OFFICE OF THE **COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**

Annual Report
2025–2026





NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Acknowledgement

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the lands on which we work and gather and pays respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The term Aboriginal is used throughout this report to refer to all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.



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Letter to the Minister

The Honourable Jo Hersey MLA
Minister for Public Service
PO Box 3
KATHERINE NT 0851

Dear Minister Hersey

2025–2026 Annual Report

I am pleased to submit the 2025–2026 annual report on the activities of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE).

The report complies with requirements of section 18(2)(d) of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act). I advise that to the best of my knowledge and belief:

a. the financial outputs included in the annual report have been prepared from proper accounts and records and are in accordance with the Treasurer's Directions

b. all Employment Instructions issued by the Commissioner for Public Employment have been satisfied

c. all public sector principles, contained in section 5 of the PSEM Act, have been upheld by OCPE during the financial year.

Parts of items (a) and Part 9 of the *Information Act 2002* (excluding archives management) involve functions provided by the Department of Corporate and Digital Development (DCDD). DCDD has established, and maintains a corporate governance model, service management frameworks and internal controls appropriate to the department's span of operations.

Accordingly, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) DCDD, advised in relation to the items above, that to the best of her knowledge and belief, proper records are kept of transactions undertaken by DCDD on behalf of our agency and the employees under her control observe the provisions of the *Financial Management Act 1995*, Financial Management Regulations, Treasurer's Directions and Part 9 of the *Information Act 2002*.

It is a requirement of the PSEM Act that you table a copy of this report before the Legislative Assembly within six sitting days of you receiving it.

Yours sincerely,



Nicole Hurwood
Commissioner for Public Employment
30 September 2026

Acronyms and initialisms used in the report

AECD	Aboriginal Employment and Career Development division
AECDS	Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
ANZSOG	The Australia and New Zealand School of Government
ARMC	Audit and Risk Management Committee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DCMC	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
Commissioner	Commissioner for Public Employment
DCDD	Department of Corporate and Digital Development
DTF	Department of Treasury and Finance
ECO	Executive Contract Officer
ER	Employee Relations division
ERRP	Executive Remuneration Review Panel
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HR	Human Resources
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Minister	Minister for Public Service
MoG	Machinery of Government
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPS	Northern Territory Public Sector
OCPE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
OICAC	Office of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption
PDWG	Positive Duty Working Group
PSAB	Public Sector Appeal Board
PSEM Act	Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993
PSAGR	Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews division
SWPD	Strategic Workforce Planning and Development division
WHS	Work Health and Safety

Purpose of the report

The OCPE Annual Report 2025–2026 complies with the Commissioner's annual reporting requirements under section 18(2)(d) of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act).

The Commissioner is required to report to the Minister on the following matters specified in section 28(2) of the PSEM Act, in so far as they relate to the Commissioner's office, within three months from the end of the financial year:

- functions and objectives of the agency
- legislation administered
- organisation overview, including number of employees of each designation and any variation in those numbers since the last report
- operations, initiatives and achievements relating to planning, efficiency, effectiveness, performance and service delivery to the community
- financial planning and performance
- measures taken to ensure public sector principles were upheld
- management training and staff development programs
- occupational health and safety programs.

The Commissioner is also required under the PSEM Act to report to the Minister on human resource management in the public sector during that financial year. This separate *State of the Service Report* is published on the OCPE website after it is tabled in Parliament.

Legislation administered

Under the Administrative Arrangements Order 2026 the following legislation is administered through OCPE:

- Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993
- Public Employment (Mobility) Act 1989
- Long Service Leave Act 1981
- Police Administration Act 1978 (Part III)
- Public Holidays Act 1981
- Correctional Officers Arbitral Tribunal Act 1950

Commissioner's Foreword

I am pleased to present the OCPE Annual Report for 2025–2026.

It has been a busy and important year for OCPE, with our work reaching across almost every part of public sector employment.

When I look back on 2025–2026, what stands out is the practical contribution this work has made for employees, agencies and the wider Northern Territory community.

Some of that work was highly visible, including major enterprise agreements, leadership programs and the People Matter Survey. Much of it happened behind the scenes through advice, policy development, training and close collaboration with agencies, employees, unions and other partners. Together, these efforts supported clearer employment arrangements, stronger workforce capability and fairer, more respectful and inclusive workplaces.

There is much to be proud of. We finalised major enterprise agreements, supported significant workplace reforms and updated recruitment policies and resources to strengthen merit, transparency and integrity. We also delivered 58 merit selection training sessions, with 1,239 recorded attendances, including targeted and regional sessions designed around the needs of employees and agencies.

Our key performance indicators provide a balanced picture of OCPE's performance. Ministerial satisfaction with our services, communication and responsiveness reached 100 per cent, with agency client satisfaction at 84 per cent. The weighted average annual remuneration increase in enterprise agreements finalised during the year was 3.3 per cent.

Building workforce capability remained a strong focus. Eleven leadership programs supported 530 employees at different career stages, from emerging leaders to senior executives. We expanded access to leadership opportunities in Alice Springs and Katherine and began shaping the next NTPS Workforce Strategy through consultation with employees, agencies, education providers and partners across the Territory.

We made progress towards a public sector that reflects and understands the community it serves. Aboriginal employees represented 10.9 per cent of the NTPS workforce and employees who identified as having a disability represented 2.1 per cent of the workforce. Our work to sustain action to improve employment pathways, participation, career development and inclusion continues.



During the year, we evaluated both the Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy and the Aboriginal Employee Mentor program, supported capability and leadership development and hosted employee forums, progressed the EmployAbility Strategy 2024-27 and launched the *Creating Respectful Workplaces* program. By 30 June 2026, the program had recorded 7,679 course completions, and 92.1 per cent of evaluation respondents rated it very or somewhat useful.

The 2025 People Matter Survey gave us a clearer picture of what employees value. A total of 11,976 employees took part, representing 48 per cent of the NTPS workforce, compared with 39 per cent in 2023. Their feedback is already shaping action on leadership, wellbeing and workplace culture and will continue to guide our priorities.

I thank OCPE employees for their professionalism, care and commitment throughout the year, and our partners across the NTPS for the way they worked with us. In the year ahead, we will continue to listen, improve our services and focus on building the workforce the Territory needs to deliver trusted services now and into the future.



Nicole Hurwood
Commissioner for Public Employment
30 September 2026



"When I look back on 2025–2026, what stands out is the practical contribution this work has made for employees, agencies and the wider Northern Territory community."

About OCPE

Functions of the Commissioner

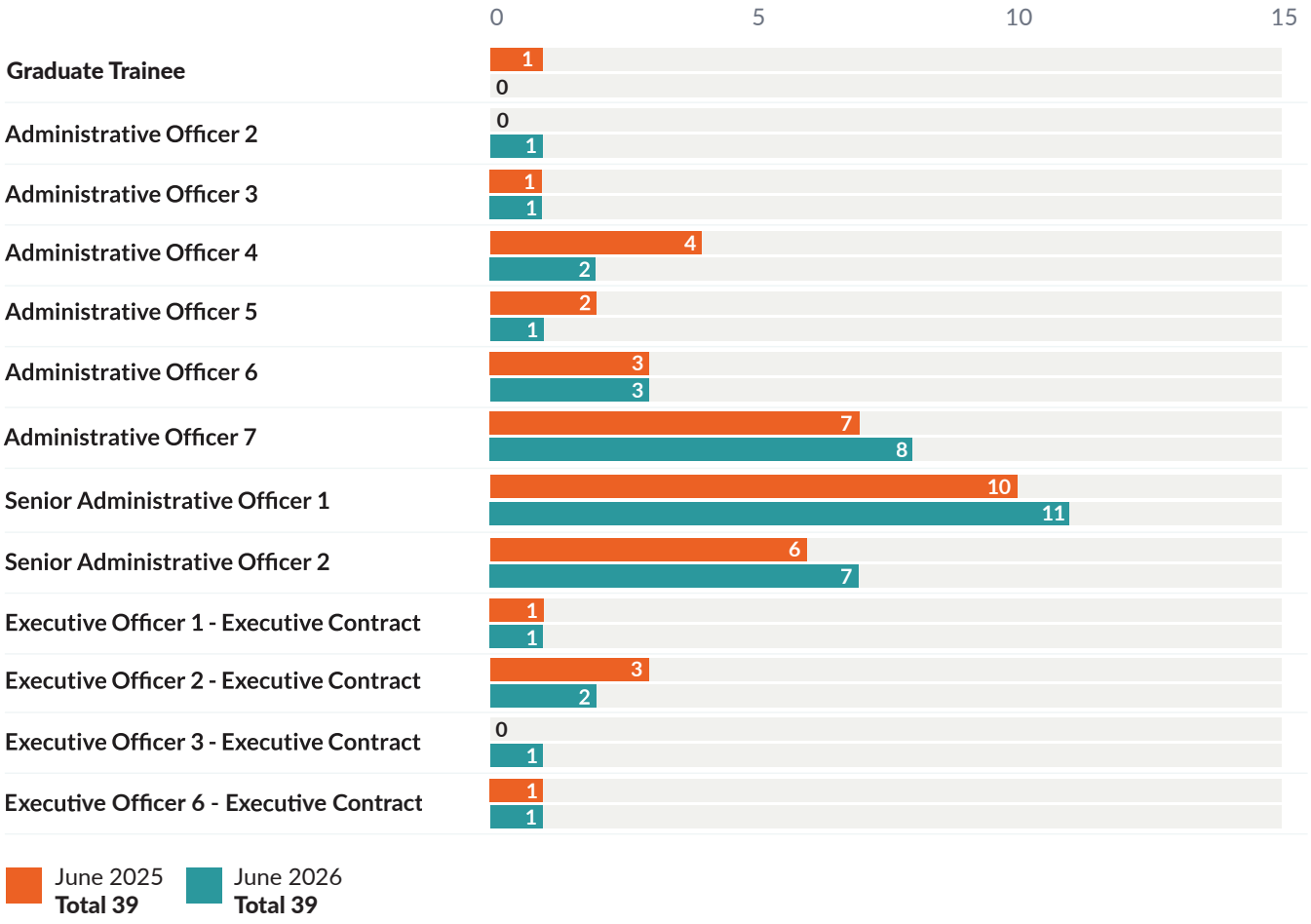
The Commissioner has the following functions as defined in the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* (PSEM Act):

- to determine the respective designations and other terms and conditions (including the remuneration) of employment for employees
- to promote the upholding of the public sector principles
- to determine practices and procedures relating to the recruitment and employment of persons as employees, the promotion of employees and the employment, transfer, secondment, redeployment, discipline and termination of employment of employees and any other matters relating to human resource management
- to consult with and advise CEOs in relation to the development and application of appropriate human resource practices and procedures in their Agencies
- to consult with CEOs in relation to the application of public employment policies in their Agencies
- to advise the Minister on, and monitor the implementation of, public employment policies
- to develop uniform systems, standards and procedures for the determination of designations and the allocation of designations to employees in their Agencies and assist CEOs in the application of those systems, standards and procedures
- to assist as appropriate CEOs in evaluating the performance of employees employed in their Agencies
- to coordinate training, education and development programs in conjunction with CEOs
- to conduct, or cause to be conducted, inquiries and investigations into, and reviews of, the management practices of Agencies
- to consult with CEOs on the development of appropriate standards and programs of occupational health and safety
- to assist as appropriate CEOs in the performance of their functions relating to the management of their Agencies
- such other functions as are imposed on him or her by or under this or any other Act, or as directed by the Minister.

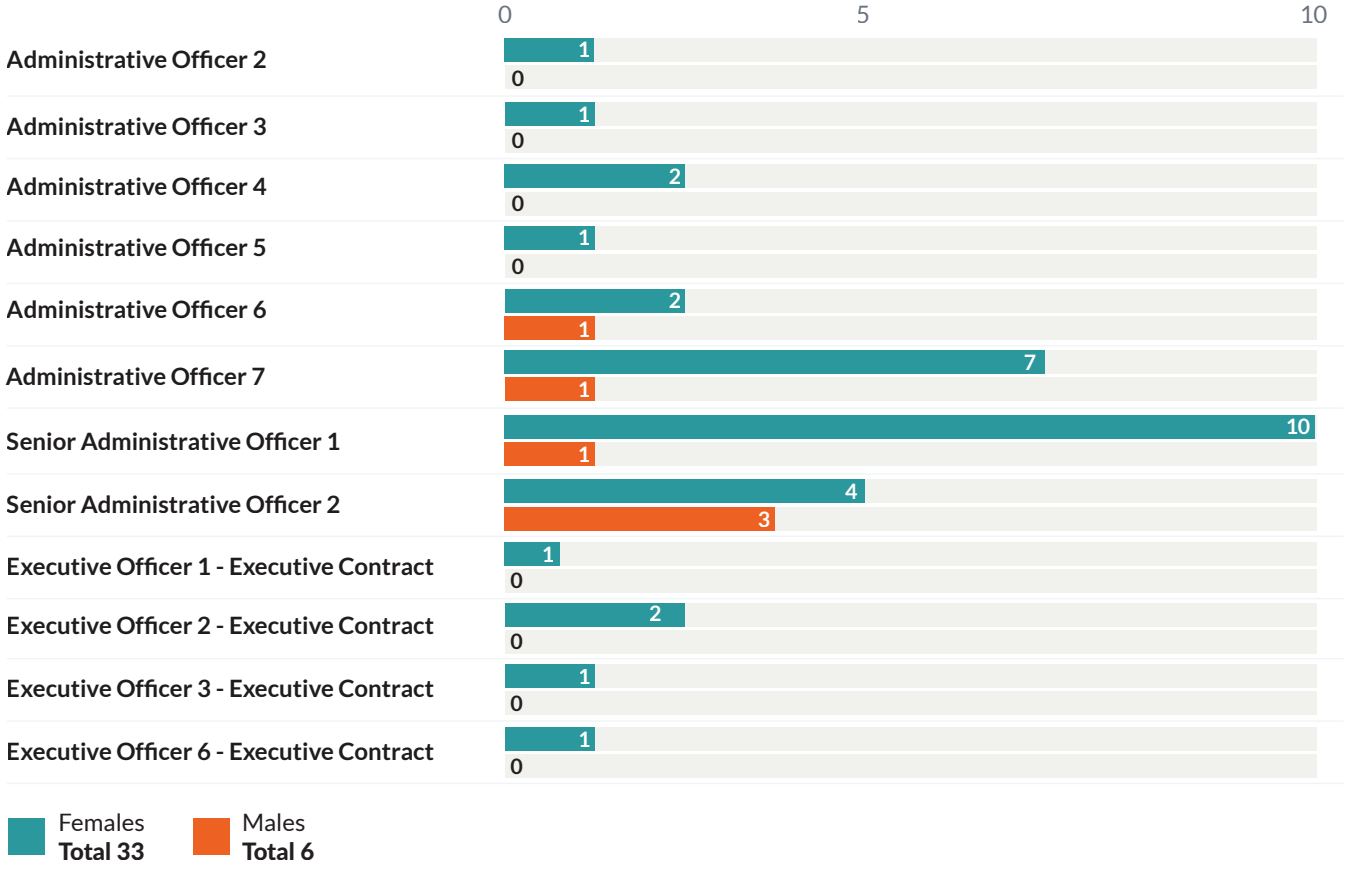
Who we are

On 30 June 2026, OCPE employed 39 people, unchanged from the previous year. The following graphs provide a profile of the workforce, including employee classification, gender, equal employment opportunity groups, working arrangements, employment status, average age and length of service.

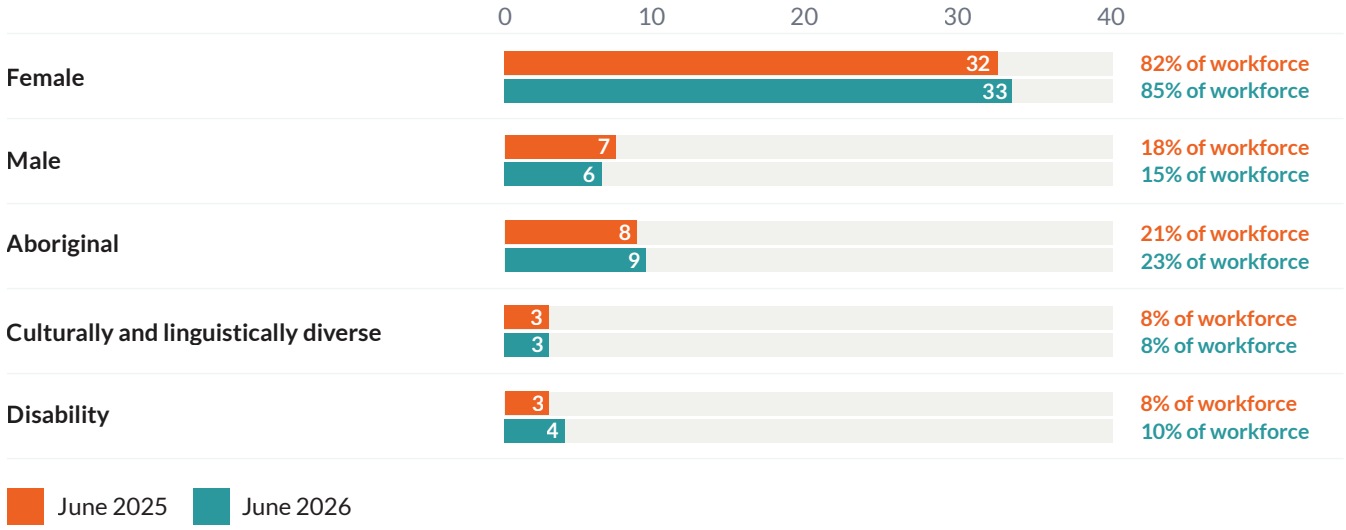
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY CLASSIFICATION



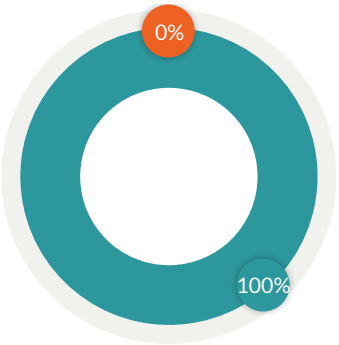
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY CLASSIFICATION AND GENDER



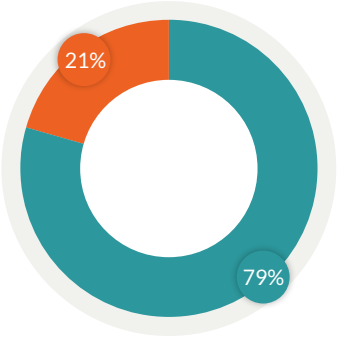
DIVERSITY



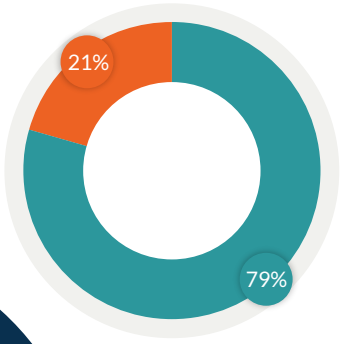
EXECUTIVE STAFF BY GENDER



NUMBER OF OCPE EMPLOYEES EMPLOYED FULL TIME AND PART TIME:



NUMBER OF OCPE EMPLOYEES EMPLOYED ONGOING (PERMANENT) AND FIXED PERIOD (TEMPORARY)





44 years

old is the average age of OCPE employees



17.57 years

is the average length of service in the NTPS for OCPE employees

The role of OCPE

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment is the statutory employer of Northern Territory Public Sector employees, and leads whole of sector employment policy, industrial relations, workforce capability and integrity initiatives.

During 2025–2026, OCPE focused on enterprise bargaining, workforce planning, leadership development, culturally respectful workplaces and modernising employment frameworks. This work responded to recruitment pressures, skills shortages and changing workforce expectations, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Delivering our strategic plan

The OCPE Strategic Plan 2025–2030 guides the organisation's work. Its vision is a high-performing, future-focused public service that inspires community trust, and its purpose is to enable an agile, capable and engaged public sector workforce.

During 2025–2026, OCPE delivered work under four strategic outcomes:

- contemporary and agile employment
- capable and accountable NTPS employees and leaders
- an ethical and culturally respectful public sector
- a centre of excellence for public sector employment.

The following chapters report OCPE's work and achievements under these outcomes. Some initiatives contribute to more than one outcome. For example, employment practices can support attraction and retention, while leadership development can strengthen capability, accountability and workplace culture.

OCPE Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Our Vision:
A high performing, future focused public service that inspires community trust.

Our Purpose:
Enable an agile, capable and engaged public sector workforce.

Who we are:
The Commissioner for Public Employment is the statutory employer of all employees in the NTPS, and we work to support every NT Government agency to deliver services for Territorians.

Our Key Partners:
NTPS agencies, OneNTG Corporate Service partner (DCDD), Charles Darwin University, Institute of Public Administration Australia

Our Workforce

Goals and Objectives

Contemporary and agile employment

1. Promote opportunities to attract employees to work in the NT public service.
2. Negotiate contemporary, affordable and attractive terms and conditions of employment in the NTPS.
3. Contemporise employment provisions and promote agility through review and amendment of legislation and the employment framework.
4. Deliver fair and equitable reviews of treatment in employment.
5. Promote uplift in quality of decision making in relation to employment matters.

Capable and accountable NTPS employees and leaders

1. Deliver a future focused sector-wide workforce plan that positions the NTPS to grow the technical and leadership capability to deliver government priorities.
2. Identify key foundational learning and capability development that supports growing our own and the performance of public servants now and into the future.
3. Provide opportunities that identify, accelerate and grow talent and strengthen leadership behaviours and performance.
4. Provide executive performance and development opportunities that promote stewardship, integrity and accountability.

Key performance indicators

- NTPS enterprise agreements are consistent with the NTPS Wages Policy.
- More than or equal to 95% of promotion appeals, finalised within 6 weeks each year.
- More than or equal to 95% of grievance finalised with 3 months each year.
- More than or equal to 90% discipline and inability appeals finalised with 3 months, each year

- Maintain or increase sector wide People Matter Survey results for Employee Satisfaction to more than 69% and Engagement to more than 64% for each survey.
- Maintain or increase sector wide People Matter Survey response rate to more than 39% for each survey.

Our Sector

Goals and Objectives

Ethical and culturally respectful

1. Position the public service as a career pathway and build a culture of integrity.
2. Drive improved employee experience in the public service, guided by feedback received in perception surveys, including the People Matter Survey.
3. Provide sector level leadership to ensure workplaces are safe, inclusive and support the career aspirations of all public servants, including Aboriginal staff and those with a disability.

Key performance indicators

- Maintain or increase sector wide People Matter Survey results for Integrity and Accountability to more than 70% for each survey.
- Proportion of NTPS employees who identify as Aboriginal is increased in line with employment targets once approved.
- Proportion of NTPS Employees who identify having a Disability 8% by 2027.

Our People

Goals and Objectives

Centre of excellence for public sector employment

1. OCPE staff will work collaboratively with each other and engage with the public sector to share knowledge, build capability and understand agency needs.
2. OCPE staff are provided with opportunities to develop their careers.
3. Model and promote the NTPS values in our everyday work.
4. Attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce in OCPE.
5. Embed feedback and evaluation into OCPE staff activities.

Key performance indicators

- 100% of OCPE staff have a current MyPerformance Agreement each year.
- Maintain OCPE's People Matter Survey results, Employee Satisfaction 90% and maintain or increase Engagement from 77% for each survey.
- Ministerial client satisfaction with OCPE services, communication and responsiveness 95% each year.
- Agency client satisfaction with OCPE services, communication and responsiveness 85% year each year

Ethical practice
Uphold the highest standards of practice and acts with integrity in all that we do.

Accountability
Be transparent and accountable in all our actions.

Respect
Respect all people, and in particular their rights as individuals.

Commitment to service
Be professional, hardworking, effective, innovative and efficient and work collaboratively.

Diversity
Value the diversity of The NTPS workforce.

Impartiality
Provide the Government with advice that is objective, timely and based on the best available evidence.

OCPE Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

2026 Action Plan

Our People

Contemporary and agile employment

- Finalise negotiation of 2025-2029 enterprise agreements for Aboriginal Health Practitioners, Firefighters, Correctional Officers, Medical Officers, Jacana Energy.
- Negotiate new enterprise agreements for Power and Water, Territory Generation, Nurses and Midwives and Dental Officers.
- Take action to ensure commitments made in enterprise agreements are met and that NTPS employees have information to assist understand and access employment entitlements.
- Collaborate with agencies to ensure terms and conditions of employment meet contemporary needs
- Develop and deliver a program of reform to contemporise NTPS recruitment and selection guidance and practices.
- Ensure timely response to Fair Work, Public Sector appeals and grievance matters.

Capable and accountable NTPS employees and leaders

- Develop a new NTPS Strategic Workforce Plan 2027-2030 focused on attracting and growing the current and future capability to deliver on Government's priorities that includes specific commitments focused on employment for school leavers, Aboriginal Territorians and people with a disability.
- Provide opportunities to uplift the capability and enhance career opportunities for NTPS staff.
- Develop pathways to identify and nurture talent while providing focused leadership development opportunities that drive growth, inclusivity, and high performance.
- Deliver the NTPS response to the People Matter Survey with a focus on Leading Change and Performance Improvement, Supporting Wellbeing and Positive Workplace Culture.

Our Sector

Ethical and culturally respectful

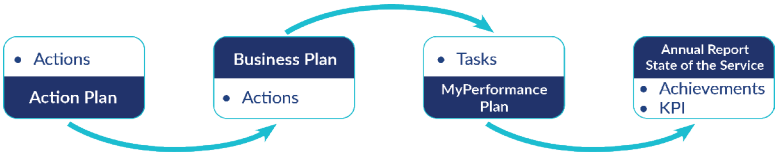
- Develop and promote an NTPS Integrity Framework, underpinned by the NTPS Values.
- Continue implementation of the NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2024-2027.
- Enhance reward and recognition activities such as Recognition of Service Milestones and Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector.
- Enhance the NTPS Aboriginal Cross-Cultural Training Framework and supporting cross cultural capability uplift, including celebrating days of significance.

Our Workplace

Centre of excellence for public sector employment

- Enhance and share the capability of OCPE staff through a program of capability uplift and leadership development, and through providing subject matter expertise to enhance delivery of cross sector wide priorities.
- Implement succession planning practices to enhance available pool of suitable candidates for identified high risk roles.
- Support staff growth and retention by ensuring all employees maintain MyPerformance Agreements with approved learning and development opportunities.
- Implement a program of administrative efficiencies, including a workflow management system and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to assist streamline workload management.
- Develop an OCPE Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Monitoring our progress
We will review our strategic plan each year and our annual Action Plan will focus our work including delivering on areas identified from the 2025 People Matter Survey. We will share our progress in the State of the Service and Annual Reports.



Division	E-mail	Contact Number
Executive Team (Exec)	OCPESecretariat.Commissioner@nt.gov.au	08 8999 4187
Strategic Workforce Planning and Development (SWPD)	SWPD.ocpe@nt.gov.au	08 8999 3708
Aboriginal Employment and Career Development (AECD)	AECDS.ntg@nt.gov.au	08 8999 4118
Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews (PSAGR)	PSAGR@nt.gov.au	08 8999 4129
Employee Relations (ER)	Enquiries.ocpe@nt.gov.au	08 8999 4282

Key performance indicators

OCPE's key performance indicators measure service satisfaction, enterprise agreement outcomes and progress towards a workforce that reflects the Northern Territory community.

The table below compares the 2025–2026 results with the published targets and shows where targets were met or exceeded and where further work is needed.

Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment	2025–2026 Target	2025–2026 Results
Ministerial client satisfaction with OCPE services, communication and responsiveness	≥95% annually	100%
Agency client satisfaction with OCPE services, communication and responsiveness	≥85% annually	84%
Enterprise agreement outcomes (average annual increase in remuneration)	3%	3.3%*
Proportion of NTPS employees who identify as Aboriginal	≥12%	11%

*Note: The weighted average for finalised EA outcomes in 2025–2026 is 3.3%

100% ministerial client satisfaction with OCPE's services, communication and responsiveness.

Our people

Contemporary and agile employment

A contemporary public sector requires employment arrangements that are flexible, ustainable and responsive to changing workforce needs. The OCPE develops and maintains the legislative, industrial and policy frameworks that support public sector employment across the Northern Territory.

Throughout 2025–2026, OCPE delivered a broad program of workforce reform focused on modernising employment arrangements, strengthening recruitment integrity and supporting workforce participation across the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS).

To achieve this outcome OCPE progressed enterprise bargaining, reviewed employment policies and legislation, provided specialist employment advice and supported agencies to implement contemporary employment practices. This work aimed to make employment arrangements clear, consistent and responsive to operational and workforce needs.

Negotiating, implementing and communicating enterprise agreements

As the employer of NTPS employees, the Commissioner is responsible for negotiating and maintaining contemporary employment arrangements across the sector.

During 2025–2026, OCPE negotiated and implemented enterprise agreements that deliver fair, affordable and sustainable employment outcomes while maintaining alignment with NTPS wages policy settings, reviewed employment legislation and policy, and advised agencies on industrial and employment matters. This work supported consistent employment practices across the NTPS.

2025–2026 milestones

Enterprise agreements

The NTPS General and Aboriginal Health Practitioner enterprise agreements were successfully finalised and approved by the Fair Work Commission, representing a significant achievement, particularly for the NTPS General Agreement which covers the NTPS's largest workforce groups.

Enterprise bargaining more broadly remained a major focus throughout the year, with negotiations progressing on a further eight enterprise agreements.

Negotiations commenced for the following agreements:

- Jacana Energy
- Correctional Officers
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Medical Officers
- Power and Water Corporation
- Territory Generation
- Nurses and Midwives
- Dental Officers

Where necessary, OCPE used the Fair Work Commission's dispute resolution processes to support negotiations and facilitate agreement outcomes for the NTPS General Enterprise Agreement and progress negotiations for Jacana Energy, Correctional Officers and Fire and Rescue Service Enterprise Agreements.

The OCPE used a range of enhanced methods to communicate bargaining updates to employees. In addition to traditional Commissioner's bulletins, short infomercials were developed and employees were offered the opportunity to attend virtual and in-person briefings to hear about proposed offers.

New model for public safety

The OCPE also played a significant role in supporting major organisational reforms across government.

A key achievement was working to support implementation of the Police Public Safety Officer (PPSO) model. This new frontline model was adopted with the aim of reducing antisocial behaviour and improve safety in public spaces and around public housing.

Collaboratively with the Northern Territory Police Force (NTPF), the DCDD, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development (DHLGCD) and the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) to establish the new Police Public Safety Officer (PPSO) rank.

The new model brings existing public safety functions together within the NTPF as a single frontline service. Transit Safety Officers and Public Housing Safety Officers were consolidated into one workforce, supported by new employment and legislative arrangements.

In consultation with NTPF, OCPE developed and negotiated the Consent Agreement for the new PPSO rank. The Agreement updated employment conditions for the new workforce and provides a strong foundation for negotiating the next Police Consent Agreement.

The OCPE also led the NTPS change management committee established as part of the reform, ensuring the NTPS met its legislative obligations for managing the change. The reform required extensive consultation, industrial negotiations and change management support to ensure a smooth transition for affected employees.

The OCPE acknowledges the significant contribution of the agencies and stakeholders involved in the reform, particularly the frontline employees who continued to provide essential services throughout the transition while supporting implementation of the new model.

Creating a new Tourism and Events NT (TENT)

On 1 January 2026, Tourism NT and the Northern Territory Major Events Company (NTMEC) merged to form Tourism and Events NT (TENT). The new entity brings tourism and major events together to support growth in the Territory's visitor economy as part of the Department of Tourism and Hospitality.

The OCPE led the NTPS change management committee established to support the merger and ensure the NTPS met its legislative obligations. This included guiding consultation, supporting employees through the transition, and considering the employment and business impacts as the two organisations' functions, structures and operations were brought together.

These reforms demonstrate OCPE's role in supporting machinery-of-government changes and workforce transition activities while ensuring employment arrangements remain contemporary and aligned with government priorities.

Creating a modern employment framework

Across the reporting period, OCPE continued a broad program of policy and framework reform designed to strengthen the effectiveness of NTPS employment arrangements.

During 2025–2026, OCPE issued 60 Determinations and one Public Sector Instrument to support agencies in meeting workforce requirements and responding to emerging operational needs. Existing Determinations were also reviewed to check that they met legal and industrial requirements, remained fit for purpose and clearly stated NTPS employment conditions.

This work updated employment arrangements and made it easier for agencies and employees to understand the terms and conditions applying across the NTPS.

Significant work was undertaken to strengthen workforce participation and inclusive employment outcomes through revision of Employment Instruction 15 – Special Measures, development of a contemporary Special Measures Recruitment Plan template and introduced condition codes to enable enhanced reporting to strengthen agency accountability.

Special Measures Recruitment Plans remain a key workforce planning mechanism supporting Aboriginal employment and career development. During the year, 19 agencies renewed their plans, reinforcing their commitment to creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians and building a workforce that reflects the communities it serves.

A further milestone was publication of the NTPS Designated Positions Guideline. The guideline provides agencies with a consistent framework for identifying positions where cultural knowledge, community connections, lived experience or specialist attributes are essential to effective service delivery. It supports workforce planning, workforce participation and accountability for agencies to ensure employment pathways.

Together, these reforms strengthened workforce planning capability, improved oversight of Special Measures initiatives and provided agencies with clearer tools to support workforce diversity and inclusion.

They also support the Strategic Plan objective of increasing employment opportunities, strengthening workforce participation and building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Northern Territory community.

Building capability through Aboriginal employment pathways

The OCPE is supporting Aboriginal employees to build their skills and experience while contributing to fair and transparent recruitment across the NTPS.

The OCPE continued its rolling six-month developmental opportunity for Aboriginal employees at the AO6 and AO7 levels. Participants undertake a secondment with OCPE as an Aboriginal Employment Pathways Project Officer, gaining practical experience in employment grievance management, Special Measures recruitment processes, policy development, project work and stakeholder engagement.

Two Aboriginal employees participated in the rotation during 2025–2026. The experience helped build their capability while giving them an opportunity to contribute to initiatives that strengthen Aboriginal employment outcomes across the NTPS.

Participants reported increased confidence in navigating recruitment and human resource processes, greater understanding of grievance and policy matters, and valuable experience working across agencies. They also appreciated the opportunity to make a practical contribution to a fairer and more inclusive public sector.



Pictured: Denise Raymond took on secondment as an OCPE Aboriginal Employment Pathways Project Officer.

Reforming recruitment practices

During 2025–2026, OCPE updated the NTPS Recruitment and Selection Policy and its supporting guidance resources. Improvements were made to recruitment documentation including the conflict-of-interest disclosure form, selection panel checklist, selection report template and Merit Selection Training Manual.

The revised requirements help selection panels and delegates:

- identify and manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest
- complete required pre-employment screening and referee checks
- check qualifications and candidate suitability
- document recruitment decisions
- consider relevant Applicant of Potential Risk information.

The changes give panels and delegates clearer requirements for conducting fair, transparent and merit-based recruitment.

Reviewing the Applicant of Potential Risk Register

Recruitment integrity remained a key reform priority throughout 2025–2026.

The Applicant of Potential Risk Register allows agencies to consider relevant employment-related risk information when completing pre-employment screening.

During 2025–2026, OCPE reviewed the governance and operation of the register, including whether its processes were fair, consistent and aligned with natural justice requirements.

The review confirmed the effectiveness of the AOPR as a centralised pre-employment screening mechanism and identified opportunities to strengthen governance arrangements and operational processes, and led to:

- a standard notification letter explaining the role of referees nominated through the process
- standard wording in termination and cessation correspondence about the possible future use of employment information
- changes clarifying the relationship between the register, Employment Instruction 3 – Natural Justice, and the NTPS Pre-Employment Screening Guideline
- clearer guidance on when a chief executive officer may nominate a public sector officer as a referee for a person listed on the AOPR Register.

The review found that the register was operating as intended as part of the broader assessment of applicant suitability.

Updating recruitment frameworks

During 2025–2026, OCPE reviewed key recruitment and workforce management frameworks to identify changes needed to keep NTPS recruitment processes clear, consistent and responsive to workforce needs.

This work included completing enhancements to the NTPS Pre-Employment Screening Guideline, working with DCDD on a trial new Job Evaluation System (JES) assessment and Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) processes.

The OCPE also began work on broader recruitment reforms, including recruitment documentation and the use of emerging technologies to improve the job description template.

These changes provide a basis for further improvements to NTPS recruitment processes and support agencies to apply merit, transparency and integrity requirements consistently when recruiting employees.

Merit selection training

Merit Selection Training remains one of OCPE's most important capability-building programs.

The OCPE delivered merit selection training to support selection panel members and delegates to apply the merit principle consistently when recruiting NTPS employees. The training covers applicant assessment, referee checks, conflict of interest, Special Measures recruitment and natural justice, as well as the requirements of section 5D of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993*.

During 2025–2026, OCPE delivered 57 face-to-face sessions, including 23 executive sessions, 27 whole-of-sector sessions and 7 targeted agency or cohort-specific sessions. This included 15 regional sessions across Big Rivers, Central Australia, East Arnhem and the Barkly, with 1,194 recorded attendances.

A further virtual session had 45 recorded attendances, bringing the total to 58 sessions and 1,239 recorded attendances for the year.

The OCPE also tailored training to meet the needs of particular agencies and employee groups. This included:

- merit selection training delivered in conjunction with the Katherine Aboriginal Employee Forum, with 37 participants
- specialised training for Department of Health nursing and medical officer cohorts
- a dedicated session for school principals, assistant principals and education leaders at the request of the Northern Territory Principals Association, delivered in a hybrid format to include metropolitan and regional participants
- customised sessions for individual agencies based on their workforce and operational needs.

The regional and tailored sessions extended access to recruitment training and allowed OCPE to address specific workforce and recruitment issues across the NTPS.

The training supports selection panel members and delegates to assess applicants against the requirements of a role, document recruitment decisions and apply relevant legislative and policy requirements. This helps agencies conduct consistent, transparent and merit-based recruitment processes across the NTPS.

Chief Minister Awards Finalist – Strengthening integrity and inclusion in NTPS recruitment

The OCPE was recognised as a finalist in the NT Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector for its leadership strengthening ethical, transparent, and inclusive recruitment practices across the Northern Territory Public Sector.

Through targeted reforms including enhanced merit selection training, strengthened conflict of interest requirements, and improved pathways for Aboriginal applicants. The OCPE delivered sector wide improvements that uphold integrity, fairness, and confidence in NTPS employment systems.

Further reforms were implemented following the ICAC's Operation Apollo investigation into recruitment practices. The OCPE strengthened NTPS merit selection training and resources, including new mandatory written declarations of real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest by panel members and delegates.

These measures significantly reinforced transparency, accountability, and ethical practice across the sector.



Pictured: Employees from the Big Rivers region attended the merit selection training.

Responding to industrial relations matters

The OCPE worked closely with agencies to provide practical advice, support workforce decision-making and manage employment matters across the sector.

During 2025–2026, OCPE managed 49 matters, an increase of 40 per cent from the 35 matters managed in 2024–2025. The increase was mainly due to more unfair dismissal applications, disputes arising from enterprise agreement negotiations and new types of disputes relating to flexible work arrangements.

The increase in matters reflects the growing complexity of workforce issues and the continuing need for specialist industrial relations support across government.

SUMMARY OF FAIR WORK MATTERS

Matter type	2023–2024	2024–2025	2025–2026
Unfair dismissal	10	10	18
General protections	2	12	12
Flexible work practices	-	-	5
Dispute management	5	8	4
Bargaining disputes	-	-	4
Stop bullying or sexual harassment	1	4	3
Unlawful termination	0	1	2
Appeal against Fair Work decision	0	0	1
Representational rights	1	0	0
Ambiguity or uncertainty applications	1	0	0
TOTAL	**20**	**35**	**49**

Advisory and support services

The OCPE provided advice to agencies on industrial relations, employment legislation, recruitment, workforce planning and policy implementation. This support helped agencies understand their obligations and apply NTPS employment requirements consistently and helps maintain confidence in public sector employment processes.

Independent review and accountability

Supporting effective and independent employment review remains a key statutory responsibility of the Commissioner for Public Employment.

Through administration of the Public Sector Appeals Board and grievance review functions, OCPE provides employees and agencies with access to independent review processes that promote confidence in employment decisions and support workforce integrity across the NTPS.

Public Sector Appeals

Promotion appeals

SUMMARY OF PROMOTION APPEAL OUTCOMES 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Promotion Appeal Board outcomes	2024–2025	2025–2026
Varied (varying suitability of appellant)	0	10
Replaced (promoting the appellant)	0	1
Decision affirmed	18	18
Set aside and returned to be redone	2	2
Vacated (promotion cancelled)	2	3
Withdrawn	19	15
Total finalised	**22**	**34**
Still open	0	1

Where an appeal is withdrawn after lodging it is usually because either the employee is not eligible to appeal and will instead lodge a s59 grievance, or they decide not to pursue the appeal after a discussion with the Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews (PSAGR) team.

Eighty five per cent of promotion appeals were resolved within six weeks, against the OCPE Strategic Plan target of 95 per cent or more. Timeframes in a small number of matters were affected by procedural and administrative factors necessary to support the appeal process.

Promotion appeals not finalised within the six-week KPI were generally attributable to factors such as requests for extensions of time from appellants, Appeal Board membership changes arising from unforeseen circumstances, delays in receiving required documentation, and the time needed to obtain additional information from parties. These factors, while occasionally extending timeframes, are necessary to ensure procedural fairness and the proper consideration of appeal matters.

Discipline and inability appeals

SUMMARY OF DISCIPLINARY AND INABILITY APPEAL OUTCOMES 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Appeal Board Outcomes	Discipline	Inability
Affirm the decision of the CEO	1	2
Withdrawn	0	1
Total finalised	**1**	**2**

When an appeal is withdrawn after lodging it is generally because the employee has commenced proceedings in another jurisdiction (e.g. Fair Work Commission).

While the three disciplinary and inability appeals received during 2025–2026 exceeded the three-month KPI timeframe, each matter involved complex circumstances and procedural requirements. Timeframes were affected by requests for extensions from parties and legal representatives, the need to provide appropriate support to unrepresented appellants consistent with model litigant principles, and the time required to obtain and coordinate information from multiple parties to support the independent consideration of matters by the Appeal Board. Despite these challenges, work continued to work with all parties to facilitate the efficient progression of appeals while ensuring procedural fairness was maintained.

Review of treatment in employment – grievances

REASONS FOR SECTION 59 PSEM ACT GRIEVANCE REVIEWS 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Reasons	2024–2025	2025–2026
Management action or decision	46	24
Selection decision	27	23
Application of procedures and policies	2	7
Application of conditions of service	8	4
Agency handling of bullying	3	4
Termination of probationary employment	1	5
Termination of Executive Contract	0	0
Disciplinary action	1	1
Bullying	16	0
Unfair Treatment	5	2
Total handled	**109**	**70**

Eighty two per cent of grievances were resolved within three months, against the OCPE Strategic Plan target of 95 per cent or more.

A small number of matters exceeded the target timeframe due to requests for extensions of time from parties, delays in the receipt of relevant information, the availability of key individuals required to progress the review, and the complexity of issues requiring further assessment and consultation.

All attempts are made to resolve grievances as quickly as possible while ensuring the process was fair and decisions were well considered.

OUTCOMES OF SECTION 59 GRIEVANCE REVIEWS 1 JULY 2025 TO 30 JUNE 2026

Outcomes	2024–2025	2025–2026
Agency directed to take/refrain from taking action	0	2
Agency action confirmed	8	11
Agency action confirmed with comment from the Commissioner	0	10
Resolved through PSAGR involvement	43	17
Resolved within the agency	3	1
Being handled by the agency	18	18
Declined to review (e.g. no jurisdiction)	11	2
Withdrawn	21	6
Total finalised	**104**	**67**
Still open	5	3

The Commissioner may decline to review matters where the request for review is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or if alternative proceedings have commenced in another jurisdiction (i.e.Fair Work Commission).

Where a grievance is withdrawn after lodging it is generally because a) the matter is resolved in the workplace, b) after a discussion with PSAGR, the employee is made aware of another more appropriate action to take or c) the employee is advised that the Commissioner may not be able to assist in the matter e.g. workers compensation claims.

Seventy formal s59 grievances were managed through the full formal grievance process in 2025–2026, compared with 110 in the previous year.

In addition to formal grievances more than 150 complaint-related enquiries and requests for assistance were managed, many of which required detailed review and consideration. Accordingly, while formal grievance numbers declined, the overall volume and complexity of work undertaken by PSAGR increased.

During the year, intake and assessment processes were refined to ensure matters were directed to the most appropriate resolution pathway.

Appeals, grievance reviews and Fair Work matters provide valuable insight into emerging workforce issues and help identify opportunities to strengthen employment policies, guidance materials and agency workforce practices across the NTPS.

Capable and accountable NTPS employees and leaders

A capable and accountable workforce is essential to delivering high-quality public services and maintaining community confidence in government. The NTPS relies on employees and leaders who have the skills, knowledge and judgement to respond to changing community needs, deliver services effectively and uphold the values of the public sector.

During 2025–2026, OCPE worked with agencies to strengthen workforce planning, develop leadership capability and expand opportunities for employees to build their skills and careers in the NTPS. This included consultation about the next NTPS Workforce Strategy, investing in leadership development and supporting initiatives that help attract, develop and retain a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Together, these initiatives help prepare the NTPS for future workforce challenges while supporting employees and leaders to act with integrity, deliver quality services and contribute to accountable, high-performing and inclusive workplaces.

Building the future workforce

Attracting and retaining skilled employees remains a priority for the NTPS. During 2025–2026, OCPE worked with agencies to strengthen workforce planning and develop employment pathways for people who can help meet future workforce needs.

A major focus was consulting about the next NTPS workforce strategy. The OCPE also supported initiatives to attract school leavers, Aboriginal Territorians and people with disability to public sector careers.

Developing the NTPS *Workforce Strategy 2027-32*

During 2025–2026, OCPE continued to deliver the existing NTPS workforce strategy while developing the NTPS *Workforce Strategy 2027-32* . The new strategy will aim to set a shared direction for building the NTPS workforce and ensuring it has the skills needed to meet future needs.

The OCPE consulted widely across the Territory to help shape the new strategy. This included face-to-face and online workshops with employees, including in regional areas, and a whole-of-sector Have Your Say survey. The OCPE also sought input from agency executive leadership groups, advisory groups, students, education providers and government partners in other Australian jurisdictions.

The consultation highlighted the importance of:

- attracting and retaining employees, particularly in frontline and regional roles
- providing clearer career pathways and development opportunities
- strengthening leadership capability and employee experience
- supporting Aboriginal employment, inclusion and cultural capability
- supporting employee wellbeing, including through flexible working arrangements
- preparing for future workforce capability needs
- improving workforce planning, recruitment systems and workforce data.

The findings are shaping the priorities and actions in the new strategy. The strategy will provide a shared direction for the NTPS while allowing agencies to respond to their own workforce and service delivery needs through local workforce planning.

Development of the strategy will continue in 2026–2027, with priorities refined and implementation arrangements developed.

EMPLOYEE VOICE

NTPS employees

20 WORKSHOPS

Approximately 140 participants across open, new-starter, leader, executive, Aboriginal workforce and OCPE cohorts, includes regional workshops.

DEDICATED SESSIONS

Aboriginal workforce

7 WORKSHOPS

Dedicated sessions were held in Darwin, regional locations and online, alongside participation in sessions open to all employees and the NTPS Aboriginal Employee Forum.

PLACE-BASED INPUT

Regional voices

5 REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEES

Top End, Barkly, Big Rivers, East Arnhem and Central Australia.

AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Agencies and executives

LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

9 agency executive sessions and written submission providing implementation and system insights.

SECTOR-WIDE SURVEY

Have Your Say

317 RESPONSES

Survey responses reinforcing the themes from workshops and stakeholder engagement.

FUTURE WORKFORCE

Community and partners

SCHOOLS AND ADVISORY GROUPS

Students, advisory committees, education institutes and government partners.

Improving employees' skills and opportunities

The OCPE supports leadership and professional development across the NTPS, helping employees build their skills and prepare for current and future roles. During 2025–2026, this included leadership programs, executive development and initiatives to increase access to development opportunities across the Territory.

Developing the next generation of leaders

Investing in leadership capability remains one of the most important ways to strengthen organisational performance across the NTPS.

During 2025–2026, OCPE strengthened leadership capability and talent management across the NTPS through a more integrated, sector-wide approach. A centralised leadership development team was established within OCPE to coordinate leadership programs, connect development with workforce planning and succession management, and align investment with current and future capability needs.

The OCPE worked with CEOs and senior executives to identify emerging workforce challenges, critical capability requirements and talent priorities.

This engagement informed program planning, strengthened consideration of succession needs and improved alignment between leadership development opportunities and agency capability requirements. The OCPE also continued to support use of the NTPS Capability Framework as a common basis for workforce planning, performance and career development.

Eleven programs supported 530 employees to build leadership capability across career stages, from emerging leaders to senior executives. The programs covered strategic leadership, leading change, stakeholder engagement, ethical decision-making and performance management.

Pictured: Kiriakoula Giannikouris shared her experience with the Emerging Leaders forum.



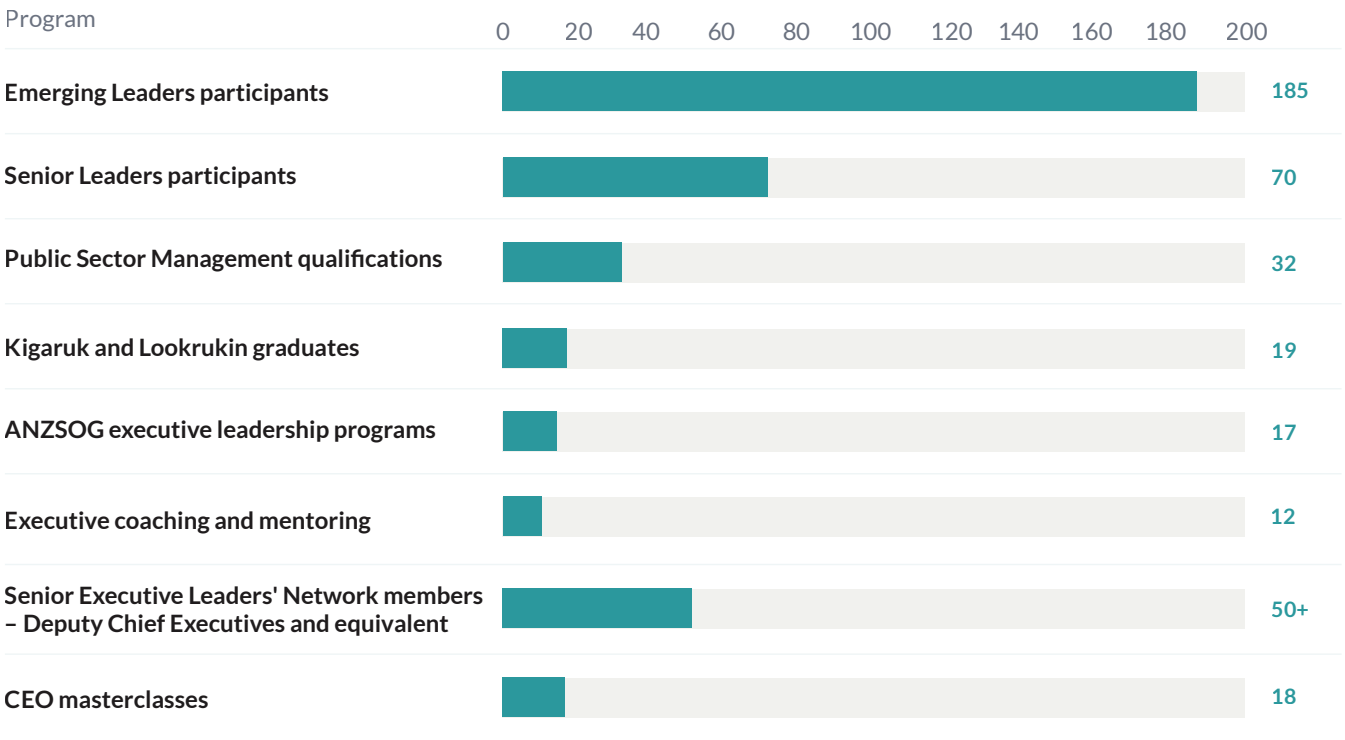
Leadership programs offered in 2025–2026

- Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leadership Development Program
- Leadership for New Managers
- Emerging Leaders Program
- Foundations of Public Sector Government
- Public Sector Management Program
- Senior Leaders Program
- Mini Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Company Directors Course – Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)
- Executive Master of Public Administration – Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG)
- Executive Fellow Program – ANZSOG
- Deputies Leadership Program – ANZSOG

A centralised training calendar on NTG Central was introduced to make it easier for employees and agencies to find leadership development opportunities and plan their participation.

Key achievements during 2025–2026

- 530 employees participated in leadership development programs, covering a range of programs from short courses to formal accredited training and supporting employees from emerging leaders through to senior executives.
- Leadership development was expanded in regional areas, with programs delivered in Alice Springs and Katherine – the first time that Big Rivers regional emerging leaders had the opportunity to engage in face-to-face learning outside of Darwin in many years.
- 32 employees completed the Public Sector Management Program, gaining a formal qualification in public sector management.
- 19 employees from eight agencies completed the Kigaruk and Lookrukin Leadership Development Program, gaining a Diploma of Leadership and Management. The program provides culturally safe, group-based learning and will be offered to a new cohort in 2026–2027.
- 185 employees completed the Emerging Leaders Program, including participants in programs delivered in Alice Springs and Katherine.
- 70 employees completed the first Senior Leaders Program, introduced in 2025 for employees at SAO1 to SAO2 and equivalent levels.
- More than 50 senior leaders participated in the Senior Executive Leaders' Professional Network, which meets quarterly to share ideas, collaborate and discuss issues affecting the NTPS. The OCPE also continued CEO Collaborative Learning Sessions to support senior executive development and discussion of government priorities.



Executive leadership development

Senior executives were provided with additional opportunities to build their leadership capability through CEO masterclasses, the Senior Executive Leaders' Professional Network and other targeted initiatives. Focusing on leadership, strategic decision-making, reform and workforce issues relevant to the NTPS, these activities strengthened executive leadership, supported succession planning and helped build a strong pipeline of future NTPS leaders. This included:

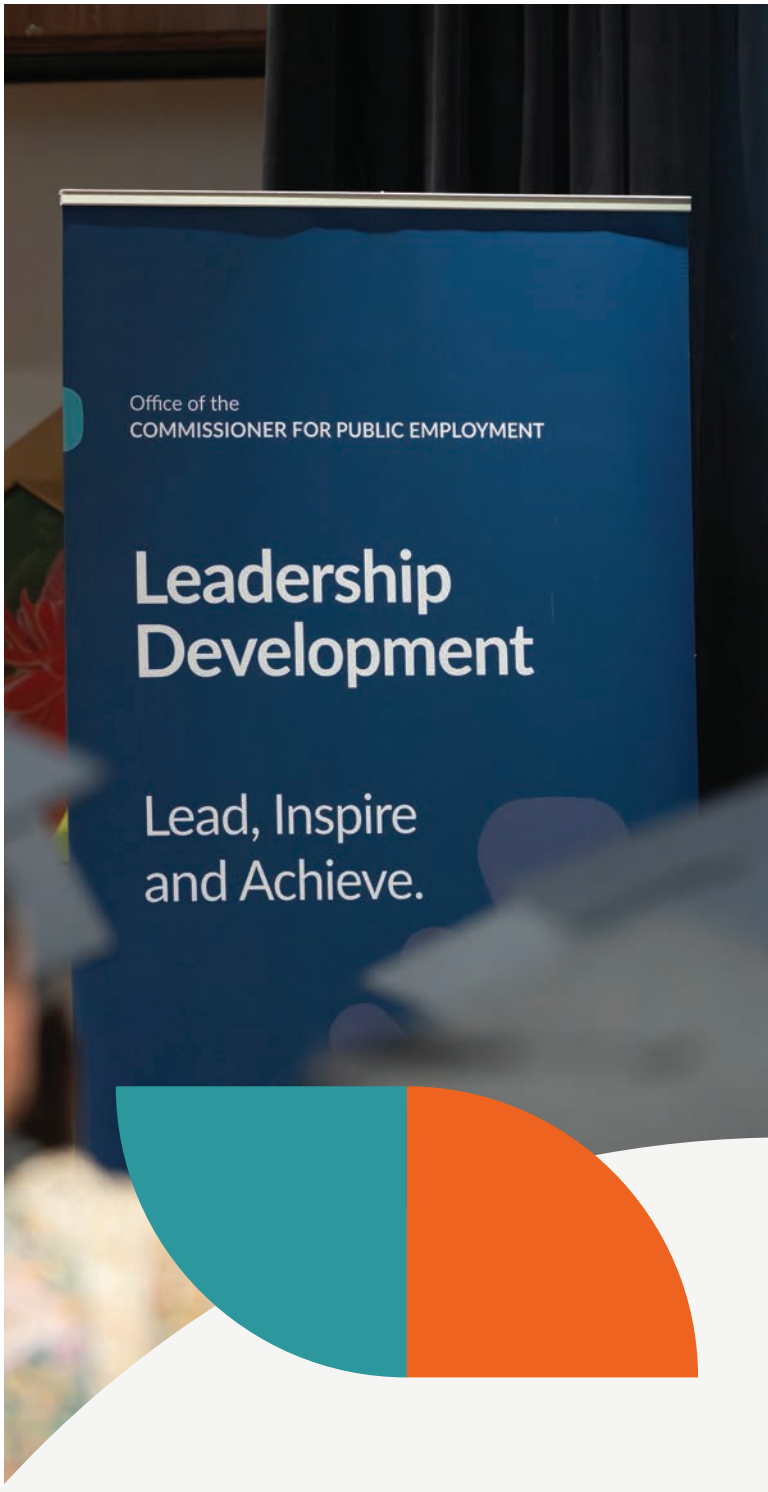
- 37 executives participated in a Leading through Reform workshop in Alice Springs, which included site visits and a focus on applying the NTG's three key strategies.
- 29 executives participated in a strategic recruitment workshop focused on Growing Our Own in the Territory, exploring approaches to attracting and retaining staff.
- CEOs and executives participated in professional learning on strategic storytelling and its use in communication, engagement and leadership, and on leading innovation.

In 2026, executive professional learning was informed by feedback from the 2025 People Matter Survey, with a focus on effective communication, clear strategic direction and employee engagement. This included:

- 72 senior executives and CEOs attended a Building a High-Performance Culture in the NTPS workshop, focused on performance, accountability and organisational alignment.
- 32 members of the Senior Executive Leaders' Professional Network participated in The Emotionally Intelligent Leader workshop, focused on practical approaches to leading effectively in complex and high-pressure environments.

The OCPE also supported executive development through centrally funded access to external programs and coaching. During the year:

- 17 NTPS executives participated in ANZSOG programs, including the Deputies Leadership Program (4), Executive Fellows Program (5) and Executive Master of Public Administration (8).
- 12 executives participated in micro-sprint coaching through the executive career discovery and coaching offer.



"72 senior executives and CEOs attended a Building a High-Performance Culture in the NTPS workshop, focused on performance, accountability and organisational alignment."

Centrally funding executive development helps smaller agencies access leadership opportunities that may otherwise be difficult to provide within their budgets. The OCPE also continued the Senior Executive Leaders' Newsletter to share strategic priorities, leadership insights, development opportunities and key organisational updates across the NTPS.

The OCPE strengthened its work with national leadership providers, including the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and ANZSOG, to expand executive development opportunities in governance, strategy, public sector stewardship, public value and organisational performance.

Through the Senior Executive Leaders' Professional Network, more than 50 deputy chief executives and equivalent leaders had a dedicated forum to build cross-agency relationships, share experience and address current leadership issues. Sessions covered leading through reform and organisational change, building high-performing and accountable workplace cultures, emotional intelligence, leading innovation strategic recruitment, workforce sustainability and growing workforce capability in the Territory.

The network's visit to Central Australia gave senior leaders direct exposure to regional issues and priorities and supported discussion of the leadership approaches needed in different operating environments. The OCPE also delivered dedicated chief executive officer masterclasses on communication, engagement, strategic storytelling, leading high-performing organisations and driving system reform.

The Commissioner, CEOs and other senior NTPS leaders contributed to leadership programs and executive forums by sharing practical experience of leadership, stewardship, accountability and public sector values. Their participation helped employees connect program content with the decisions and challenges faced by NTPS leaders.



Pictured: Department of Logistics and Infrastructure CEO Gemma Lake (third from left) joined the Strategic Workforce Planning and Development team at a leadership development forum

Expanding executive governance capability

The OCPE worked with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) to develop an NTPS-specific Company Directors Course, with the first course scheduled for delivery in October 2026.

The course is designed to strengthen executive capability in governance, strategy, risk management, financial oversight and organisational performance. Participants who successfully complete the program will obtain the AICD Company Directors Course qualification.

The work to establish this course builds on OCPE's focus on the national leadership development providers to expand executive learning opportunities and tailor professional development to the governance and leadership needs of the NTPS.

Aboriginal employment and career development

Aboriginal employees make an important contribution to the delivery of government services across the Northern Territory, bringing cultural knowledge, community connections and diverse perspectives to the public sector workforce. Supporting Aboriginal employment, career development and leadership remains a key priority for building a representative, capable and culturally responsive NTPS.

During 2025–2026, OCPE continued to support Aboriginal attraction, retention, career progression and leadership development through a range of workforce and employee initiatives. This work included evaluating the *Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2021–25*, and leadership programs, strengthening opportunities to participate in recruitment processes, and hosting forums for Aboriginal employees to connect, share experiences and provide feedback.

Together, these initiatives help build Aboriginal leadership capability, strengthen cultural safety and inclusion, and support increased Aboriginal participation and career development across the NTPS.

Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2021–25 evaluation

The NTPS *Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2021–25* provided a sector-wide approach to attracting, developing and retaining Aboriginal employees. It focused on six areas: targets, attraction, retention, leadership, workplace culture and remote employment, with targets of 16 per cent Aboriginal workforce representation and 10 per cent representation in senior roles.

The evaluation, completed in 2026, found positive progress in Aboriginal employment, leadership and workforce development across the NTPS. It drew on workforce data, program and training records, survey results and feedback from Aboriginal employees to assess implementation and outcomes from June 2021 to December 2025.

During the life of the strategy, the number of Aboriginal employees increased by 331, reaching 11.19 per cent of the NTPS workforce. Aboriginal representation in senior roles increased by 56 employees to 5.01 per cent. Special Measures Recruitment Plans remained an important recruitment tool, with 95.4 per cent of advertised vacancies between 2021–2022 and the second quarter of 2025–2026 identified under Special Measures. Aboriginal applicants were appointed to 10 per cent of these vacancies.

The strategy also supported career development, leadership and participation across the sector. This included:

- 96 Aboriginal employees registering on the Merit Selection Register to participate on selection panels
- 694 Aboriginal employees attending Aboriginal Employee Forums in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine
- 162 employees participating in the Aboriginal Employee Mentor Program
- Aboriginal employees making up 7.88 per cent of participants in OCPE leadership programs and 5.17 per cent of participants in capability development programs.

Other initiatives included the implementation of the Executive Leader Development Framework, embedding Agency Expo Showcases into the Aboriginal Employee Forums, promotion of NTPS vacancies through the Aboriginal Employee Network and recognition of days of significance.

The evaluation also considered Aboriginal employees' experiences of career development, workplace culture and cultural safety. Detailed findings from the 2025 People Matter Survey are reported in the People Matter Survey section of this report.

The evaluation identified a need for further work on career progression, leadership development, cultural safety, remote employment opportunities, workforce participation and workforce data. Its findings will inform Aboriginal employment and career development priorities in the next NTPS Workforce Strategy.

Pictured: Participant during a workshop at the Aboriginal Employee Forum



Key achievements in 2025–2026

- Coordinated and hosted two Aboriginal Employee Forums in Katherine and Alice Springs, attended by 190 Aboriginal employees.
- Maintained the Aboriginal Employee Network, with more than 2,500 subscribers, sharing information about employment opportunities, career development, training and other workforce initiatives.
- Completed an evaluation of the Aboriginal Employee Mentor Program to inform development of a sector-wide mentoring framework.
- Streamlined the Aboriginal Merit Selection Register nomination process.
- Delivered Merit Selection Training to 53 Aboriginal employees in dedicated sessions associated with Aboriginal Employment Forums.

Supporting Aboriginal career development

The OCPE supported Aboriginal employees to plan their careers through sponsored one-on-one Career Planning Sessions delivered by UNE Partnerships (the training arm of the University of New England). The sessions provide individual guidance to help employees identify career goals, explore development opportunities and plan career pathways within the NTPS.

In 2025–2026, four employees completed a session. Feedback identified opportunities to promote the sessions more widely, improve access and better connect them with other workforce development programs. The OCPE will use this feedback to improve participation and ensure the sessions complement other career development opportunities across the NTPS.

Aboriginal Employee Mentor Program

In 2026, OCPE completed an evaluation of the NTPS Aboriginal Employee Mentor Program (AEMP), a structured 12-month program established in 2019 to support Aboriginal employees to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Between June 2021 and December 2025, the program supported 162 participants, including 101 Aboriginal mentees and 61 mentors, with consistently high satisfaction and strong engagement in mentoring and workshop activities.

The evaluation found that mentees gained confidence, strengthened career planning and felt better prepared for career progression. Mentors developed their leadership, communication and cultural understanding. The program also strengthened cross-agency networks and contributed to more culturally capable, inclusive and safe workplaces.

The evaluation confirmed strong demand for the program while identifying opportunities to strengthen its design, participant support and measurement of longer-term outcomes, and expand delivery in regional and remote locations.

The findings, together with consultation for the NTPS Workforce Strategy 2027–2032, will inform development of a sector-wide mentoring framework to expand mentoring opportunities across the NTPS.

Connecting Aboriginal employees across the NTPS

The Aboriginal Employee Network had more than 2,500 subscribers during 2025–2026. The OCPE used the network to share vacancies, employee entitlements, training, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and information about other workforce initiatives.

The network gives OCPE a direct way to keep Aboriginal employees informed and encourage participation in career and workforce development opportunities.

Aboriginal Merit Selection Register

The NTPS Aboriginal Merit Selection Register gives Aboriginal employees opportunities to serve on recruitment and selection panels and contribute culturally informed perspectives to recruitment.

During 2025–2026, OCPE worked with the DCDD to streamline the nomination process. As of 30 June 2026, 96 Aboriginal employees had nominated for the register.

Merit selection training delivered alongside the Katherine and Alice Springs Aboriginal Employee Forums recorded 53 employee participants.

Aboriginal employees connect at 2025 forums

Aboriginal employees from across the NTPS came together in Katherine and Alice Springs in 2025 to share experiences, build connections and focus on social and emotional wellbeing.

The two Aboriginal Employee Forums, hosted by OCPE, attracted 190 participants, with 74 attending in Katherine and 116 in Alice Springs. Employees travelled from communities across the Territory to take part.

Held since 2016, the forums provide an opportunity for Aboriginal employees to connect with colleagues from different agencies and locations in a culturally safe environment. Sessions cover wellbeing, leadership, career development and workplace experiences.

Feedback from the 2025 forums showed that employees valued the opportunity to network, share experiences and learn from each other. Participants also highlighted the importance of continuing to support Aboriginal leadership, cultural safety, wellbeing and career progression across the NTPS.

The OCPE will continue to deliver the forums as part of its work to support Aboriginal employees and strengthen connections across the public sector.



Pictured top: The Aboriginal employee forum in Katherine attracted 74 participants from across the NTPS.

Pictured bottom: More than 100 Aboriginal NTPS employees from across the Territory travelled to Alice Springs for the forum.

The People Matter Survey – using employee feedback to improve the NTPS

The OCPE led the 2025 People Matter Survey (PMS) across the NTPS, giving employees an opportunity to share their experiences and identify areas for improvement.

The survey was delivered through a whole-of-sector partnership model that combined central coordination with agency-led implementation. Agency champions provided executive sponsorship, while senior coordinators supported planning, engagement and delivery within agencies. Regular coordinator forums enabled agencies to share successful approaches, solve common issues and maintain consistent messaging across the NTPS.

The OCPE introduced a renewed engagement approach to increase awareness of the survey and make it easier for employees to participate. Working with agency leads, communication teams and DCDD Workforce business partners, OCPE promoted the survey through workplace channels and provided a range of ways for employees to access information and participate. This included survey hubs in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek, QR-enabled mobile access, workplace signage, translated Kriol and English materials, an Aboriginal Kriol video developed with the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, employee case studies, lock-screen promotions and online information. Agencies were also encouraged to provide employees with time, access and assistance to complete the survey where needed.

To support a coordinated approach, agencies collaborated on survey planning, testing, communications and engagement activities. The OCPE also publicly reported agency participation rates throughout the survey period, encouraging agencies to promote participation and share successful engagement strategies.

A total of 11,976 employees participated, representing 48 per cent of the NTPS workforce, compared with 39 per cent in 2023. The higher participation rate provided a stronger evidence base for understanding employee experience and identifying priorities for action across the NTPS.

After the survey, OCPE worked with agencies to interpret their results, identify strengths and develop actions in response to employee feedback. Every agency received detailed results reports and access to interactive data dashboards, enabling leaders to explore findings and identify priorities relevant to their workforce. The OCPE also facilitated agency action-planning workshops to help agencies translate survey results into practical workforce initiatives.

Targeted workshops were conducted with CEOs, agency executive leadership teams and the Aboriginal Employee Forum to support interpretation of results, recognise strengths and identify opportunities for improvement. This work informed both agency-level responses and whole-of-sector priorities.

At a whole-of-sector level, the findings informed the NTPS Whole-of-Sector Response Plan, which focused on leadership, wellbeing and workplace culture.

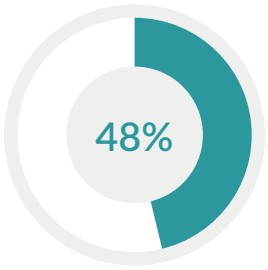
The OCPE also delivered initiatives in response to the survey findings, including:

- a *Building a High-Performance Culture in the NTPS* workshop attended by 72 chief executives and senior executive leaders
- an *Emotionally Intelligent Leader* workshop attended by 32 members of the senior executive leaders' professional network
- HR Skill Up sessions on accessing coaching and managing burnout and overwhelm
- Releasing the *Creating Respectful Workplaces* eLearning program.

2,822 ↑

more people completed the 2025 survey (11,976* total)

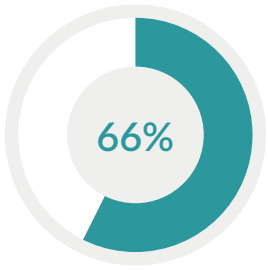
*Excludes non-NTPS staff



2% UP ↑

for employee engagement from 2023

Describes employees having a strong commitment to their organisation, feeling connected and wanting to be part of its future success



Aboriginal employee feedback

In 2025, the Aboriginal Employee Stay Survey was incorporated into the People Matter Survey for the first time. This reduced the need for separate surveys and created a consistent source of information about Aboriginal employees' experiences.

The survey received responses from 1,103 Aboriginal employees, which is 9.21 per cent of the total NTPS workforce. Aboriginal employee engagement increased from 66 per cent in 2023 to 68 per cent in 2025, while satisfaction increased from 66 per cent to 71 per cent.

Aboriginal employees reported improvements of five percentage points or more in several areas, including:

- managers demonstrating NTPS values
- confidence that bullying and harassment would not be tolerated
- feeling safe to speak up
- workplace health and wellbeing
- flexible work
- performance feedback
- career discussions
- recognition for good work.

The results also identified areas requiring further attention. Aboriginal employees continued to report barriers related to workplace behaviours and attitudes, respect between colleagues and personal background. Twelve per cent of Aboriginal respondents reported experiencing racism in the NTPS in the previous 12 months.

Career progression remained the most commonly identified reason Aboriginal employees would consider leaving the NTPS, reported by 33 per cent of respondents, followed by job satisfaction (12 per cent), managers (10 per cent) and health and wellbeing (9 per cent). These findings were consistent with the earlier Aboriginal Employee Stay Surveys and reinforce the need to continue improving career development, workplace culture and cultural safety.

The findings will inform future work on career development, workplace culture and cultural safety and provide a baseline for monitoring Aboriginal employee experience.

PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY 2021 TO 2025

PMS Cohort	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander			NTPS
Survey Years	2021	2023	2025	2025
Participation	962 (10.04%)	876 (9.57%)	1103 (9.21%)	11,976
Employee engagement	67%	66%	68%	66%
Employee satisfaction	71%	66%	71%	71%

The key drivers of Aboriginal employees' engagement show large gains, as outlined below:

COMPARISON OF KEY DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Aboriginal respondents' key drivers of Employee Engagement	2023	2025
I would recommend my organisation as a great place to work	61%	66%
I am proud to tell others I work for my organisation	66%	71%
I feel a strong personal attachment to my organisation	53%	60%
My organisation motivates me to help it achieve its objective	58%	62%
My organisation inspires me to do the best in my job	57%	63%

Our sector

Ethical and culturally respectful

An ethical and culturally respectful public sector is one where employees understand the standards expected of them, feel safe to speak up, are treated with respect and are supported to contribute their best.

The OCPE supports an NTPS where people are treated fairly, respectfully and with integrity, and where employees have the opportunity to participate and progress regardless of their background or circumstances. This includes strengthening the systems that support ethical decision-making, improving diversity and inclusion, and building employees' and leaders' capability to create safe, respectful and culturally responsive workplaces.

During 2025–2026, OCPE progressed work to develop an NTPS Integrity Framework while delivering practical initiatives to strengthen integrity, inclusion and cultural capability across the NTPS. This included supporting employment and career opportunities for Aboriginal people and people with disability, strengthening Special Measures, and giving employees a clearer understanding of the standards and behaviours expected in the workplace.

Together, these initiatives contributed to building workplaces that are more inclusive, culturally capable and responsive to employee feedback.

Supporting diversity and inclusion

During 2025–2026, OCPE continued to strengthen diversity and inclusion across the NTPS by supporting agencies to build a workforce that reflects the community it serves and provides equitable opportunities for employees to participate, develop and progress.

Key areas of work included:

- implementing initiatives under the NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2024–27 to improve employment and career opportunities for people with disability
- supporting Aboriginal employment and career development through Special Measures, career development, leadership and employee engagement initiatives
- incorporating diversity and inclusion into workforce planning and development
- using the 2025 People Matter Survey to gather employee feedback and identify areas for improvement in the employee experience
- providing advice, resources and opportunities to help agencies create inclusive and culturally respectful workplaces.

Supporting people with disability – EmployAbility Strategy 2024–27

The NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2024–27 supports increased employment opportunities for people with disability through the Disability Employment Program, agency support and awareness activities that promote accessible employment pathways, and training that builds disability inclusion capability across the NTPS.

During the year, OCPE introduced a renewed governance model to support implementation of the strategy. A steering committee comprising a small group of CEOs was established to champion the work and provide guidance and oversight of action delivery.

The OCPE delivered eight virtual workshops on disability confident workforces, disability confident managers, workplace adjustments and neuro-inclusive workforces, with 186 participants across the four workshops. This included:

- two disability confident workforces sessions – 58 participants
- one disability confident managers session – 18 participants
- two workplace adjustments sessions – 31 participants
- three neuro-inclusive workforces sessions – 79 participants.

The neuro-inclusive workforces workshops provided employees and managers with information about neurodiversity, including different communication, learning and working styles, and practical approaches to supporting neurodivergent employees in the workplace. The participation in these workshops indicates strong interest in building understanding of neurodiversity and creating more inclusive workplaces.

From compliance to culture

The Northern Territory is one of only four Australian jurisdictions to extend positive duty to disability, requiring organisations to take proactive steps to prevent and address discrimination and promote inclusion.

The NT Anti-Discrimination Commission hosted Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner Rosemary Kayess in Darwin to explore what positive duty means in practice, particularly in relation to employment. The OCPE joined other NT stakeholders for a roundtable discussion with Commissioner Kayess focused on employment and training opportunities for people with disability.

The Commissioner for Public Employment also contributed to the Positive Duty Oration at Charles Darwin University, where Commissioner Kayess delivered the keynote address on addressing the demand side of employment. The event brought together government, community and industry perspectives on moving from compliance to a culture where people with disability can participate and thrive in the workforce.

For the NTPS, this work aligns with the EmployAbility Strategy 2024-27, which provides a framework for improving policies, training and workforce planning so disability inclusion is embedded in how the public sector works. The strategy supports the NTPS to continue removing barriers, improving employment opportunities and creating workplaces where people with disability can participate and progress.



Pictured: Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner Rosemary Kayess (front row, centre) and NT Anti-discrimination Commissioner Jeswynn Yogaratnam (standing, far right) led the round-table discussion.

Disability representation

In response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, handed down in September 2023, the Northern Territory Government set a target for eight per cent of the NTPS workforce to be people who identify as having a disability.

As of 30 June 2026, 2.1 per cent of NTPS employees shared their disability status, an increase of 0.2 percentage points from the previous reporting period.

Disability representation data is based on employees who choose to disclose that they have a disability. Employees are not required to disclose this information, so the reported figure may not reflect the actual proportion of NTPS employees who have a disability.

Looking ahead

In 2026–2027, OCPE will continue implementing the NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2024–27 and support agencies to increase employment and representation of people with disability across the NTPS.

Key priorities will include:

- progressing towards the eight per cent disability representation target through targeted workforce attraction initiatives and encouraging self-identification
- incorporating disability inclusion into strategic workforce planning
- continuing to build leadership capability to support inclusive workplaces.

Special Measures

During 2025–2026, OCPE updated the NTPS Special Measures framework to support agencies to improve Aboriginal employment and workforce participation. Changes included revisions to *Employment Instruction 15 – Special Measures*, updated guidance and a new Special Measures Recruitment Plan (SMRP) template, providing a wholistic consideration of how special measures complements an agency focus on Aboriginal employment and career development aspsirations.

Nineteen agencies refreshed or renewed their SMRPs for 2026–30, using workforce information to identify employment priorities and opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The OCPE also introduced new system condition codes to improve monitoring and workforce data. The NTPS Designated Positions Guideline was published to help agencies consistently identify positions where cultural knowledge, community connections, lived experience or other specialist attributes are important to effective service delivery and employment pathways.

Together, these changes give agencies clearer tools to plan for Aboriginal employment, apply Special Measures and monitor progress against their Aboriginal workforce objectives.

19 special measures plans in place

1,102 designated positions

Cross-cultural capability

The OCPE worked with agencies to strengthen employees' understanding of cultural difference, respectful behaviour and their responsibilities when working with colleagues and communities across the Northern Territory. During 2025–2026, this included launching the *Creating Respectful Workplaces* eLearning package, continuing mandatory foundational cross-cultural training, publishing calendars of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of significance, and coordinating activities that gave Aboriginal employees and young people opportunities to share their perspectives with NTPS leaders and employees.

Creating respectful workplaces

In March 2026, OCPE launched the *Creating Respectful Workplaces* eLearning package. The program brings together in a single learning program information about the NTPS Code of Conduct, respectful workplace behaviour and the new positive duty to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation. It also helps employees recognise and respond to inappropriate workplace behaviour.

The training responded to issues identified through the People Matter Survey, including the importance of respectful workplaces, employee wellbeing and confidence to raise concerns.

By 30 June 2026, 7,679 employees had completed the course. Evaluation responses indicated that the program helped employees understand the Code of Conduct, positive-duty obligations and expected workplace behaviours.

Of those who provided feedback, 92.1 per cent rated the course as very or somewhat useful, with an average rating of 3.9 out of 5 across the key learning measures.

Foundations of cross-cultural training

The OneNTG Essential Training module, *Foundations of Cross-Cultural Training*, provides baseline cultural awareness training for NTPS employees and complements agency-specific programs. New employees are required to complete the module within their first three months of employment and undertake refresher training every three years. During the period, work was undertaken to refresh the module and the updated content will be launched in the second half of 2026.

By the end of June 2026, 9,826 people (37 per cent of the NTPS workforce) had completed the module.

Days of Aboriginal cultural significance

Recognising and celebrating days of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural significance is an important way of strengthening cultural understanding, respect and inclusion across the NTPS. These events provide opportunities for employees to learn, reflect, celebrate and engage with Aboriginal cultures, histories and communities.

In 2026, OCPE published the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Days of Significance Calendar and the NT Regional Events and Days of Significance Calendar to support cultural awareness, understanding and inclusion across the NTPS. The calendars highlight nationally recognised observances, significant cultural dates and community-led events across the Northern Territory, encouraging employees and agencies to engage with Aboriginal cultures, histories and communities in meaningful and respectful ways. Both resources are publicly available on the OCPE website and support culturally inclusive workplace practices across the sector.



Celebrating culture and connection during NAIDOC Week

The OCPE marked NAIDOC Week 2025, themed *The Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy*, with a week of activities celebrating the achievements, leadership and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The week opened with a cake cutting, followed by activities that encouraged employees to learn, connect and build their cultural awareness. Employees tested their knowledge in a NAIDOC quiz, watched Blue Water Empire, exploring the culture, history and maritime traditions of Torres Strait Islander peoples, and came together over a shared Big Makan lunch.

Staff also joined the official Larrakia Nation NAIDOC March, showing their support for Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory and their strength, resilience and leadership.

The activities provided opportunities for employees to celebrate culture, learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and perspectives, and contribute to a more inclusive and culturally responsive NTPS.



Pictured: OCPE staff gathered to celebrate NAIDOC week, including cutting a special cake.

Recognising employee service and achievement

The OCPE coordinated the NTPS Recognition of Service Milestones program in partnership with the DCDD and NTPS agencies. The program recognises employees for periods of continuous service, with milestones beginning at 10 years.

In 2025, OCPE supported the recognition of 1,231 NTPS employees who reached a service milestone of 10 years or more. This included one employee who reached **50 years of service**.

On 8 December 2025, OCPE employees Ann Vincent, Nicole Hurwood, Michelle Leonard, Hayley Green, and Kiriakoula Giannikouris received recognition for their service milestones.



Pictured above, from left: Denise Raymond on behalf of Ann Vincent, Nicole Hurwood, Hayley Green and Kiriakoula Giannikouris received their recognition of service milestone awards.

Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector

The OCPE facilitated the judging process for the 2025 Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector. This included coordinating nominations and assessment by panels of Chief Executive Officers, with final award decisions made by the Chief Minister.

Awards were presented across eight categories. Eight employees from six agencies also received Chief Minister's Medals, including two Outstanding Aboriginal Leadership Medals.

Public Service Medal

The OCPE facilitated the NTPS selection process for the Public Service Medal, supporting the nomination and assessment of employees recognised for outstanding public service.

Two NTPS employees received the Public Service Medal in the national 2026 Australia Day Honours List.

Our workplace

Centre of excellence for public sector employment

Training our people to be the experts

A centre of excellence is built through capable people, strong governance, continuous improvement and a commitment to learning and innovation. Throughout 2025–2026, OCPE strengthened its organisational capability by investing in employee development and wellbeing, building specialist expertise and progressing key reform initiatives. This work is helping OCPE build the capability needed to be a centre of excellence for public sector employment and provide leadership, expertise and high-quality services to the NTPS.

The OCPE employees took part in a range of professional development activities spanning leadership, public sector management, employment practice, decision-making, cultural capability and workplace wellbeing. All OCPE employees completed Mental Health First Aid and Unconscious Bias training. Employees also participated in Advanced Government Decision Making, Statutory Interpretation, the Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leaders Development Program, the Emerging Leaders Program and the Senior Leaders Program. Other professional development included the ANZSOG Executive Master of Public Administration, Public Sector Management Program, Mini MBA and Public Sector Appeal Board training.

Building expertise also means sharing knowledge across the sector. Employees from OCPE delivered online HR Skill Up sessions to NTPS employees on leadership and development programs, creating respectful workplaces and the NTPS EmployAbility Strategy. These sessions gave agencies access to OCPE expertise and practical information to support their own workforce management and development. OCPE leaders also presented to the CEO coordination committee on the NTPS workforce strategy, and to executive teams about leadership and employee entitlements.

Together, these activities strengthened OCPE's specialist capability while creating opportunities to share knowledge and build capability across the NTPS. They contribute to an organisation that can provide informed, practical advice and lead improvements in public sector employment.

Building expertise in employment appeals

The OCPE worked with the Solicitor for the Northern Territory to provide professional development for people who may be involved in NTPS Appeal Boards. The May 2026 session brought together participants from eight agencies and one employee representative union, giving them the opportunity to build their knowledge of Appeal Board processes, member responsibilities and the legal principles that underpin sound decision-making.

Participants explored the role and jurisdiction of Appeal Boards, different types of appeals and key considerations including natural justice, procedural fairness and lawful decision-making. Scenario-based activities allowed participants to apply these principles to practical appeal matters and develop confidence in considering the legal and procedural requirements that apply to employment appeals.

The session is part of OCPE's broader approach to developing specialist expertise within the public sector, giving people the knowledge and practical skills to apply employment principles confidently and make well-informed decisions.



Pictured: Commissioner Nicole Hurwood (right) presented OCPE's Peta Cork with her certificate for completing the Emerging Leaders program.

Listening to and supporting our staff

All OCPE employees participated in the 2025 People Matter Survey, providing a comprehensive view of the employee experience within the organisation. The results showed strong connection to OCPE's purpose and values, positive views of diversity and inclusion, and confidence to contribute ideas and speak up. Employees also identified teamwork and collaboration as strengths of the workplace.

The survey identified opportunities to strengthen career development and support employees to manage stress and burnout.

The OCPE discussed the results with employees and identified wellbeing, performance and career development, and effective ways of working as priorities for its organisational response. Actions include strengthening individual development conversations, establishing an internal health and wellbeing committee and improving workflow management systems and processes.

These findings will help OCPE focus its workforce and workplace initiatives on the issues that matter to employees and monitor progress through future employee feedback.

The OCPE continues to hold its weekly standup meeting, which provides all staff with an update on key divisional activities occurring during the upcoming week, and for the Commissioner and Senior Directors to give a shout out to employee efforts during the previous week. This activity is a simple but key connector across the OCPE divisions contributing to the dissemination of information and cross divisional work activities.

PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

Measure	2025–2026 result
People Matter Survey participation	100%
Employee engagement	76%
Employees who believe in OCPE's purpose and objectives	97%
Employees with strong personal attachment to OCPE	76%
Employees who believe executives consider wellbeing important	92%
Number of OCPE employees	39
Aboriginal workforce representation	23%
Employees identifying with disability	10%

Pictured (left to right): OCPE staff Calvin Lim, Nikita Santos and Jasmine Valdoze share ideas during a workplace discussion.



Health and wellbeing

In response to the 2025 People Matter Survey findings, OCPE established a workplace health and wellbeing committee.

Although employees reported positive overall wellbeing, they also identified a need for more sustainable ways of working and greater support during periods of high demand.

Established in 2025–2026, the committee gives employees a stronger voice in workplace wellbeing and coordinates activities that promote connection and healthier ways of working. Its work complements the role of leaders and managers in supporting employees, maintaining open communication and fostering positive workplace practices.

Notable activities during 2025–2026

- A wellbeing activity was incorporated at each weekly stand up meeting
- 62% of staff access flexible work arrangements
- Staff participated in R U OK? Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week activities
- Staff participated in mental health first aid training and Aboriginal employee forums which focused on wellbeing
- During September 2025, OCPE staff participated in *STEPtember*. They raised $1,763 by walking a phenomenal 2,388,748 steps to support people with cerebral palsy continue to lead full and independent lives
- The OCPE social club facilitated a range of staff engagement and fundraising events.

Measure	2023	2025
Employee Engagement	76%	76%
Employees believe in the purpose and objectives of OCPE.	96%	97%
Employees feel a strong personal attachment to OCPE.	65%	76%
Employees agree that executives consider employee wellbeing important	90%	92%

Succession planning for a sustainable NTPS

During 2025–2026, OCPE worked with CEOs and senior executives to identify critical capability requirements, emerging workforce risks and future leadership needs. The centralised leadership development team connected this information with program planning, executive development, coaching and mentoring so that development investment responded to identified agency and sector needs.

Leadership programs supported succession planning at several career stages. Emerging and senior leader programs, Aboriginal leadership development, accredited public sector management qualifications, executive coaching and mentoring, ANZSOG programs and the Senior Executive Leaders' Professional Network provided structured pathways for employees to develop the skills and experience needed for more senior roles.

By coordinating these opportunities across the NTPS, OCPE helped agencies prepare future leaders, broaden access to development and strengthen the leadership pipeline needed to sustain service delivery.

The OCPE also used the OneNTG Succession Planning Toolkit to identify high-risk roles and plan capability development for critical positions. Six roles were identified and strategies such as gradual development and talent identification through cross-agency rotations and secondments are being implemented.

Building Aboriginal leadership capability

Terese Kelly, Principal Advisor Aboriginal Employment and Career Development, has graduated with a Diploma of Leadership and Management through the Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leadership Development Program.

Delivered by UNE Partnerships, the program helps Aboriginal employees strengthen their leadership skills, build professional networks and prepare for future career opportunities.

For Terese, the qualification is both a personal achievement and an example of what can be achieved when employees are supported to develop their skills and pursue leadership opportunities.

Her success reflects OCPE's commitment to growing Aboriginal leadership capability across the NTPS and building a stronger pipeline of Aboriginal leaders for the future.

Pictured below: Terese Kelly with Commissioner Nicole Hurwood.



Service excellence

With just 39 employees, OCPE is a small agency with a big reach. As steward of the NTPS workforce, OCPE supports the systems, leadership and employment arrangements that enable more than 25,000 public sector employees to deliver essential services to Territorians.

During 2025–2026, OCPE led major workforce reforms aligned with government priorities. This included 11 enterprise bargaining negotiations and more than 130 consultation meetings, resulting in agreements covering more than 14,000 employees. Key outcomes included the Fair Work Commission approving the NTPS General Enterprise Agreement, the Aboriginal Health Practitioners Enterprise Agreement. With OCPE support, the Police Consent Agreement was approved and a Determination issued for the new rank of Police Public Safety Officer, introducing significant police workforce reforms that will help shape the future of policing in the Territory.

The OCPE also continued to build workforce capability through online onboarding, the myPerformance framework, a refreshed Capability Framework and leadership development programs supporting around 700 leaders each year.

This work is delivering results. Employees who identify as Aboriginal reached a record 2890 employees, while the number of employees who shared their disability status increased to 531. Positive perceptions that bullying and sexual harassment are not tolerated also improved by 15 per cent since 2021.

For a small agency, OCPE has a significant role in shaping the NTPS workforce. Its work helps create a public sector that is stronger, more capable and more inclusive, supporting better outcomes for Territorians.

National leadership and workforce representation

The OCPE represented the Northern Territory in national forums and interjurisdictional networks during 2025–2026, contributing Territory perspectives and drawing on approaches used elsewhere to inform NTPS workforce and employment policy.

- national public service commissioners networks
- national work health and safety and workers compensation forums
- jurisdictional industrial relations networks and meetings
- cross-jurisdictional workforce, leadership and public sector capability discussions.

Participation supported the exchange of practical approaches, strengthened working relationships with other jurisdictions and informed OCPE's workforce, leadership and employment initiatives.

Corporate governance

Boards and committees



Pictured (left to right): The OCPE Management Board Megan Townsend, Hayley Green, Johanna Stieber, Nicole Hurwood, Courtney Mabey, Ursula White and Matthew Young (DCMC).

Management Board

The OCPE Management Board plays a key role in supporting good governance and organisational performance. The Board provides strategic direction, monitors progress against priorities, oversees risk management, and considers matters of significance to the agency. The Board helps ensure the agency delivers its functions effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with government expectations through regular oversight and monthly review on the following:

- budget and financial performance
- workforce data and activity
- information and records management
- governance and risk
- workplace health and safety
- information technology and website updates.

Management Board decisions are communicated to employees through whole-of-office and divisional staff meetings.

THE BOARD HELD 12 MONTHLY MEETINGS DURING 2025–2026.

Member	Role	Job Title
Nicole Hurwood	Chair	Commissioner
Johanna Stieber	Member	Senior Director, ER
Hayley Green	Member	Senior Director, SWPD
Ursula White	Member	Director, AECD
Courtney Mabey	Member	Senior Director, PSAGR
Megan Townsend	Member	Principal Advisor to the CPE
Matthew Young	Member	Chief Financial Officer & Senior Director Corporate Services (DCMC)
Sian France	Member	Workforce Business Partner (DCDD)

Audit and Risk Management Committee

The OCPE has a joint Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) with the Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet (DCMC) and the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

The committee provides independent advice to the Commissioner and the chief executive officers of DCMC and DTF on the effectiveness of each agency's risk management, internal controls, compliance and governance arrangements.

The ARMC has five members: an independent chair, one other independent member and one representative from each agency. Ursula White, Director Aboriginal Employment and Career Development, represents OCPE.

The committee met four times during 2025–2026, key achievements included:

- monitoring the implementation of the Shared Services Internal Audit Plan 2025–2026
- overseeing the internal audit function, including review and endorsement of the Shared Services Internal Audit Plan and DTF-specific internal audit plans, and monitoring audit action registers at each meeting
- monitoring agencies fraud risk and incident registers
- reviewing and endorsing corporate policies across the shared services
- reviewing and endorsing OCPE Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) and Strategic Risk Register (SRR).

Freedom of Information requests

All public sector organisations, including OCPE and its staff, are required to comply with the *Information Act 2002*. Under a shared services arrangement, DCDD provides and manages the governance of this act for OCPE.

During 2025–2026, one application was made for freedom of information. There were no privacy complaints made to the Information Commissioner for OCPE.

External and internal audit

Under shared services arrangements, the governance unit of DCMC undertakes the internal audit function for OCPE. During 2025–2026, two internal audits were completed under the Shared Services Internal Audit Plan:

- Agency recruitment review
- ICT asset management review

All recommendations and agreed actions arising out of the internal audit function are monitored by the ARMC and reported to the Commissioner.

Work Health and Safety Committee

The OCPE has a joint Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee with DCMC.

Chaired by the Executive Director, Corporate Services DCMC, the committee provides advice through the DCMC Executive Management Group and OCPE Management Board, on WHS issues regarding the health and safety of employees and clients in the workplace.

The committee includes representatives from across the department, including OCPE and regional offices. Courtney Mabey, Senior Director PSAGR is the OCPE representative on this group.

Achievements for 2025–2026

- Enhanced workplace safety awareness through the rollout of clear and consistent work health and safety messaging across work locations, including notice boards, signage and other communication channels.
- Launched a monthly whole-of-agency work health and safety online communication program to promote workplace safety awareness and reinforce key health and safety messages.
- The OCPE recorded no reportable work health and safety incidents during the reporting period.

Priority for 2026–2027

- Enabling the workforce to embrace safe and supported work practices to reduce risk, boost resilience and address evolving challenges in the workplace.

State and national representation

The OCPE has representatives on the following Northern Territory and national committees and boards.

Northern Territory

- CEO Coordination Committee
- Executive Remuneration Review Panel
- NT Emergency Management Council
- Information Governance Committee
- Public Sector Consultative Council
- Deputy CEO Coordination Committee
- Barkly Regional Coordination Committee
- Big Rivers Regional Coordination Committee
- Central Australia Regional Coordination Committee
- Darwin Regional Coordination Committee
- Top End Regional Coordination Committee
- East Arnhem Regional Coordination Committee
- Work Health and Safety Senior Officers Advisory Group
- CFO Forum (a DCMC shared service representative attends on OCPE's behalf)

National

- Public Service Commissioners' Conference (PSCC)
- Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG)
- Institute of Public Administration Australia (NT) (IPAA)
- National Public Sector Industrial Relations (Directors) group
- Workplace Relations and Work Health and Safety Senior Officials Group

Financial management

The OCPE falls under the DCMC for budgeting purposes. In all other respects, however, it remains an independent office comprised of four divisions:

1. Employee Relations
2. Strategic Workforce Planning and Development
3. Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews
4. Aboriginal Employment and Career Development.

Budget outcomes

In 2025–2026, OCPE operated to a total budget of $9.7 million across all output groups with OCPE's reported total expenditure for the financial year of $9.3 million.

Further information regarding budget versus actual outcome can be found in the financial performance section of the DCMC Annual Report.

The budget movement and expenses by output for 2025–2026 are outlined in the following table:

Output group/Output	2025–2026 Published Budget $000	2025–2026 Final Budget[1] $000	2025–2026 Actuals[2] $000	2025–2026 Actuals against Final Budget %
Employee and industrial relations	3 017	3 017	3 035	-18
Workforce planning and development	2 661	4 691	4 366	+325
Aboriginal employment and career development	1 018	1 018	945	+73
Public sector appeals and grievance reviews	996	996	957	+39
OCPE total	**7 692**	**9 722**	**9 303**	**+419**

1. Increased budget in 2025–2026 relates to leadership development function transferring from DCDD and the associated increase in training delivery.
2. Lower expenditure mainly due to timing of EmployAbility, People Matter Survey and executive leadership programs.


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Pictured: Graduates from the Aboriginal Leadership and Development Program



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