

CHAPTER 3: CONDUCT

3.2 APS VALUES

The APS Values articulate the parliament's expectations of public servants in terms of performance and standards of behaviour. The principles of good public administration are embodied in the APS Values. The APS Values require that we are:

Impartial

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

Committed to service

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

Accountable

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

Respectful

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

Ethical

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

3.2.1 THE APS VALUES IN DETAIL

The APS Values are set out in the *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act). The *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013* (the Directions) determine the scope and application of the Values. Agency heads and employees are required to comply with the Directions.

Committed to Service

The Committed to Service Value provides for an APS that is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, that works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.

The Directions about this Value require employees to encourage innovative thought and support innovative solutions. Employees should be open to good ideas, thinking beyond traditional boundaries and challenging the 'business as usual' approach. Employees should contribute to a culture of achievement, and support a unified APS that is focused on serving the Government and the Australian community.

Ethical

The Ethical Value provides for an APS that demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity at all times. APS employees must comply with:

1. all relevant Australian laws
2. appropriate professional standards
3. the APS Code of Conduct (the Code).

APS employees should act in a way that models and promotes the highest standard of ethical behaviour.

Respectful

The Respectful Value provides for an APS that respects all people, including their rights and their heritage. APS employees must treat all people with dignity and recognise that all people have value. Employees should also collaborate, and be open to ideas in policy development, implementation, program management and regulation.

Accountable

The Accountable Value provides for an APS that is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of ministerial responsibility.

APS employees are answerable to ministers for the exercise of delegated authority and, through them, to parliament. Employees should be able to demonstrate that actions and decisions have been made with appropriate consideration, and that resources have been used efficiently, effectively, economically and ethically.

Employees should document significant decisions or actions consistent with the *Archives Act 1983* and to a standard that will withstand independent scrutiny. Good recordkeeping allows others to understand the reasons why a decision was made or an action taken and can guide future decision-makers.

Impartial

The Impartial Value provides for an APS that is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence. Advice provided to the Government must also be:

1. objective and non-partisan
2. relevant, comprehensive and unaffected by fear of consequences, not withholding important facts or bad news
3. mindful of the context in which a policy is to be implemented, the broader policy directions set by the Government and its implications for the longer term.

APS employees must serve the needs of the Government. This entails providing the same standard of high quality policy advice and implementation, irrespective of which political party is in power and irrespective of an employee's political beliefs. Employees should ensure that their actions do not provide grounds for a reasonable person to question their ability to serve the government of the day.