



# Shifting the Dial

Enhancing employee  
experience for the SA  
public sector

people  
matter  
employee  
survey

[publicsector.sa.gov.au](http://publicsector.sa.gov.au)



Government  
of South Australia

# Contents

Commissioner's Foreword	1
Setting the scene	2
Making impactful change	4
Current policy landscape	6
Shifting the dial: Enhancing employee experience for the SA public sector	7
Putting the plan into action	10

## Acknowledgment of Country

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations, and recognises Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters.

# Commissioner's Foreword



**As part of a workforce of over 100,000 South Australians across 95 agencies, we are best able to make a difference for our community when we feel supported, enabled and connected.**

Through the 2024 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) many of you contributed to the conversation about where we, as a public sector, are succeeding in building a diverse, inclusive and contemporary workforce and where we can enhance the employee experience.

We set out to better understand the rich diversity of our workforce tapestry and how we come together as agents for change in building workplaces that foster positivity and performance.

A record 40,398 added your voice to that conversation and as a result, I believe we can now move with confidence in using that input to create positive change.

We are committed to 'shifting the dial' on our people, our work and our culture by adopting a refreshed sector-wide approach to employee experience that puts localisation at the heart of change.

Of the 95 agencies that make up South Australia's public sector, no two are the same. They each have unique demands, responsibilities, roles and requirements, and the data from the 2024 PMES reflects that, with each agency reporting different drivers of employee experience.

This is not addressed by a one-size-fits all mindset. This is our sign to act local.

Through localised action, we are better placed to continue the conversation that the PMES started and directly address your feedback within each agency.

We've built this plan around three core pillars: Our People, Our Work and Our Culture. These pillars work together to address your calls for workplaces that inspire engagement, nurture more meaningful connection to the work you do, and create a sense of belonging for all.

This engagement plan facilitates that by outlining a framework for sharing good ideas, learning from each other, and working together across different teams. This plan supports all the good that our agencies are already doing and helps shape our broader public sector policies that enable us to be the best we can.

Fundamentally, the policies and strategies within this plan are designed to cultivate a public sector that is safe, inclusive, and free from racism and discrimination. By embedding our core public sector values into every aspect of our work, we lay the foundation for our people, our work, and our culture to thrive.

I'm excited by the plans that are being developed in line with this 'act local' philosophy and energised by our role in coordinating and facilitating positive change through a high-level focus that links back to government policy and provides the frameworks and resources that facilitate change.

Together we can make our public sector even better at what we do: serving our community.

**Erma Ranieri, PSM**

Commissioner for Public Sector Employment



# Setting the scene

**The People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) is a critical tool in both measuring and shaping how the public sector can drive improvements in employee experience.**

In 2024, all employees working for the South Australian public sector, including statutory bodies and state-owned corporations, were invited to participate in the survey. More employees participated in the survey than ever before, with more than 40,000 employees responding, reflecting a 35% response rate.

More detailed **demographic and diversity** data was captured compared to previous surveys providing valuable insights and ensuring all actions and policies have an inclusivity focus, fundamental to the employee experience.

For the first time, **psychosocial hazards** in our workplace were also measured, creating an opportunity to increase understanding and collaboration between our practitioners in human resources, industrial relations, injury management, organisational development and work health and safety.

The survey measured key drivers of employee experience with the top three most impactful measures determined by focusing on those drivers likely to see the biggest change. The following metrics were measured across the sector:

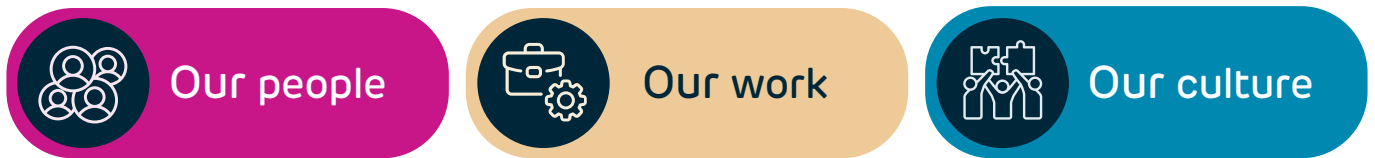
METRIC	DRIVER		
	Most impactful	Second most impactful	Third most impactful
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	<b>Social Responsibility</b> I am proud of my agency's efforts to have a positive impact	<b>Communication</b> There is open and honest communication at this agency	<b>Growth &amp; Development</b> Overall, I believe that my career goals can be met at this agency
<b>Intent to Stay</b>	<b>Growth &amp; Development</b> Overall, I believe that my career goals can be met at this agency	<b>Role Alignment</b> My job makes good use of my skills and abilities	<b>Job Security</b> I feel secure in my job
<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Communication</b> There is open and honest communication at this agency	<b>Respect</b> I am treated with respect at work	<b>Psychological Safety</b> I can share my opinions openly without fear of retaliation
<b>Employee Experience</b>	<b>Communication</b> There is open and honest communication at this agency	<b>Growth &amp; Development</b> Overall, I believe that my career goals can be met at this agency	<b>Social Responsibility</b> I am proud of my agency's efforts to have a positive impact
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Social Responsibility</b> I am proud of my agency's efforts to have a positive impact	<b>Growth &amp; Development</b> Overall, I believe that my career goals can be met at this agency	<b>Communication</b> There is open and honest communication at this agency

Results across individual agencies varied, enabling a local-led approach to the development of agency action plans which address agency specific opportunities, challenges and priorities. While contributing in a meaningful way to the following core sector outcomes:

- Better understand how human resource (HR) policies can help bridge gaps between policy and practice.
- Better understand employees' experiences to inform diversity, inclusion, and cultural capability within the public sector.
- Identify and manage risk of psychosocial hazards impacting respectful behaviours and stress.
- Assess perceptions of leadership capabilities to prioritise development.

# Making impactful change

Our focus is on shifting the dial with the aim of achieving impactful change across the three key areas of:



Central to ensuring our workforce feels supported and engaged is building trust that change will happen as a result of their feedback.



## Act local

Change needs to be seen and felt in the workplace and local-led change is the most impactful, reflecting specific agency insights and results and matching those to actions developed in collaboration with employees.

Leaders in particular play an important role in demonstrating that they've listened to employees, given the survey results proper consideration and worked together to develop an agency action plan reflective of what employees have said.

Obtaining employee feedback and testing and evaluating new initiatives ensures continuous improvement that focuses on building connection between the sector and employees and supports a **high performing workforce**.

We recognise agencies are responding to whole-of-government initiatives and priorities. We need to consider how to support agencies to continue to work within this landscape.

# Engagement

This plan reflects a refreshed whole of sector approach to lifting public sector capability and meeting the needs and aspirations of our community; while ensuring we retain, attract and develop skilled employees with a focus on **our work, our people** and **our culture**.

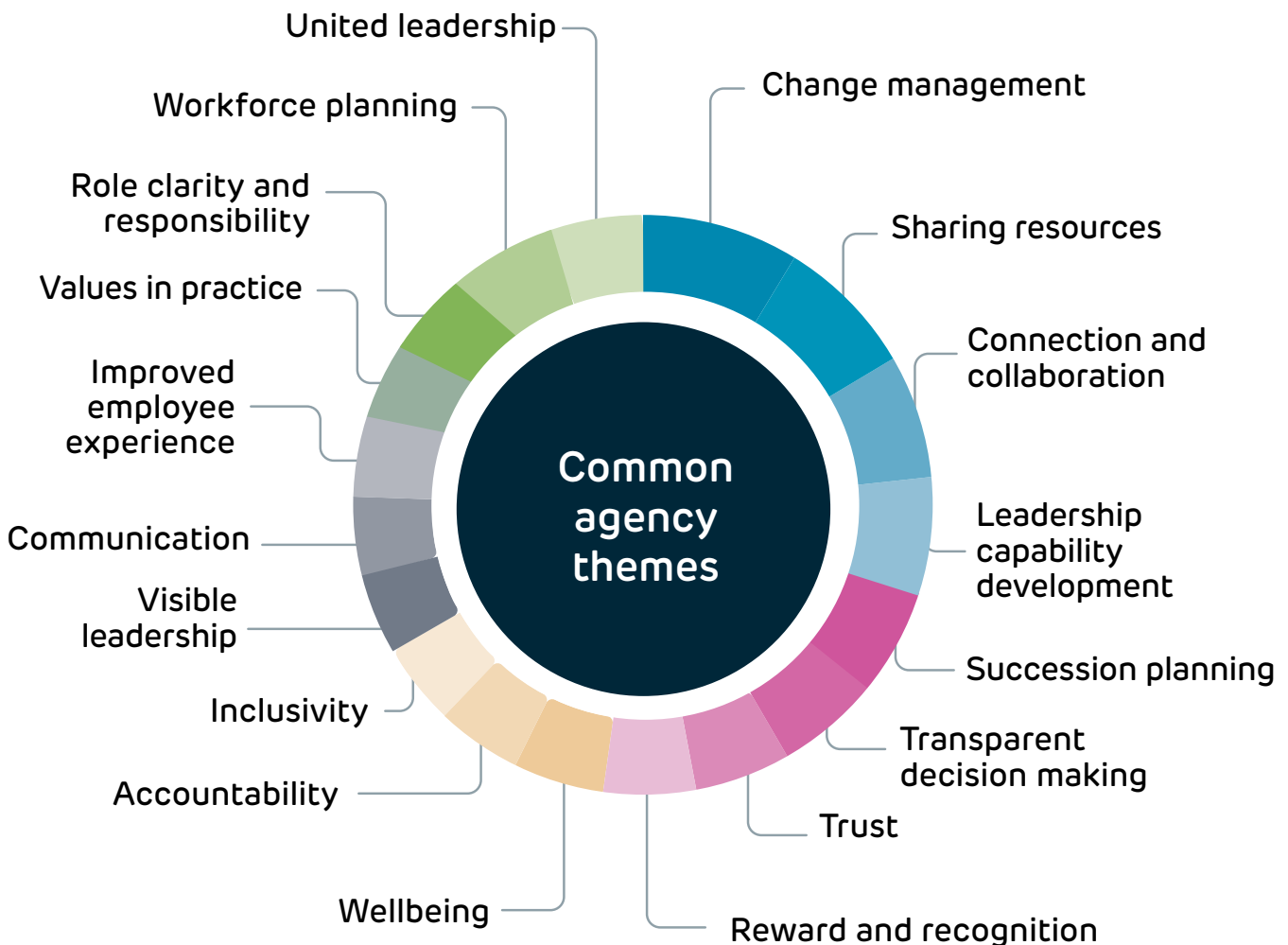
The plan is a framework for supporting agencies, leveraging ideas and learnings, and creating opportunities for collaboration through case studies, resources and cross-agency networks.

It supports and complements agency plans and sector wide policies, which continue to evolve as our sector does.

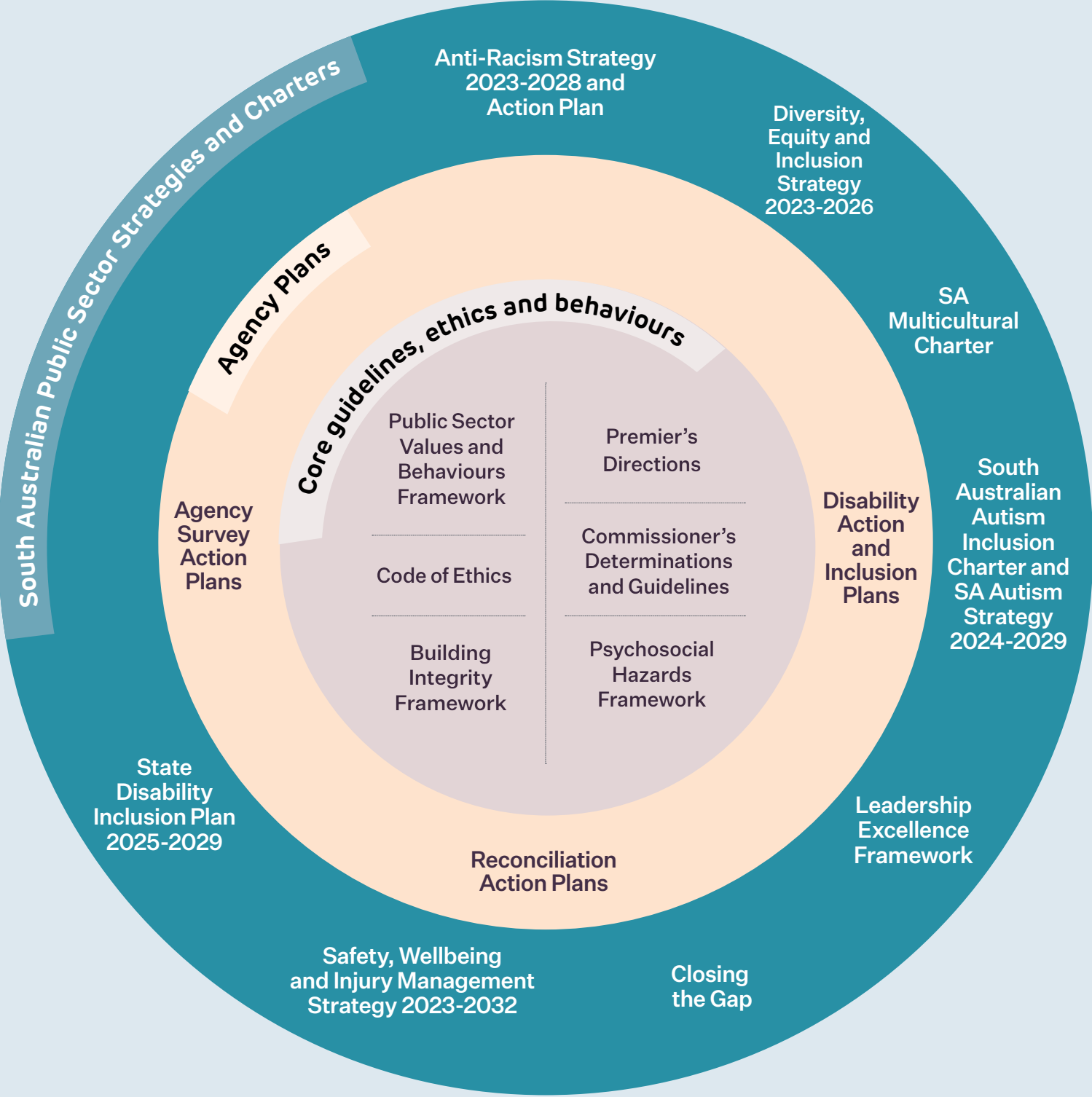
Importantly, the policies and strategies we have created aim to help ensure our sector is safe, inclusive, free from racism and discrimination, where we act with integrity and uphold the public sector values in everything we do. incorporating the values in a seamless way.

# Common agency themes

Many cross-agency synergies have emerged from the sector action planning workshop and through the development of agency action plans. The common themes are:



# Current policy landscape



# Shifting the dial:

## Enhancing employee experience for the SA public sector

**Impactful Change:** *Our plan will support agencies to think and act local, increase management and leadership capability and work together to increase cross-agency collaboration*



### Our people

As a public sector, we need to ensure we are a modern, flexible workplace where employees thrive. Our success depends on our capacity to optimise the full potential of our workforce.

To maintain high performance, we need to understand and support employee potential through the development of knowledge, mindset, skills and competencies that

align with sector and agency priorities and future needs.

Our commitment to the learning and development of our people creates a mutual benefit: supporting career goals and helping realise employee potential, while ensuring sustainable public sector performance through an engaged and skilled workforce.

#### Vision



We are ready to serve the community with purpose, enabling people to build their public sector experiences.

We prioritise investment in careers and grow our manager and leader capability.

#### What you told us



##### Growth and development

52% believe their career goals can be met at the agency

##### Role alignment

70% believe their job makes good use of their skills and abilities

##### Other key results include:

71% believe overall, their experience working in their agency meets their expectations.

68% feel secure in their job

57% have meaningful discussions with their manager about their career development

#### Outcomes



Report progress on implementation of agency action plans

Enhance and increase the reach of the South Australian Leadership Academy (SALA) to support manager capability

Support the wellbeing of employees and manage psychosocial risks through development of resources and training across the sector

# Shifting the dial:

## Enhancing employee experience for the SA public sector

**Impactful Change:** *Our plan will support agencies to think and act local, increase management and leadership capability and work together to increase cross-agency collaboration*




### Our work

How we design our work has a critical bearing on employee engagement, retention, wellbeing and purpose. Work design has a direct impact on productivity and efficiency and enables us to achieve our strategic goals.

The public sector is uniquely positioned to provide work that is meaningful, and which makes a positive contribution to our community. Enhancing this will drive improvements in a number of survey outcome areas.

**Vision**




We are proud of the positive impact we make by upholding our values and integrity in our work.

---

We support our people to make decisions in the best interests of the community.

**What you told us**



**Social responsibility**  
63% are proud of their agencies efforts to have a positive impact

**Communication**  
40% believe there is open and honest communication at this agency

**Other key results include:**  
42% feel energised at work

---

70% feel their job makes good use of their skills and abilities

---

63% are encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things

---

48% feel their agency motivates them to contribute more than is required to complete their work

**Outcomes**



Refresh the Change Management Toolkit to support agencies to make impactful change

---

Facilitate cross agency collaboration opportunities

Partner with agencies to promote learning on key focus areas for the sector

---

Manage psychosocial risks including through good work design

# Shifting the dial:

## Enhancing employee experience for the SA public sector

**Impactful Change:** *Our plan will support agencies to think and act local, increase management and leadership capability and work together to increase cross-agency collaboration*



### Our culture

The public sector values set the standard of behaviours expected at all levels within the sector. The values have been developed to make it easier for us to work together by forming a culture and a vision that we all share.

It is essential we continue to build a public sector where everyone belongs.

Inclusion and respectful behaviours are a key focus for our sector as demonstrated by the launch of several strategies including the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026 and the Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan.

#### Vision



We enhance employee experience and wellbeing by being engaged and proactive in shaping our culture.

We model open and honest communication and being inclusive and respectful.

#### What you told us

##### Psychological safety

53% believe they can share their opinions openly without fear of retribution

##### Respect

71% believe they are treated with respect at work

##### Other key results include:

55% believe at this agency, everyone can succeed to their full potential no matter who they are

59% feel as if they belong to this agency

72% believe their manager treats people fairly

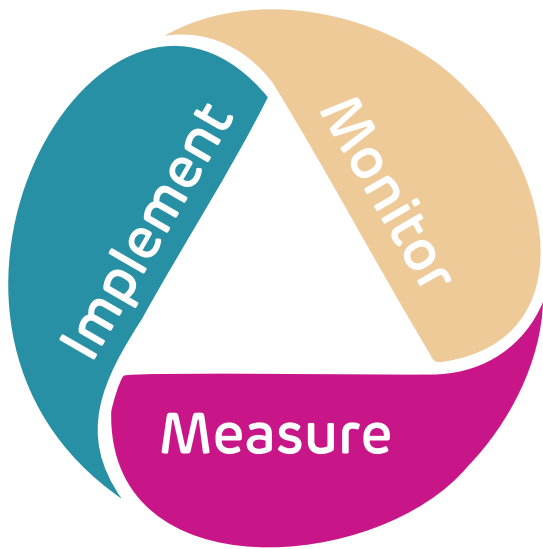
74% feel their manager cares about their wellbeing

#### Outcomes

Monitor and continuously improve existing sector strategies to build an inclusive culture

Produce spotlight reporting on key themes from the survey for evidence-based decision making

Support public sector leaders to embed integrity principles in decision making through leadership programs, including managing psychosocial risks



# Putting the plan into action

Shifting the Dial will require a deliberate effort to ensure our success in continuing to enhance the experience of all employees in the public sector.

Through a shared commitment and ownership, we can continue the conversation about what this looks like for our sector and build on what you have told us through the survey results.

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCSPE) will implement, monitor and measure the outcomes in this plan.

OCPSE will engage with agencies and encourage collaborations and shared learnings across the sector to support the success of agency plans.

This plan provides a blueprint going forward to continue to work together and leverage the best the sector has to offer for the benefit of all, our people and our communities.

For more information, please contact OCPSE at [peoplematteremployeesurvey@sa.gov.au](mailto:peoplematteremployeesurvey@sa.gov.au)



With the exception of the Piping Shrike emblem, and other material or devices protected by Aboriginal rights or a trademark, and subject to review by the Government of South Australia at all times, the content of this document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence. All other rights are reserved. © Crown in right of the State of South Australia. FIS 1091739



**Government  
of South Australia**