

# 2021 People Matter Survey – Whole of Sector Response Plan 2021 - 2023

Following the release of the whole of sector results from the 2021 People Matter Survey in May 2021, a draft whole of sector response plan was published for employee comment and feedback. Over 100 employees provided feedback on the issues identified in survey and the proposed actions. Most employees agreed that the three key areas identified were the right areas to address. The below summarised the feedback received against each key issue.

**NOTE:** in addition to the feedback on the proposed response plan, a number of employees made practical suggestions about things they would like to see implemented/changed in their agency (for example, self-care activities within offices such as meditation and Friday wind-downs). Feedback on the response plan, and by extension these suggestions, was collected anonymously and cannot be provided back to specific agencies. However, to ensure these suggestions are considered, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment will provide them to the Department of Corporate and Digital Development's Workforce Services team. The Workforce Services team are assisting agencies in the development of agency specific response plan, which may capture more operational/specific suggestions from employees than those in the whole of sector response plan.

Issue	Overview	Summary of Employee Feedback	Response to Employee Feedback	Response
<b>Senior Management Communication and Vision</b>	<p>The key driver with the highest influence on employee engagement across the sector is 'senior managers provide clear strategy and direction'.</p> <p>54% of respondents across the sector responded positively to this (noting that there is a significant variance across agencies) and 23% were neutral.</p> <p>There is a clear link between the effective communication of senior manager's vision and strategy and higher engagement scores, role clarity and perceptions of quality public service delivery.</p> <p>Actions that increase the positive response even slightly will have a high impact on engagement overall.</p>	<p>Effective leadership and management was a key theme in the feedback from employees, with respondents commenting that they feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some managers/executives do not have the skills for the job, and that they have been promoted above their ability;</li> <li>some managers/executives may be good technically, but they do not have the required leadership or people skills;</li> <li>leadership training is not necessarily the answer if they do not have leadership qualities;</li> <li>staff do not feel that they can raise poor leadership concerns; and</li> <li>managers/executives need to be accountable for the 'people' related aspects of the role, for example morale, bullying and harassment and employee wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<p>Management capability, particularly middle management, is understood to be critical to enabling the Northern Territory Public Sector to deliver high quality public services.</p> <p>Ensuring we have managers who are not just technically proficient, but who have the appropriate 'people' capabilities has been a strong focus in the recently released NTPS Workforce Strategy.</p> <p>It is intended that the delivery of core training for new managers, will embed the foundational skills needed across the sector. However, it is acknowledged that this is a long-term solution and, while it is believed to be the pathway to sustainable improvements, this approach may not result in immediate change for employees.</p> <p>The feedback received raised concerns around a perceived lack of accountability mechanisms in place for senior management in terms of the delivery of effective leadership. There is a view that employees do not have access to appropriate pathways to raise concerns about senior management. To address this, an additional action has been developed to ensure these pathways exist in agencies (action 5).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources and guides for senior leaders – effectively communicating vision and direction across the organisation, and for managers – effectively translating and embedding the vision across divisions and teams (<b>commence early 2022</b>).</li> <li>Development of an NTPS Executive Leadership Development Framework. The Framework will include specific development options to improve senior managers' capabilities in articulating and communicating the organisational vision (<b>by December 2021</b>).</li> <li>A 'grow our own' strategy supporting career pathways from middle management to senior executive, underpinned by principals of ethical behaviour/leadership, flexibility and resilience, and rewarding innovation (<b>commence mid 2022</b>).</li> <li>Core people and performance management development/training for all new managers (<b>commence mid 2022</b>).</li> <li>OCPE, in partnership with DCDD to work with agencies to promote the existing mechanisms available to employees to raise legitimate concerns about senior management. Where an agency is found not to have appropriate mechanisms in place, support will be provided to develop them (<b>commence early 2022</b>).</li> </ol>
<b>Feedback and Performance Management</b>	<p>There is a strong, demonstrated link between the receipt of both formal and informal feedback on employees work performance, career development and engagement.</p> <p>56% of respondents reported having a performance plan in place.</p> <p>49% reported receiving formal feedback and 75% reported receiving informal feedback.</p> <p>Critically though, only 48% of respondents reported that their manager had talked to them about what they could do to improve their performance.</p>	<p>The ability for managers to address under-performance of staff was a key theme, with respondents stating that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>managing under-performance is one of the greatest workplace challenges;</li> <li>many managers do not know how to performance manage staff;</li> <li>the process to address poor performance is too difficult and time consuming, so it is often not dealt with;</li> <li>managers are not supported by senior management or HR when trying to address performance issues; and</li> <li>managers need to have quality HR advice. HR should step in and mentor managers, and help resolve situations.</li> </ul>	<p>The impact of unmanaged poor performance can permeate among a team and workgroup. The actions in this response plan are designed to establish the core skills managers and leaders need to effectively deal with not only poor performance, but manage performance throughout the employee lifecycle.</p> <p>A focus on performance management as an ongoing part of managing employees will reduce the instances of 'poor performance' from becoming issues. However, in light of the feedback received, the proposed actions have been updated to reflect the importance of holding managers accountable for undertaking performance planning with employees.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a whole sector eLearning package on positive performance conversations and crucial conversations. Focus on self-responsibility for career and capability development (i.e. partnership with supervisor/manager) AND the 'how to' of performance conversations (<b>commence mid 2022</b>).</li> <li>Ongoing delivery of Results Through People - Getting Great Performance (Performance Conversations) course through OCPE (<b>current &amp; ongoing</b>).</li> <li>Contemporary tools, frameworks and accountability measures to support performance conversations between managers and employees (<b>current with further work to commence mid 2022</b>).</li> <li>A NTPS orientation program including essential training modules (<b>progressive implementation from August 2021</b>).</li> <li>Ongoing work to develop middle manager's core people skills through OCPE training courses (<b>current and ongoing</b>).</li> </ol>

<p><b>Inappropriate Workplace Behaviours</b></p>	<p>Perceptions of experienced and witnessed bullying have a serious negative impact on employee engagement. Whether the perceptions could be validated as 'real' or 'true' bullying does not change this impact.</p> <p>30% of respondents reported witnessing bullying and/or harassment in the past 12 months.</p> <p>29% of respondents reported experiencing bullying and/or harassment in the past 12 months.</p> <p>The survey results relating to bullying and harassment are <i>not</i> intended to be used as an accurate representation of the number of validated cases of bullying/harassment. There has been no process to validate instances of perceived bullying reported in the survey.</p> <p>This data is collected so that there is insight into the impact of perceived inappropriate behaviours on other survey indicators, such as the employee engagement index. This then allows specifically targeted actions to address issues.</p>	<p>The issue of bullying and inappropriate behaviour was consistently raised, with many respondents suggesting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when staff report bullying they are not believed;</li> <li>• even if they report bullying nothing gets done;</li> <li>• the bullying is often top down which makes it hard to report due to fear of repercussion;</li> <li>• management does not know how to handle accusations of bullying; and</li> <li>• there needs to be a proper equitable, meaningful, trusted and functioning system to address employees' grievances and concerns.</li> </ul> <p>Several respondents commented in support of the development of the NTPS sexual harassment policy.</p>	<p>The feedback supports the notion that actions in this area need to focus on supporting employees to feel empowered to report bullying. This includes ensuring adequate accountability measures and articulated expectations that reasonable action will be taken when a report is made.</p> <p>The sector wide campaign will have a strong focus on educating managers and colleagues on what they can/are expected to do if they receive a report (formally or informally) of bullying.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of the NTPS Code of Conduct to modernise and include clear language about inappropriate workplace behaviour <b>(by December 2021)</b>.</li> <li>2. Sector wide campaign about expected behaviours and values –focused on leaders calling out behaviour and/or explicitly dealing with inappropriate behaviour and positive reinforcement of appropriate workplace behaviour <b>(commence early 2022)</b>.</li> <li>3. Sector wide campaign to: <b>(commence early 2022)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promote respectful workplace cultures and safety at work, including psychosocial safety</li> <li>b. Support and empower employees to establish professional boundaries and respond to inappropriate behaviours and educate/raise awareness about how to deal with reports of inappropriate behaviours</li> <li>c. Make reporting processes clearer and more explicit for employees</li> <li>d. Educate/raise awareness about how to support the team when receiving reports on bullying / harassment</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. A NTPS Mental Health Framework and wellbeing programs that promote safety and wellness in the workplace <b>(by October 2021)</b>.</li> <li>5. Whole of sector Sexual Harassment Policy <b>(by December 2021)</b>.</li> </ol>
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