lies in the capabilities, well-being, and collective culture of our people. It articulates our approach to enhancing the ways we work to put us in the best position to attract, develop and retain a high performing workforce.

The Strategy builds on the significant work we have delivered across our organisation in recent years. It is critical in guiding us to continue to support people throughout their careers and in how we maintain and grow our capability and capacity amid our dynamic and evolving contexts.

Geoscience Australia is already a great place to work. As the Executive Board, we commit to this Strategy as we collectively continue to strive for excellence and maintain Geoscience Australia's position as a leader in our field.

**Dr James Johnson FTSE**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Ms Alison Rose**  
Chief of Space Division

**Dr Andrew Heap**  
Chief of Minerals, Energy  
and Groundwater Division

**Ms Maree Wilson**  
Chief of Place and Communities Division

**Dr Steve Hill**  
Chief Scientist

**Mr Trent Rawlings**  
Chief of Corporate Division



# Introduction

Geoscience Australia is the trusted advisor for Earth science, informing government, communities, and industry with evidence-based decisions. Our work spans the unique Australian landscape, our vast marine territories, the frozen frontiers of Antarctica and Earth observation.

Our roadmap to delivering our services and securing Australia's future as a global leader in Earth sciences is articulated in our organisational Strategy 2028. It is supported by our Science Strategy 2028, which outlines our strategic framework to achieving the government's objectives through our scientific endeavours.

## Our unique and complex context

Geoscience Australia operates to deliver information and services aligned to the priorities of the government of the day. Our context is shaped by the APS Values, employment principles and legislation which inform our objectives and how we operate. Central to how we function is the current APS Reform agenda, which articulates the APS's approach to building a stronger public service that delivers better outcomes for the community, acts as a model employer and contributes to a fair-minded and more inclusive Australia. To achieve this, there is a strong focus on how the APS builds and retains the capability and capacity of its workforce. This is critical for our ability to deliver outcomes and inform decision-making for the benefit of the Australian public.

As we deliver vital geoscience services to the nation, we face an array of global challenges, from climate change to a turbulent geopolitical landscape. Technological shifts, changing community demographics, digital workforce transformation and increased demand for specialist skills all contribute to the evolving environment in which we do our work.

Contributing to our complex context is our diverse Work Health and Safety (WHS) risk profile. We work and conduct field activities in dynamic risk environments nationally and internationally, encompassing both physical and psychosocial hazards that demand attention for the wellbeing of our workforce.

In the face of these challenges, our organisational identity remains rooted in our values of collaboration, openness, accountability, respect, integrity and excellence. This Strategy is our guide to build and embed behaviours representative of our values as we progress towards our strategic goals in our dynamic operating environment.

## People and culture as an enabler

Our people and culture underpin our ability to produce excellent geoscience and trusted advice.

Our people are our identity and at the core of everything we do, creating the value we offer through their skills and experiences. Our culture expresses how we work and is shown through our actions and decisions over time. It is formed by shared values, principles and behaviours that define our identity and characteristics. When our people and culture are aligned, our workforce is ready for the future and equipped with the skills to deliver high quality outcomes.

Through five strategic people and culture principles, this Strategy is our commitment and approach to ensure we have a resilient and future-focused workforce to provide Earth sciences for Australia's future.

# Our workforce

This Strategy is shaped by our internal workforce demographics, characteristics and the dynamics of the external labour market. Understanding our current workforce informs our approach to how we, as an organisation, strategically enable our people and culture to deliver current and future objectives.

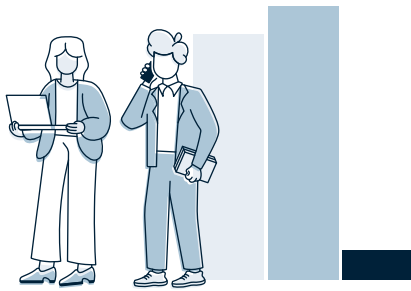
## Geoscience Australia workforce

### APS level

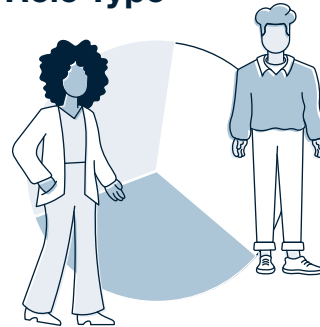
**46%**  
APS 1-6

**51%**  
EL 1-2

**3%**  
Senior Executives



### Role Type<sup>+</sup>

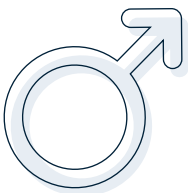


**34%**  
Science

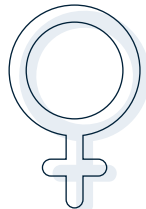
**33%**  
Technical

**33%**  
Professional services

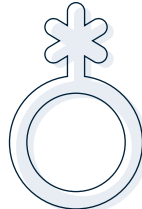
### Gender\*



**54%**  
Man or male



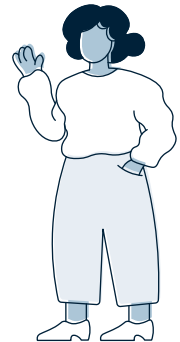
**41%**  
Woman or female



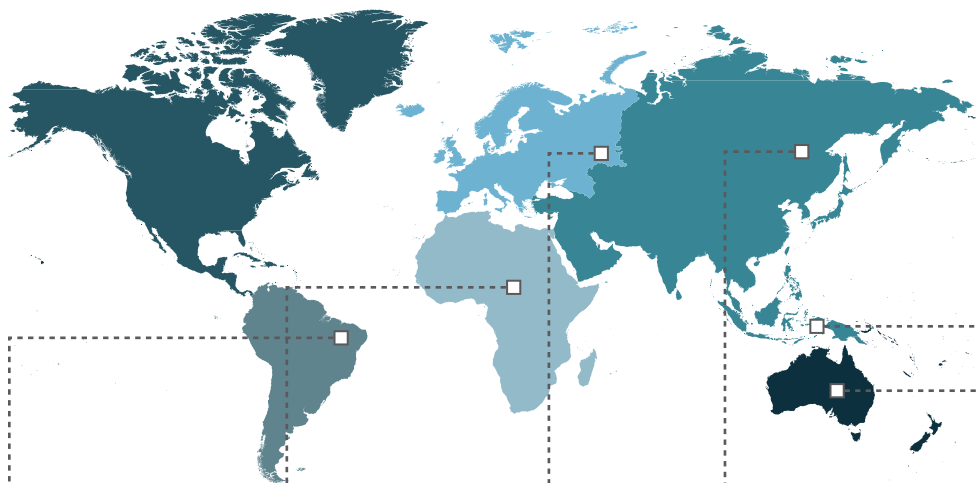
**1%**  
Non-binary



**50%**  
of senior executive positions are held by women



### Cultural background\*<sup>^</sup>



**3%**

North, South and Central American and Caribbean Islander

**3%**

North and Sub-Saharan African and Middle Eastern

**26%**

North-West, Southern, Eastern and Anglo-European

**14%**

South-East, North-East, Southern and Central Asian

**1%**

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

**65%**

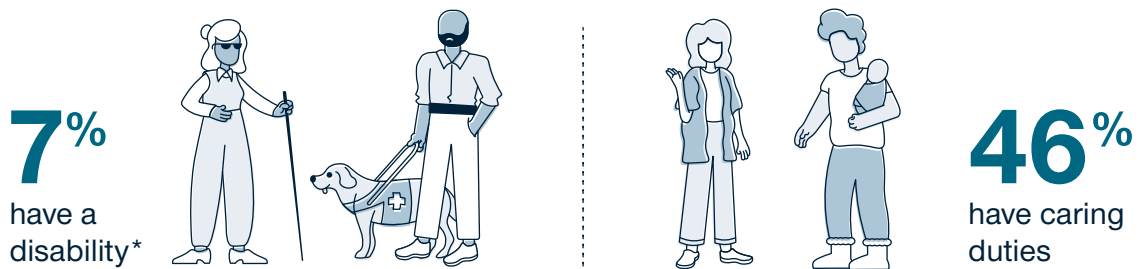
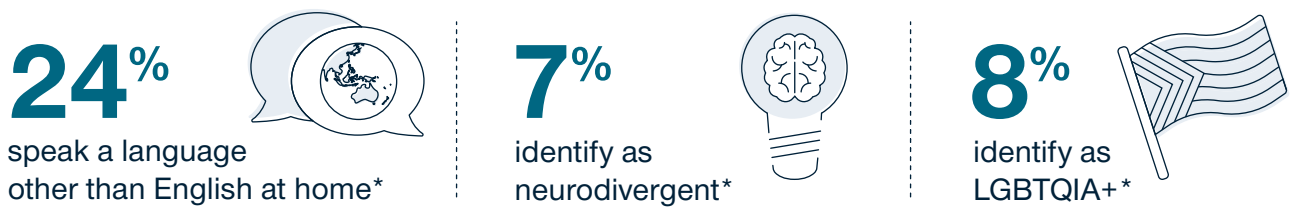
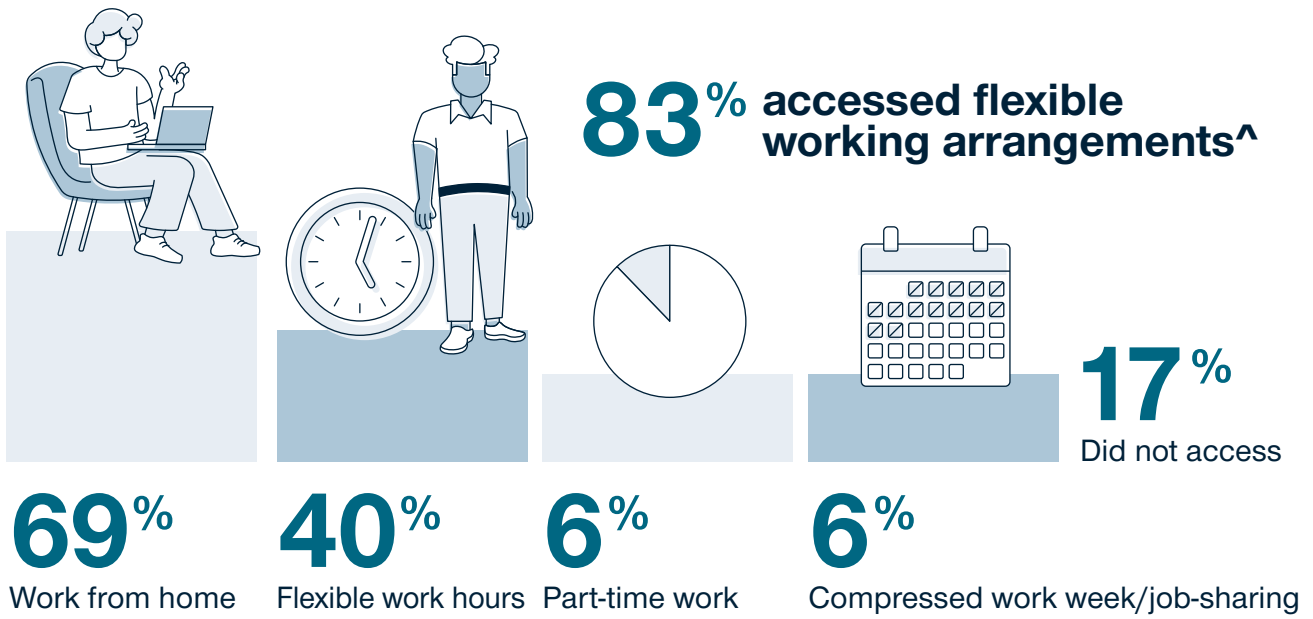
Australian

**4%**

New Zealander, Maori, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian, and Polynesian

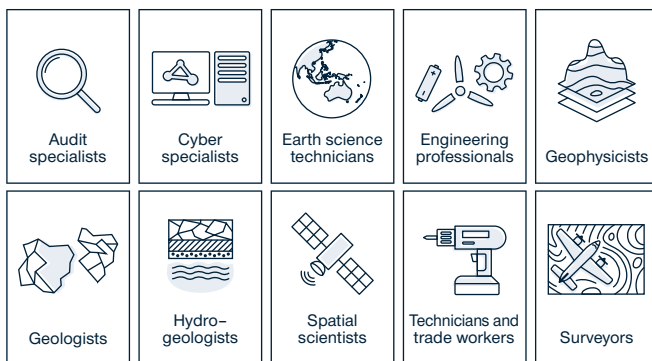
\* Excludes senior executive roles    \* Only includes those who chose to identify    ^ Includes multi-response answers

Source: APS Census data 2023



## Industry snapshot

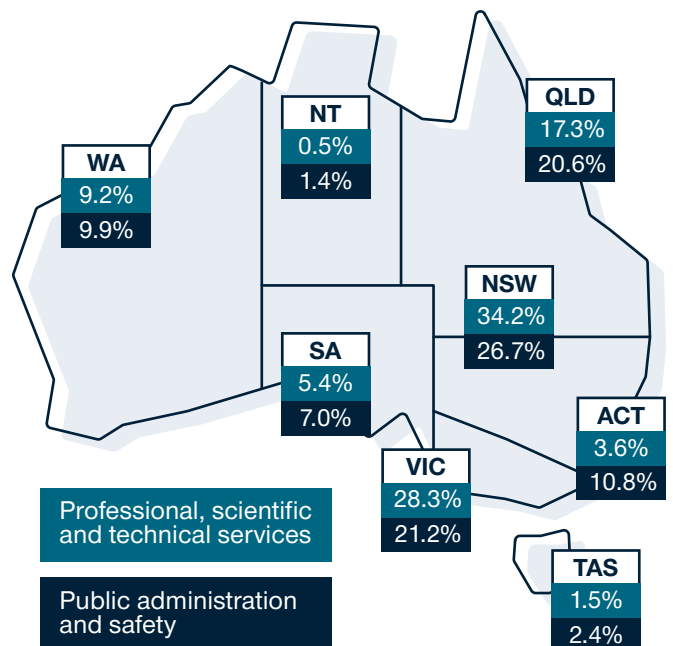
### Occupations in shortage



Online job advertisements requiring a bachelor's degree or higher

**51%** in the ACT | **39%** nationwide average

### Distribution of industry workforce



Together, our people and culture  
are the foundation and enabler for  
how we are shaping the future of  
Earth sciences in Australia.

# Strategic people and culture principles

Acting as our guide, these strategic people and culture principles articulate our vision and overarching approach to how we, as an organisation, will attract, develop, and retain our workforce to deliver Earth sciences for Australia's future.



## ■ Interdisciplinary excellence

We are a high performing workforce who bring together teams of geoscience, technical and professional expertise to address and solve complex challenges.

To achieve this, we will:

- develop plans to align workforce capability and capacity with our current and future needs
- deliver initiatives and promote opportunities for cross-skilling and workforce cohesion
- implement clear pathways for capability and career development, including specialists and generalists.



## ■ Strengthened safety performance

We intentionally embed and nurture a holistic approach to physical and psychological safety across all our workplaces.

To achieve this, we will:

- prioritise and remain accountable for safety across the organisation
- mature our approach to safety and remain adaptable to contemporary practices
- prioritise safety learning to ensure all people feel comfortable and confident to share knowledge and keep each other safe.



## ■ Leaders at all levels

We lead with purpose and initiative, demonstrating behaviours and capabilities that inspire innovation, cooperation and agility.

To achieve this, we will:

- define the types of leaders we have and what this means for our shared success
- refresh our leadership charters, articulating behaviours which resonate and support leadership at all levels
- deliver tools and resources to support everyone's potential to be an effective leader.



## ■ Success through diversity

We harness the strength of diverse backgrounds, skills and experience as an equitable and responsive organisation.

To achieve this, we will:

- develop targeted initiatives to increase the representation of diversity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related roles, and in leadership positions
- continue the removal of structural and systemic barriers to career progression and retention
- build and embed the culture and systems to ensure everyone feels safe and can bring their authentic selves to work.



## ■ Collaborating for impact

We meaningfully collaborate and engage across the organisation, government, community and industry to effectively apply our resources to achieve our priorities and commitments.

To achieve this, we will:

- actively engage across the organisation to prioritise, create capacity and deliver workforce solutions
- evolve workforce optimisation practices to improve efficiency and foster connection
- foster partnerships to tackle complex challenges and achieve collective goals.

# Implementing the Strategy

## Implementation activities

To realise our strategic people and culture principles, will we pursue activities designed to enhance who we are and how we work. Our approach and our timeframes for implementation will be articulated through Action Plans.



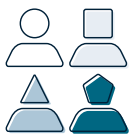
### Safety values

to guide and ensure a shared commitment to safety, so we can remain accountable, confident, and connected in all our endeavours.



### Safety systems

to uplift our safety capability and assure integrity through safe work design.



### Culture and inclusion programs

to progress our success in diversity and inclusion, to foster a safe, respectful, and equitable work environment for everyone.



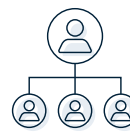
### Workforce optimisation

to understand how we are organised to improve efficiency, productivity, and performance across the organisation.



### Career pathways

to aid our workforce's growth, articulating criteria to develop and progress within their professions.



### Workforce planning

to generate insights into our current and future workforce needs and to ensure our practices are aligned.



### Employee value proposition

to continue to be an employer of choice, articulating our diverse and collaborative environment to support the attraction and retention of a motivated and high performing workforce.



### Leadership development

to strengthen leadership capabilities and behaviours through focused initiatives, ensuring their ongoing cultivation and maintenance.



### Reward and recognition

to recognise and celebrate behaviours and actions that enable a high performing and inclusive workplace.



### Capability development

to identify both shared and unique skills of our people, supporting development, workforce efficiency and mobilisation.

## Phased approach

This Strategy will be implemented through three phases, each supported by specific Action Plans. Action Plans for each phase will be developed based on the activities and outcomes from the preceding phases. By building upon efforts within each phase, we will deliver activities through a considered and targeted approach to realise our strategic people and culture principles:

### **01** Establishing phase

FY 2024–25

Implementing activities to establish the foundations to continue to support and develop our people and culture.

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### **02** Building phase

FY 2025–26 to 2026–27

Delivering activities to mature and enhance our people and culture foundations, focusing on opportunities for collective growth and performance.

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### **03** Optimising phase

FY 2027–28 onwards

Refining our activities to maximise the potential of our people and culture, ensuring sustainability and continuous improvement.

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# Evaluation

We are committed to evaluating the implementation and impact of our Strategy. By applying adaptable and data-informed evaluation practices, we will know where we have been effective and where we can improve.

We will measure our success using Monitoring, Evaluating and Learning (MEL) Plans towards the end of each phase, to ensure we remain accountable to our commitments. The findings from each phase's MEL Plan will inform the development of the proceeding phase, ensuring continuous evolution.

## MEL Plans

For each phase, Action Plans will include detailed MEL Plans, articulating how we will measure and track our progress to meet each phase's maturity milestones. Each MEL Plan will articulate the behaviours and attitudes we will see, and the Action Plans will detail the metrics that will indicate our progress to achieving this. The MEL Plans will be designed iteratively, using findings from the previous phase to continuously improve the implementation of the Strategy. The MEL Plan at Appendix A sets out how we will measure our success in the Establishing phase of the Strategy.

By applying adaptable and data-informed evaluation practices, we will know where we have been effective and where we can improve.

## Maturity milestones

To ensure our implementation of activities align to our long-term visions, maturity milestones for the strategic people and culture principles are described for each of the phases on the following page. This provides a high-level structure to evaluate the progress of the Strategy.

## Data collection and analysis

Multiple data types and sources will be used in each phase's MEL Plan to evaluate our progress. We will leverage insights from:

- staff feedback (qualitative and quantitative), from sources including the APS Employee Census, Science Evaluations and pulse surveys, to understand workforce engagement and experiences across the organisation
- key performance indicators, including those outlined in our Corporate Plan and Annual Report, to assess the extent to which the Strategy is enabling the achievement of our organisational goals.



# The Strategy's maturity milestones

## 01

**Establishing phase**  
FY 2024–25

## 02

**Building phase**  
FY 2025–26 to 2026–27

## 03

**Optimising phase**  
FY 2027–28 onwards



### Interdisciplinary excellence

There is awareness and understanding that to deliver our purpose, we must integrate geoscience, technical and professional capabilities across teams.

Individuals are actively engaged in opportunities for capability development and work across functions to deliver integrated solutions.

Geoscience Australia strategically secures and develops the skills and capabilities we need for the future across the organisation.



### Strengthened safety performance

Safety values and systems are collaboratively established and safe by design to support our needs and enable everyone to collaborate openly and with trust on matters of safety.

Individuals and teams are educated in and feel confident and capable to apply safety knowledge in risk management across all workplaces and domains.

Geoscience Australia sustains quality safety processes and relationships, aiding enhanced safety outcomes.



### Leaders at all levels

Leadership is understood to exist beyond formal roles and titles, and leadership achievements are widely celebrated.

Individuals across levels and the organisation demonstrate leadership potential and are supported to develop and grow this capability both formally and informally.

Geoscience Australia has leaders at all levels who foster continuous improvement and shared success.



### Success through diversity

The organisation recognises, celebrates, and actively supports the value that diverse backgrounds and experiences bring to its culture, effective delivery, and innovation.

Individuals and teams actively embrace diversity and inclusive ways of working to deliver outcomes.

Geoscience Australia is a diverse workplace where people can be their authentic selves.



### Collaborating for impact

Approaches to bridge gaps and foster regular cross-functional collaboration exist to address siloed ways of working.

Individuals and teams actively engage in opportunities to collaborate internally and externally, including across government.

Geoscience Australia delivers solutions for our end users, reflective of collaboration across the organisation, the public service and with our partners.

# Governance and reporting

Delivering, realising and evaluating our Strategy requires commitment and accountability by everybody within the organisation. To ensure this, governance roles and needs of key stakeholders are as follows:

Key Stakeholders	Role(s)	Responsibilities	Timing	Reporting Needs
<b>Executive Board</b>	Accountability, Ownership	Promote our Strategy and the delivery of supporting activities.	Quarterly	Progress of the Strategy
		Accountable for ensuring the organisation is appropriately resourced to deliver Strategy activities.		Financial and resourcing requirements
		Align strategic people and culture priorities with the broader organisational purpose and direction.		Organisational interdependencies
<b>Sub-Committees</b>	Oversight, Consultation	Provide insight and feedback on implementation of the Strategy.	Quarterly	Progress of the Strategy
		Drive the design and delivery of implementation activities.		Financial and resourcing requirements
<b>All staff</b>	Consultation, Feedback	Opportunities to shape and contribute to implementation of the Strategy.	Ongoing	Progress of the Strategy and implemented activities
		Engage with Strategy outputs and provide feedback to support continuous improvement.		
<b>Human Resources</b>	Design, Delivery, Reporting	Design and deliver the Strategy's activities, supporting capability and capacity needs across the organisation.	Quarterly	Progress of the Strategy
				Implementation status updates

# Interdependencies

The implementation of this Strategy will be enabled, and its outcomes supported, by a range of interdependencies.

## Senior leadership

Establishing clear organisational expectations and support for our people and culture is driven by senior leadership. This includes senior executives and champions who exemplify and encourage behaviours and structures to support our workforce. The effectiveness and success of this Strategy relies on the commitment of our leadership to endorse and deliver the Strategy and its supporting activities.

## Strategy 2028

[Strategy 2028](#) is our enterprise strategy to outline our long-term vision be a world-leading organisation informing evidence-based decisions to secure Australia's future, through integrated Earth sciences. This Strategy facilitates Strategy 2028's vision through a sustainable approach to securing the capability and capacity necessary.

## Science Strategy 2028

[Science Strategy 2028](#) is our strategic framework for how we conduct and deliver science and services to achieve the objectives outlined in Strategy 2028. The Science Strategy and this Strategy work together to ensure we have the skills and resources we need to deliver geoscience outcomes. Effective planning and strategic initiatives at the divisional level play a crucial role in facilitating this endeavour. This Strategy enables divisions to continue to deliver sciences and services.

## First Nations Strategy 2030

The First Nations Strategy (under development) reflects a renewed commitment to reconciliation and building genuine and respectful partnerships with First Nations people, communities and organisations. Our Strategies combine to enhance cultural capability and safety, and to strengthen the reputation and culture of our organisation.

## Data and Digital Strategy 2028

Our workforce and technologies are two critical enablers to achieving our broader organisational mission. The [Data and Digital Strategy](#) sets the vision and roadmap for contemporary digital capabilities and technology, enabling us to work more collaboratively, innovatively and efficiently as an organisation. High quality and fit-for-purpose platforms and methods to communicate and work to deliver our goals are key to enhancing our performance and success.

## Finance Strategy 2024

Achieving financial sustainability will ensure we can continue to meet our organisational objectives. The [Finance Strategy](#) works in partnership with this Strategy to ensure our people and culture objectives are funded and realised over the next four years.

## Corporate services

Our organisation depends on our corporate services which enable our strategic goals and daily activities through systems, people and processes. This Strategy recognises the importance of our corporate services and relies on their integration with our priorities and implementation plans to ensure successful and sustainable outcomes.

## Employee networks

Our employee networks are critical to this Strategy's success. They foster a space for people to connect with one another to share lived experiences and advice, find allies and engage in dialogue around diversity, workplace inclusion and advocacy. Our employee networks provide a platform to ensure the Strategy and its implementation supports diversity, equity and inclusion and responds to the unique contexts and needs of all our people.

# Appendix A

## Monitoring, Evaluating and Learning Plan

This MEL Plan sets out how we will measure our success during the Establishing phase of the Strategy for each of the strategic people and culture principles, and is supported by a measurable Action Plan.



### Interdisciplinary excellence

We are a high performing workforce who bring together teams of geoscience, technical and professional expertise to address and solve complex challenges.

#### How we will know we are on track

- We have reviewed and prioritised core business to inform capability and sustainability decisions.
- We have resources that articulate capabilities required for the workforce, recognising general and specialist capabilities.
- We equip employees with resources and tools to understand how to build and enhance their skills aligned to organisational capability needs.
- We have developed and actively promoted opportunities for employees to work with and across different fields and areas of the organisation.

#### What success looks like

- Senior leaders understand the skills and capabilities they need in their teams, now and into the future.
- Individuals understand the capabilities they need to succeed in their role, and as a Geoscience Australia and APS employee.
- Individuals recognise how their skills and role contribute to collective organisational and APS goals.
- Individuals from different functions and areas have opportunities to work with and learn from each other.

#### Maturity milestone

There is awareness and understanding that to deliver our purpose, we must integrate geoscience, technical and professional capabilities across the organisation.



## Strengthened safety performance

We intentionally embed and nurture a holistic approach to physical and psychological safety across all our workplaces.

### How we will know we are on track

We have developed and actively communicated the expected safety actions and behaviours required across all levels of the safety systems.

We have communicated clear safety values and secure pathways to share safety learnings and concerns.

We have opportunities and mechanisms for everyone to collaborate on safety system learning.

### What success looks like

Individuals are confident in their understanding of safety systems and their role within them.

Individuals feel secure and open to engage with safety learning to mature safety practices.

Individuals and teams engage in ongoing opportunities and initiatives for sharing safety practices.

### Maturity milestone

Safety systems are collaboratively established and safe by design to support our needs. There is awareness and understanding of the organisation's safety values.



## Leaders at all levels

We lead with purpose and initiative, demonstrating behaviours that inspire innovation, cooperation and progress.

### How we will know we are on track

We have a leadership charter that is socialised and incorporated into our performance framework.

We have developed an approach to fostering leadership at all levels.

Our rewards and recognition framework formally recognises leadership across multiple disciplines and organisational contributions.

### What success looks like

Everyone understands our leadership charter and how it is relevant to their role.

Individuals are encouraged to develop their leadership potential and be role models for the organisation.

Leadership achievements are recognised and celebrated both formally and informally.

### Maturity milestone

Leadership is understood to exist beyond formal roles and titles, and leadership achievements are widely celebrated.



## Success through diversity

We harness the strength of diverse backgrounds, skills and experience as an equitable and responsive organisation.

### How we will know we are on track

We have developed a targeted and informed approach to attracting diverse talent, including a strong employee value proposition.

We have developed a targeted and informed approach to address barriers to progression experienced by people from diverse backgrounds.

We have communicated reporting mechanisms and channels to report bullying, harassment and discrimination, which staff trust and utilise.

### What success looks like

Geoscience Australia is a supportive, inclusive and safe workplace for people from diverse backgrounds and experiences and is an attractive place to work.

Individuals from diverse backgrounds are empowered to progress their careers.

Everyone understands their responsibility to uphold an inclusive and respectful culture, and to challenge behaviours that detract from this.

### Maturity milestone

The value of diverse backgrounds and experiences to deliver science excellence is recognised and celebrated.



## Collaborating for impact

We meaningfully collaborate and engage across the organisation, government, community and industry to maximise our impact.

### How we will know we are on track

We have developed streamlined ways of working and communication across the organisation.

We have developed clear communications and streamlined processes around workforce planning and optimisation.

### What success looks like

Individuals and teams have opportunities to work across functional areas to deliver more integrated and streamlined solutions.

Individuals understand how the workforce will be efficiently organised and structured with the capabilities and resources to meet current needs and priorities.

### Maturity milestone

Approaches to bridge gaps and foster regular cross-functional collaboration exist to address siloed ways of working.



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 @GeoscienceAustralia



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