

2023 National Mental Health Commission Action Plan

In the 2023 staff census the Commission had the lowest overall index score out of 100 APS agencies in the Engagement, SES Leadership, Communications, Innovation and Wellbeing indices, and the second lowest in the Immediate Supervisor Leadership Index. The Report of the Independent Investigation into the Commission, tabled in Parliament on 14 September 2023, found that the “most significant findings impeding the functioning of the Commission relate to a very poor workplace culture” and that the Commission had “outgrown its existing systems, practices and capabilities”. The entire Commission team, Executive, management and staff, are committed to making the necessary operational and cultural improvements to address these very significant and disappointing findings. To function at their best, people need mentally healthy environments, cultures and practices to protect them from potential hazards, support recovery, and provide opportunities to develop professionally and personally. Creating a mentally healthy workplace is important for organisational sustainability and social responsibility. The Commission recognises that its performance and the wellbeing of its people are mutually dependent.

1

Continuous improvement of staff health and wellbeing



- Following the 2023 staff census results, and the findings of the Independent Investigation, the Commission has established nine initial projects across three focus areas: Governance Culture, Workplace Culture and Delivery Culture. The phased delivery of these projects, **led by the Executive**, up to June 2024 will assist the Commission to re-establish itself as a model employer through a comprehensive and inclusive program of workplace cultural reform which will be critical to supporting staff health and wellbeing. Progress will be measured against the APSC Mental Health Capability Framework, and the 2024 staff census results in terms of commitment to and continuous improvement in workforce culture and staff health and wellbeing.

2

Strategic direction and priorities articulated



- Under the *Delivery Culture* focus area, **the Executive** is working closely with all staff, and with the Department of Health and Aged Care and other relevant stakeholders, to deliver a clearly articulated strategic plan with well-defined priorities that cascade and align with team plans by June 2024.
- Clarification and articulation of strategic priorities will support revision of the Commission’s Executive and Team structures to ensure alignment between priorities, workplans, internal budget allocations and those structures. This will be led by **the Executive** and will involve extensive engagement with all staff throughout 2024.

3

More structured and transparent governance arrangements



- Under the *Governance Culture* focus area, **the Executive** is actively promoting a more inclusive workplace culture by:
 - implementing a more structured and transparent approach to Commission governance with agendas, official meeting records and actions that are shared with all Commission staff.
 - inviting staff to attend and, where appropriate, present at discussions and meetings regarding their work areas.
 - implementing an internal communications policy by June 2024 that includes 1) sharing the rationale for key decisions made by the Executive and listening to feedback from staff and 2) sharing information they gather that should inform the work of Commission teams.

4

Increased staff consultation in change management



- Under the *Workplace Culture* focus area, **the Executive** is leading a comprehensive and inclusive program of workplace cultural reform, including by taking steps to:
 - ensure effective communication about planned organisational change and consultation with all staff on how best to implement change that affects their teams and the Commission as a whole (including relating to any restructuring).
 - create a more devolved and empowering authorising environment with Managers to enable decisions and actions to be prioritised and addressed in a timely manner.