Our work
means so much
to so many

Foreword

A message from our CEO

I am delighted to present the Agency's Leadership Strategy for 2022–2023, which brings to life the leadership component of the Workforce Strategy 2021–2026 priorities to build good leaders and empower them to lead. This strategy reinforces the way that we as leaders will collaborate with, engage, coach and learn from each other in achieving our organisational goals. It also represents our intent to invest in leaders across all levels of the organisation. It will be refreshed each year after we have evaluated our progress together.

This is a strategy for everyone in a formal leadership position, everyone who aspires to move into a leadership position and for all of us who want to make a difference in our organisation and in the Australian community. We all have the ability to make a positive impact on our team and the attitudes and experiences of those around us.

The amazing knowledge and skills of our people, our diversity of experience and exemplary leadership bench strength is the engine room of the Agency. We have all we need to support Australia's outstanding health system with the best that digital technology has to offer.

As we do this, I ask you each to reflect on:

- how your leadership style maximises the delivery potential of everyone you work with
- how you support people to positively engage with and manage risk
- how you can grow your own capability as a leader, as well as that of those around you
- how you can embed this strategy and bring our Agency DNA to life as we continue our journey to high performance together.

In 2022, one of my personal goals in being a good leader is to encourage collaboration on key messages internally so that we can speak confidently with one voice externally.

I will work to promote the open, collaborative leadership that you want to see.

Our senior leaders will work to foster visible examples of teams working across divisions, mentoring and connecting early to develop, design and plan together.

With all the talent, innovative thinking and passion we have in the Agency, supported to do our best individually and together, there is no doubt that we can achieve the outcomes we set for ourselves, and by doing so deliver our mission of improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

Amanda Cattermole PSM

Contents

1.   Why great leadership matters

Our Agency is facing unprecedented change. Leadership is key to establishing the conditions for high performance and realising our goals

"Our work means so much to so many" – This is how we tell our story to those who want to work for us: as an opportunity to contribute to outcomes that improve the health of Australians. The work is complex and deeply interconnected. We need a leadership team that inspires the right people with the right skills and attributes to join our team and create a career pathway with the Agency. Our leaders then need to lead our teams to work together and do remarkable things in a fast-moving environment by setting and achieving big goals, which at times means taking and managing risks to create positive change. No leader in this Agency works alone, so collaboration at every level is critical to our success.

As leaders we must capture a sense of purpose in everything we do. We must be visible, trusted and respected, and be seen to work together. We must also continually look to build the capability and skills of our people to future-proof our Agency and open career pathways for our staff. Leaders cast long shadows. **Our behaviours set the tone for the organisation. We cannot be a high performing agency – somewhere people want to work – without the best contemporary leadership.**

Importantly, we all have a role to play as leaders. Leadership is about influence and bringing others along to achieve an outcome. We need to recognise this in the way we help and support our people to perform at their best and actively contribute to our organisational priorities. Leadership expectations at different levels of work are set out in Appendix A, and this framework will provide the foundation for leadership assessment and development across the Agency.

Governance is part of leadership, and this is clearly maturing in the Agency. It reveals itself in the interdependence of our work, internally and externally. It is reflected in the design of integrated digital solutions that work in the real world. Good governance means working at the right pace, sometimes slower and sometimes faster, while engaging with shifting priorities. All of these decisions require that our people are at the front and centre – being kept informed, being provided with role and decision-making clarity and being supported to identify how best to manage change, risk and pressure.

By putting people at the forefront of decision-making and planning, we help embed our Agency DNA, which includes having leaders who are trusted, respected and visible and who champion the Agency's strategic vision; a thriving workforce with a sense of purpose, pride and passion; and a compelling value proposition and employee-centred experience.

Our workplan is clear. Our DNA is agreed. We know that we can only deliver our goals through our people, so implementing actions in the workforce strategy is a critical leadership role. Census results say we have more to do to become the leaders we need to be. **This strategy sets out what we need to do to build a positive and strong culture that drives success no matter what we are called on by the government to do.**

Corporate Plan 2021–2022

Agency DNA

Purpose
A **thriving** workforce with a sense of **purpose, pride** and **passion** to propel the Agency forward

Innovation
An **inspiring, agile** and **collaborative** work environment that embraces **innovation** and empowers everyone to **contribute ideas** and embrace continuous **change**

Experience
A **compelling** value proposition and **employee-centred** experience across all employment types

Digital Mindset
A culture which puts **digital at the centre** of what we do and how we do it through **digital ways of thinking** and **working** at all levels of our Agency

Connection
An **inclusive** and **growth-focused** culture where everyone can bring their **best self** to work and be **purposefully connected** with colleagues across the Agency

Agency DNA

Accountability
A workforce that embraces **accountability** and operates **ethically** while delivering to the expectations of **government** and the **Australian public**

Leadership
Leaders who are **trusted, respected** and **visible**, who **champion** the Agency's strategic vision and **role model** all Agency DNA

Workforce Strategy 2021–2026

Learning and Development Strategy

2. Our Agency Leadership Framework

This framework is underpinned by best practice leadership theories and learning from real life evidence and top organisations to support our Agency in building and empowering our leaders.[1]

The framework provides clear direction and guidance for what it means to be a leader across all levels in the Agency.

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1   The framework has been developed using different theories of leadership including systems, transformational, purpose-driven and authentic leadership.

What makes us unique – our DNA
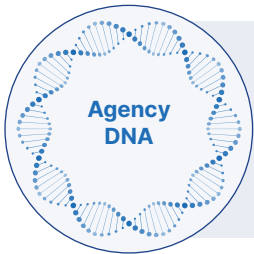
Agency DNA

The Agency's DNA defines us and encompasses our sense of purpose, values and beliefs. It is expressed through our decisions and behaviours, including how we collaborate to get things done.

We expect all our leaders and staff to:

- have a sense of **purpose** in the work they do
- provide an employee-centred **experience** for the people they work with
- facilitate purposeful **connection** with colleagues
- show **accountability** for their actions
- operate with an **innovative approach**
- be seen as a trusted, respected and visible **leader**.

Levels of leadership

Leading self

Leading self is the foundation to leading teams. Our leaders will strive to look for ways to improve themselves and help others to do the same.

Leading self has 3 facets:

1. **Self-improvement** encourages each leader to be a curious and lifelong learner, lead with questions, actively listen and practise self-reflection.
2. **Self-awareness** enables a leader to become more adaptive in the way they embrace change by understanding what is likely to drive them or demotivate them and by observing and working with their own and others' emotions.
3. **Self-discipline** is needed to deliver the practice of authentic leadership in a balanced, consistent and sustained way. It is necessary to balance the need to complete a project with providing a "holding environment" for the individuals delivering the project, including pushing back where appropriate and being an engaged, empathetic observer about the impact of sustained workloads on individuals' mental and physical health.

Leading team

Leading team

The next step up from leading self is leading team. We want to positively lead our team through celebrating diversity and embedding flexibility – this is critical for success across the Agency.

Leading team has 3 facets:

1. **Inspiring** team members with a vision of the future galvanises engagement and enhances the cohesiveness of the team.

2. **Interconnection** between team members, between teams and between divisions of the Agency, facilitated through effective relationship development, makes others feel valued for their contributions, perspectives and working styles.

3. **Team growth** involves leaders bringing together diverse teams, playing to the strengths of team members, building relevant skills and capabilities and building team trust by demonstrating authenticity, vulnerability and collaboration and by giving and receiving constructive feedback.

Leading Agency

Leading Agency

We want to lead our Agency proudly. We exemplify the value that our diverse skills, experience and styles bring to the Agency.

Leading Agency has 2 facets:

1. **Progressive** leaders are visionaries who promote diversity of thought, challenge the status quo, illuminate the future of the Agency and articulate what needs to be done to help their people realise the vision.

2. **Innovative** leaders support new ideas and encourage creativity and growth among their staff. The Agency as a whole needs to facilitate innovative thinking within to support new ideas and concepts and pioneer a new world of innovation through collaboration.

Australian Public Service leaders

We work within the framework of the APS and the requirements of the Public Service Act 1999. Section 10 of the Act sets out the values we must always uphold.

Public Service Act 1999

No. 147, 1999

10 APS Values

Committed to service

(1) The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.

Ethical

(2) The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

Respectful

(3) The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.

Accountable

(4) The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.

Impartial

(5) The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

3. Assessing ourselves as leaders

Consultations across the Agency in developing our workforce strategy, census results, survey data and engagement with leaders in multiple forums have provided insight into who we are, where we see ourselves now and where we aspire to be. This snapshot as at 1 December 2021 informs the development of the Leadership Framework and the direction we want our leadership to take.

How we think about good leadership and how to develop it has been factored into our actions

What a great leader looks like at the Agency

Consultations, survey data and census results have revealed that great leadership in the Agency comes from leaders who:

- **Have a strong purpose and vision** – establishing a strong vision and clarity of purpose and being customer-centric
- **Possess characteristics essential for strong leadership** – being humble, personable, patient, honest, reliable, respectful and collaborative
- **Role model capabilities** – focusing on team development, leading by example, strong communication, strategic thinking, being innovative and adaptive to changing circumstances and enthusiastic about the Agency's mission
- **Align themselves with APS leadership capabilities** – aligning to core leadership requirements such as transparency, integrity, fairness and operating ethically
- **Have an ability to communicate authentically** – communicating information with transparency and clarity, not only within the senior leadership but directly across the Agency

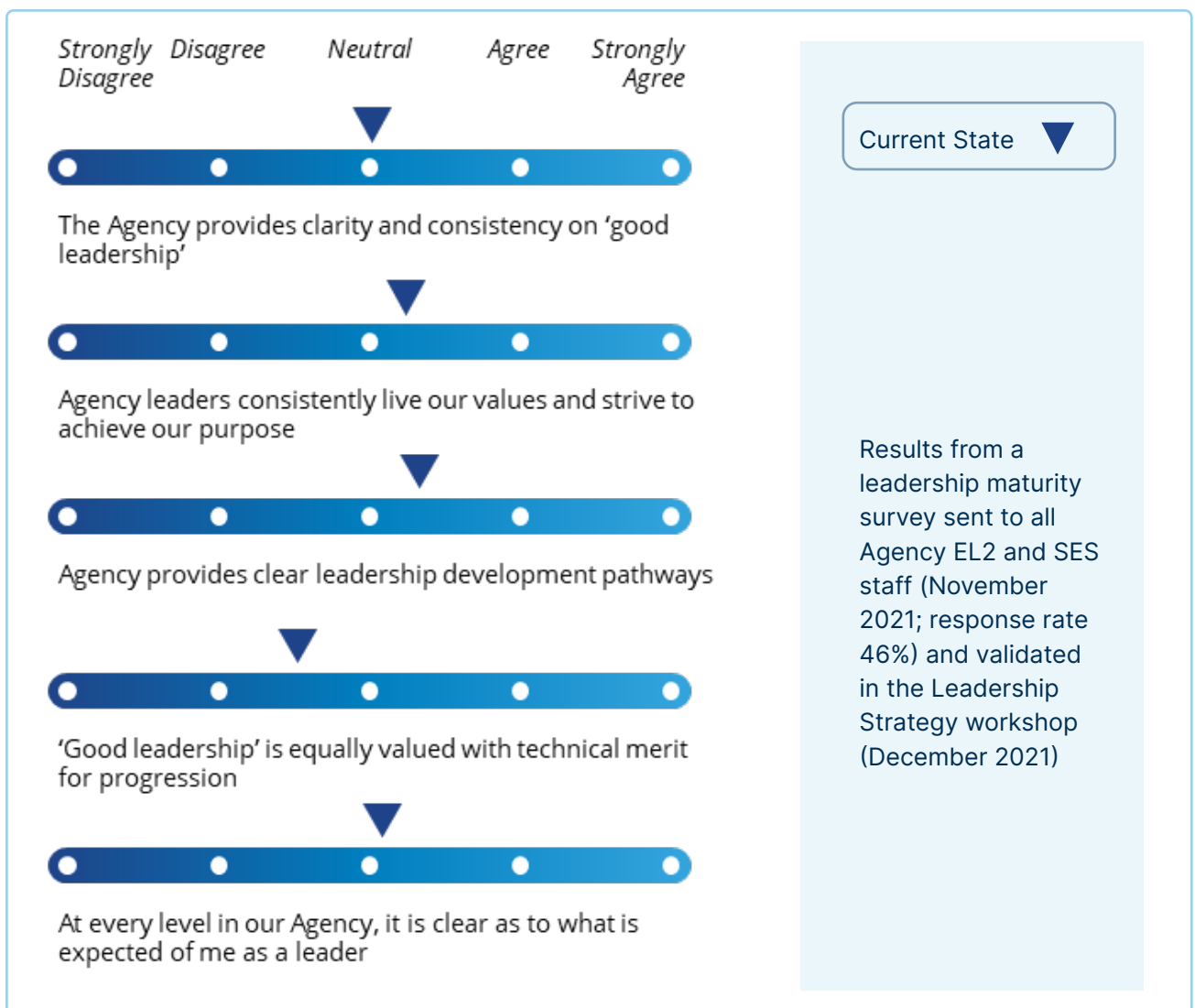### Opportunities for development to enhance leadership at the Agency

Consultations, survey data and census results have suggested that there is potential to strengthen leadership capability in relation to:

- **Recognising the value that diversity brings to our teams** – leveraging diverse ways of thinking as well as unique individual differences to enhance team performance
- **Coaching and mentoring** – creating a culture of deliberate feedback, recognition and supportive development, in which these practices are the default
- **Visibility** – enhancing visibility and creating more informal touchpoints with staff
- **Cross-collaboration** – strengthening connections across divisions to create linkages and efficiencies
- **Talent succession** – embedding transition plans, leadership progression and growth opportunities to support key talent

We assessed our current level of leadership maturity on 5 dimensions, which we will reassess each year

Baseline leadership maturity

This scale measures how the EL2 and SES cohort currently perceives leadership maturity at the Agency. This metric provides us with a baseline to improve each year through implementing these strategy initiatives.

Strongly Disagree　Disagree　Neutral　Agree　Strongly Agree

The Agency provides clarity and consistency on 'good leadership'

Agency leaders consistently live our values and strive to achieve our purpose

Agency provides clear leadership development pathways

'Good leadership' is equally valued with technical merit for progression

At every level in our Agency, it is clear as to what is expected of me as a leader

Current State ▼

Results from a leadership maturity survey sent to all Agency EL2 and SES staff (November 2021; response rate 46%) and validated in the Leadership Strategy workshop (December 2021)

4. Investing in leadership

We will invest in leadership development to build our individual
and collective leadership capabilities

1. Intensive investment in building leadership capability and confidence

Targeted leadership capabilities
- Leading hybrid and diverse teams
- Coaching for performance and growth (mentoring, peer-to-peer)
- Creating high performing teams
- Developing a strong foundation of leadership skills

Targeted leadership behaviours
- Fostering connected and accessible leaders who can be called upon to inspire others
- Transitioning into senior leadership roles
- Embedding leadership culture and leading the implementation of the workforce strategy

Outcomes:
- Our leaders have clarity of performance expectations and confidence in their leadership capabilities
- Our Agency becomes renowned as a place to develop as a leader
- Our Agency attracts and develops the best talent, due to reputation for leadership development

2. Development of a robust leadership ecosystem

Leadership pipeline development
- Identifying core leadership and technical skills that the Agency will invest in for all leaders at all levels
- Forming a Talent Committee to focus on talent and succession challenges, including "mission critical" people
- Identifying lateral and growth opportunities

Embedded leadership expectations
- Refining a performance management framework that values leadership capability as much as technical proficiency
- Developing a measurement framework that examines success of learning and development opportunities

Outcomes:
- Our Agency has clarity regarding the leadership capabilities critical for success in a complex public sector environment
- Our Agency has clear metrics to measure performance in its leaders and support them in reaching the next step

5. Implementation and action plan

A whole-of-Agency approach will be used to implement the Leadership Strategy

We will take a phased approach to implement our Leadership Strategy and begin by enhancing core operational and enabling activities. Our specific action plan for 2022–2023 will deliver initial leadership foundations and programs to develop our leaders.

Theme	Actions	Underway	2022-2023
1. Intensive investment in building leadership capability and confidence	Build leadership capabilities across our EL1 and EL2 leaders through the internal Leadership Program	✓	
	Leverage training provided through APS Learn with a focus on building supervisory capabilities for our managers at APS6, EL1, EL2 and SES levels	✓	
	Provide executive coaching and specialised training as part of Planning and Development (P&D) discussions to enhance and build capability for managers	✓	
	Design and deliver SES leadership development activities, which include 360 assessments, coaching and development opportunities to grow as a leader		✓
	Provide support to managers leading hybrid and virtual teams		✓
	Provide training to improve skills in giving and receiving feedback		✓
	Run a technology leadership master class in partnership with a university (see Appendix B – EY leadership development)		✓

Theme	Actions	Underway	2022-2023
	Leverage APSC program "Leadership in the Digital Age" for SES leaders responsible for leading and driving digital programs		✓
	Conduct a series of Talent Talks for leaders (see Appendix B – Microsoft leadership development)	✓	
	Offer career transition support to ensure success at critical transition points at the APS6, EL1 and SES levels to build strong supervisory and management skills to lead and manage teams effectively		✓
	Develop specific pathways and professional development opportunities for identified talent and succession planning (including capability building plans) for mission-critical staff	✓	
	Provide career pathways and tailored development opportunities to engage and grow our top talent		✓
	Develop career pathways for different workforce streams		✓
2. Development of a robust leadership ecosystem	Implement a talent and succession framework for EL2 and SES staff	✓	
	Provide internal mobility opportunities to build breadth and capabilities of our people	✓	
	Invite key leaders across government to share with senior Agency leaders their insights on leadership challenges in the APS	✓	
	Run SES Leadership Days to build a cohesive, connected executive and build capability	✓	

Theme	Actions	Underway	2022-2023
	Facilitate CEO and COO attendance at EL2 Forum meetings to discuss leadership, values and key priorities and to get mid-level management input into Agency reforms and policy changes	✓	
	Expect that all SES will make a contribution to corporate activities as part of their P&D requirements	✓	
	Embed and measure leadership expectations in the P&D process	✓	
	Ensure that leaders' development includes a focus on agile, design thinking and behavioural economics (see Appendix B – BBVA leadership development)		✓
	Ensure the Studies Assistance Policy is aligned to core leadership and technical skills that the Agency will invest in for future capability	✓	
	Develop a 360 feedback process as part of the P&D online system to allow assessment and focused development		✓
	Analyse P&D development data (once online) to better target where we run internal courses to bring our people together for learning opportunities		✓
	Develop "safe to fail" as part of our culture, with agreement on what this means in terms of behaviours staff can expect to see developed together as a leadership activity (see Appendix B – ANZ Bank leadership development)		✓

6. Measuring success

The annual APS Census will be used to measure the impact and success of Leadership Strategy actions, specifically through responses about:

- immediate supervisor
- immediate SES manager
- all SES.

Sections 1 and 2 of this strategy (Why great leadership matters and Our Agency Leadership Framework) will inform several Agency-specific questions in the annual census. These questions will enable an assessment of how well we are embedding the Agency's DNA (the leadership elements of which are outlined on page 6) across the areas of purpose, experience, connection, leadership, accountability and innovation. While all employees are expected to exemplify these DNA elements in all that they do, culture-setting starts with our leaders, so staff views on leaders' consistent demonstration of these values will be integral to tracking our progress and performance.

Agency-specific questions will also be used to measure employee satisfaction with development and leadership opportunities, enabling us to measure our performance on the delivery of this Leadership Strategy.

The implementation of the new P&D framework and online module will:

- ensure the new performance system aligns individual plans to our purpose, vision and mission and incorporates goal setting
- agree, measure and report progress against each employee's main business and behavioural goals
- include a focus on development and leadership.

Each year we will reassess our leadership together on the 5 leadership dimensions in section 3 above.

Appendix A.
Leadership at all levels of the Agency

It is important to grow leaders at all levels of the organisation to support our Agency's vision and purpose. The following framework will inform our leadership development expectations and strategies, including what is expected in P&D.

		APS 3/4	APS 5/6	EL 1/2	SES 1-3
Leading Self	Self-improvement	Strong commitment to learning and self-development, complies with recommended learning curricula and seeks feedback	Actively looks to understand own development needs and proactively identifies learning opportunities to build skills and experience	Promotes strengths and proactively undertakes skills-building efforts such as coaching, mentoring and self development	Identifies own capabilities that complement other SES and takes steps to assist, coach. Role-models self-learning and seeking feedback from others
	Self-awareness	Focuses on achieving balance between personal and professional commitments, remains positive in stressful conditions	Finds ways to improve balance between personal and professional commitments for self and team members	Develops personal strategies to sustainably look after wellbeing, for self and team members, proactively overcome obstacles	Consistently achieves Agency objectives in high pressure periods, recovers rapidly from setbacks, maintains positive outlook in difficult circumstances
	Self-discipline	Shows initiative to achieve objectives and allocated tasks, self-evaluates performance and seeks feedback from others	Is accountable for the achievement of objectives, critically analyses self performance and seeks feedback from peers	Takes decisive action when wellbeing is at risk, inspires others to act as well, reflects on impact of behaviour on others	Role models Agency response to wellbeing risks, ensuring Agency strategies applied. Understands own impact on others and knows how to resolve challenges
Leading Team	Inspiring	Breaks down tasks that align with the Agency's strategic objectives and effectively communicates outcomes	Fosters a shared sense of purpose in aligning with the Agency's vision, engages in collaboration, encouraging team contribution	Develops strategic direction for teams, encourages team member input, demonstrates vulnerability, communicates strategic outcomes	Champions Agency's vision, aligns others to the Agency's strategic direction, is highly consultative and present, particularly when leading others through change
	Interconnection	Tailors communication to context, checks own understanding of interactions with the team, mitigates misunderstandings	Anticipates the needs of other team members and broader team, proactively tailors their approach to the needs of others	Anticipates the needs of others and what's needed from a broader context, positively manages conflict and directs/aligns the team to the work	Translates audience needs across multiple sources (including social status),, is inclusive, proactive, facilitative and authoritative as required, coaches others on style
	Teaming	Recognises benefits of diversity, encourages exploration of diverse views, recognises different working styles	Actively encourages expression of diverse views, recognises differing working styles and appreciates different perspectives	Proactively builds diverse teams, culturally competent, embraces diversity to enhance Agency operations and increase inclusivity	Communicates the importance of Agency diversity, sets the tone of psychological safety, inclusivity, and collaboration

		APS 3/4	APS 5/6	EL 1/2	SES 1-3
Leading Agency	Progressive	Analyses and presents data, contributes to Agency-wide knowledge sharing, communicates Agency priorities	Develops diverse network across Agency through ideas, knowledge and resources sharing, promotes Agency accurately	Develops relationships that can benefit Agency, identifies relevant opportunities and trends, systemic decision making	Promotes Agency services, strategy and values, develops wide and deep network across digital health sector – paves the way for others to do the same
	Innovative	Communicates ideas to improve work, expressing problems and opportunities with team when they arise, integrates ongoing creativity	Experiments with new ideas and reviews outcomes, willing to take data-driven risks to further Agency objectives	Develops ideas to expand Agency operations, improves Agency-wide ways of working, supports a risk taking and innovative culture	Identifies and evaluates new ideas and technologies to expand Agency capabilities, identifies and reduces barriers to change
	Customer Service	Considers important issues for customer and how own actions could help customers more generally, seeks guidance and learns from mistakes	Assesses decisions and patterns in experience with customer and adjusts behaviour accordingly, encourages discussion on difficult issues	Able to make difficult decisions to achieve Agency objectives and serve Australian public, takes responsibility	Role models leadership courage through raising difficult issues, taking carriage of improvements, accepts accountability and corrects mistakes
Leading APS	Connected	Participate in inter-APS knowledge sharing and identify opportunities for the Agency to benefit the broader Australian public	Actively seek, wherever possible, avenues to create connections with other APS Departments and Agencies	Develops connections with APS leaders, identifying opportunities for collaboration, and sharing of resources, technology and ideas	Creates opportunities for inter-APS collaboration by championing Agency values, objectives and mission
	Impactful	Constantly identifies opportunities for the Agency and APS to benefit Australian society and create more connected healthcare	Identifies mechanisms for the Agency, digital health and technology can be used to address national health priority areas	Engages with the health technology sector and health agencies to address structural health issues such as equity and remote health	Provides strategic direction to enhance positive impacts to the Australian health landscape and use digital health to improve health outcomes
	Integrity	Understands and applies APS Code of Conduct and behaves in an honest, ethical and professional way, holding others to account			

Appendix B.
Best practice ideas from others

Our Agency has clear metrics to measure performance in its leaders and support them in reaching the next step.

Ideas from the companies below are incorprated into potential actions in the implementation and action plan in section 5.

Ernst & Young Professional Services Firm *Transformative leadership and learning*	**Key differentiators for leadership** • Ongoing individual assessment and growth profile with regular feedback of performance and identification of growth opportunities • Accelerated leadership lab for each senior leader and immersive leadership development camps at key transition points • Promotes organisational strategy with learning and leadership culture • Technology MBA (partnership with university) to be made available to all employees • Transformative leadership model that is embedded into the performance management process
Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, Financial Services Firm *Digital transformation*	**Key differentiators for leadership** • Identification of three key behaviours that each employee must develop as a fundamental capability (agile, design thinking and behavioural economics) • Development of Centre of Excellence that accumulates best practices and fosters a community of practice • All employees were targeted and, depending on the business line, trained in one content or another depending on role and seniority • Creation of internal training school
Deliberately Developmental Organisations *e.g. Novartis and ANZ Bank*	**Key differentiators for leadership** • Individuals come to work to develop and grow as people; doing their job well is seen as a by-product of their development • Edge, Home and Groove elements are key to growing their leadership • Test and learn philosophy, such as new ways of working, experimentation to trial one style of feedback • Safe-to-fail environment – encouraging people to take risks, promoting psychological safety
Microsoft *Using growth mindset to develop leaders*	**Key differentiators for leadership** • Annual hackathon that promotes innovation and collaboration across disciplines • Focus on using high risk projects where leaders and their team can learn quickly through trial and error – fostering creativity and innovation • Talent Talks program where the CEO and senior leadership team talk to all department heads to identify key talent and opportunities to broaden employees' expertise and experience

Australian Government

Australian Digital Health Agency