



Australian Government

Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research

2025 APS Employee Census Results and Action Plan

ACIAR's 2025 APS Employee Census results show declines across all indices, yet staff remain united in our purpose. We are committed to taking action to rebuild trust, strengthen leadership, improve communication, and make ACIAR a workplace where people feel valued and supported, while continuing to deliver on our mission. This action plan has been developed in consultation with staff and will be implemented with involvement of staff.

The results of the 2025 APS Employee Census are concerning and have been taken seriously at every level of our organisation. We recognise the challenges highlighted by our staff, and we are determined to work together to ensure ACIAR is again a great place to work—delivering strong outcomes for the Australian Government and the stakeholders and communities we work with.

ACIAR's mission—to achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems, for the benefit of developing countries and Australia, through international agricultural research partnerships—depends on the strength and wellbeing of our people. We are grateful to all staff who participated in the Census, and we acknowledge the honesty and courage in their feedback.

We know that rebuilding trust and improving our workplace culture is critical and the ACIAR Executive is united in its commitment to lead this change, working in partnership with staff at every level.

For more information contact media@aciar.gov.au.

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Dr Nick Austin
Acting Chief Executive Officer
25 November 2025



ACIAR 2025 Census Action Plan

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Actions

Leadership and culture

1. Equip and support the CEO, SES, Research Directors and all EL2s to strengthen ACIAR's leadership and culture and improve psychosocial safety.
2. Enable ACIAR Executive Team to focus on internal organisational issues by reducing non-critical overseas travel until end of March 26.

Communications and change management

6. Develop a new internal communications and engagement strategy, which includes consideration of the design and cadence of all staff meetings.

Structure and ways of working

3. Establish short-term cross-functional working groups to address shared challenges across the agency, such as travel and procurement processes.
4. Confirm ACIAR's structure to reflect enterprise priorities and address significant pain points, including filling critical roles.
5. Develop an ACIAR-wide charter through engagement with all staff to inform section level charters that clarify roles, priorities, goals and ways of working.

Organisational enablers

7. Review, update and communicate internal policies and processes for reporting complaints, with a focus on rebuilding trust.
8. Ensure employee support mechanisms adequately and equitably support staff.
9. Review, update and implement people policies with a focus on recruitment processes and conflict of interest processes.

Targets

Workforce metrics

- Reduction in annual turnover rate.

Note: 2026 targets to be finalised by 10 December 2025

APS Census 2026 results

- Improvement in 'Employee Engagement', 'Leadership – Immediate Supervisor', 'SES Manager' and 'Wellbeing Policies and Support index scores, resulting in a reduction in percentage of staff perceiving bullying or harassment in the workplace and/or observing conduct they would consider to be corruption.