



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water

12-month Implementation Review of the Response to the Russell Review

Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)

Introduction from the Secretary

It has been over 12 months since I, and the executive of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, released the “Independent Review of Workplace Culture and Change at the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)” and the department’s comprehensive response to ensure that the department, and the AAD, is the best possible workplace – a place that is safe, inclusive, without judgement, and where people feel comfortable to be their best self.

A year ago we acknowledged that practices and behaviours within the AAD had contributed to unacceptable workplace harm. We committed to do significantly more, both in the AAD and across the department, to put our people first and make our workplace safe. This included our commitment to addressing unacceptable behaviours in the workplace.

We acknowledged the significant work required to turn culture around – and included a response plan with immediate and short-medium term actions to progress that work over two years. We have been working to hold people to account for their behaviour, increase trust, focus on accountabilities of leaders, provide tools and support to our people and to measure and track progress.

We are proud of what we have achieved over the past 12 months and documented in the attached internal review of action. Staff at the AAD, and within our corporate enabling services, have worked hard to implement the response plan – and I know this has been challenging.

We are proud of the positive signs of change within the AAD – but we know that there is more work to do to achieve the culture we want. We will continue to focus on embedding the positive changes made to date and building on the foundations we have laid. We will continue to focus on this work and track our actions. We will undertake an independent review of progress in 2025.

We are in this together to ensure necessary cultural change is realised. I remain determined for our Antarctic Division to be the best place to work while delivering science and stewardship critical to Australia’s national interests.

David Fredericks
Secretary

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Executive summary

The Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) is a division of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department). It recognises that it has one genuine asset: its people, and must provide a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace environment for them.

Workplace cultures that are safe, inclusive and respectful are widely recognised as not only the places where people want to work but the ones that enable people to do their best work. Safe workplaces are physically safe and also psychologically safe. They are workplaces where people are protected from harmful behaviours such as bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment.

In 2020, the AAD began examining its culture by commissioning research into inclusion, diversity, and equity, culminating in Meredith Nash's research study: [Review of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Australian Antarctic Program](#). The department accepted all recommendations from this report, and implementation commenced in parallel to additional work to fully understand and address the cultural issues affecting the AAD.

In response to this need the department engaged specialist consultant Leigh Russell to conduct [An Independent Review of Workplace Culture and Change at the Australian Antarctic Division \(AAD\)](#). The Review commenced in October 2022. It was published in April 2023 along with the Response to the [Russell Review by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#). The department's response plan detailed 63 actions to address the recommendations of the Russell Review. Actions included a commitment to conduct a departmental review in 12 months of evidence of implementation, challenges and successes.

Over the last 12 months the department's response has been guided by the principles that actions and implementation must be real and achievable, that changes must be owned and driven together for the benefit of the whole department and that leaders and decision-makers operate with transparency and respect. Progress achieved in the last 12 months includes:

- Formation of the Respect and Equality Reform Council
- Delivery of specialised expeditioner training, contextualised to the Antarctic experience
- Establishing the Program Management Board and Division Management Committee
- Training, coaching and 360-degree feedback for leaders
- Launch of the pulse survey

It was recognised by Ms Russell in her review that building a positive culture takes time, and embedding culture takes ongoing energy and focus. The department remains committed to putting its people first and working together to achieve and embed the positive culture the people of the AAD deserve.

Summary of the DCCEEW Russell Review response plan

Stream	Key Change
1. Leadership commitment to a culture that enables the mission	
Commitment	a. Leadership acknowledgement of issues and ongoing commitment to change b. Leadership commitment to safe, respectful, diverse and inclusive workplaces
Governance	c. Reformed AAD leadership structure and Executive Committee arrangements d. A dedicated People Operations function equipped to support leaders and teams e. A new Respect and Equality Reform Council to guide and oversee the change
Accountability	f. Leadership accountability through reporting, 360-degree feedback and appraisal
2. Ensuring everyone is safe and supported	
Expectations	a. Reinforcing the obligation to prevent unacceptable behaviour and workplace harm b. Expanding risk management to include workplace harm and psychological safety c. Creating a safe reporting culture, ensuring support and no adverse consequences
Reporting	d. More flexible options to report unacceptable behaviour and workplace harm e. Facilities to support "Independent Safe Space"
Supports	f. Additional resources in Hobart to provide advice, support and incident response g. Diverse, experienced mentors available to support expeditioners in Antarctica
Follow through	h. Accountability and consequences for both harmful behaviour <u>and</u> inaction
3. Building awareness and practical skills	
Awareness	a. Raising awareness of the nature and impacts of bullying, harassment and discrimination b. Training for all staff in unconscious bias and bystander obligations
Leadership capability	c. Training for all leaders to address unacceptable behaviour and provide support d. Coaching for all people leaders to reinforce inclusive and collaborative leadership
Contextual skills	e. Specialised training for expeditioners tailored to the Antarctic context
4. Working together to deliver results	
Collaboration	a. A more supportive relationship between AAD and DCCEEW b. Working with our contractors and partners to help prevent workplace harm c. International collaboration to prevent workplace harm in Antarctica
Inclusion	d. Breaking down barriers to progression based on gender or background e. Antarctic workplace facilities and equipment designed for safety, inclusion and respect f. New expectations for on-station leadership and alternative avenues for support
5. Ongoing measurement and improvement	
Measurement	a. Team pulse checks and surveys to track collective performance and progress b. Standardised psychological assessments and debriefings for all expeditioners c. Measuring diverse group representation in leadership and leadership pipeline
Continuous improvement	d. KPIs and dashboards to monitor workplace harm, reporting and action taken e. Ongoing evaluation of implementation, year-1 audit and year-2 independent review

1. Leadership commitment to a culture that enables the mission



1.1 Commitment

- a. Leadership acknowledgement of issues and ongoing commitment to change
- b. Leadership commitment to safe, respectful, diverse and inclusive workplaces

Progress Update

Leadership commitment to building positive workplace culture began with an acknowledgement by the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary and the Senior Executive Service (SES) members of the AAD publicly acknowledging workplace practices and behaviours that contributed to harm. They committed to implementing all the recommendations of the Russell Review. The Secretary and Enabling Services Group SES members have continued to demonstrate support for the AAD and the Russell Review response plan, through engagement in the AAD's Respect and Equality Reform Council (Reform Council), the Program Management Board (PMB) and Division Management Committee (DMC). They have also made regular visits to AAD's head office and engaged with staff.

The AAD's Head of Division (HoD) has continued to engage with staff through regular all-division meetings and weekly email updates. The HoD and Branch Heads have held monthly sessions to answer staff questions, utilising the opportunity to address issues of culture. These live sessions demonstrate openness by the SES members and provide a pulse check of topical issues across the division. SES leaders show cultural leadership through their live-time answers which demonstrate accountability, collaboration and trust.

Performance agreements for the SES group incorporate their responsibilities in leading culture change and their individual accountability for implementing the Russell Review response plan. They have also undertaken a program of leadership development and coaching.

Future Focus

Regular staff engagement between SES members and APS staff through all-division forums and Q&A sessions will continue.

Continued focus on leadership development for SES and EL2 cohorts.

"We always said that it was going to be a two-year process. We're trying to shift culture, and you don't do that quickly."

— Deputy Secretary Sean Sullivan

"Within my work department at Head Office and on station I have seen strong, positive engagement and tangible action to improve and strengthen the culture. It feels like the commitment is genuine, and it inspires me to actively participate in it."

"Bad behaviour is still being swept under the carpet or tolerated because the Executive doesn't have the appetite to address it, particularly when it is sensitive or tricky."

"Consistent and predictable approach to interpersonal engagement demonstrated by Supervisors and Management."

"More people seem to be talking about culture, which is a very good thing, but I am struggling to identify any tangible progress."

"There is a strong feeling of positivity and a desire to lead with kindness and consideration. The leadership from the women at the top of the AAD is a much-needed breath of fresh air. Strong messaging of acceptance, support, tolerance and kindness is working."

"Cultural change is being profiled a lot. It seems to be included in more conversations and meetings as an item."

— Staff comments, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024

1.2 Governance

- c. Reformed AAD leadership structure and Executive Committee arrangements
- d. A dedicated People Operations function equipped to support leaders and teams
- e. A new Respect and Equality Reform Council to guide and oversee the change

Progress Update

Governance structures and committee roles have been reviewed through a governance uplift project, with new clearly-defined committee and decision-making structures in place. The result is clearly defined roles and responsibilities for committees ensuring pathways for decision making, adherence to delegation frameworks and evidence-based decisions relating to priorities and resources.

The PMB oversees key activities, risk and strategic alignment. Meetings are chaired by the Deputy Secretary and membership includes independent representation, the department's Chief People Officer, Chief Legal Counsel and Chief Financial Officer.

The AAD established the DMC in January 2024. It is chaired by the HoD and includes all AAD Branch Heads and three Executive Level 2 (EL2) staff as contributors and staff representatives. The EL2 staff membership is rotated every six months. The DMC meets monthly, with a quarterly meeting dedicated to planning. Decision-making processes are documented and outcomes communicated to staff.

A People Operations Taskforce operated for the initial eight weeks of the Russell Review response plan and then part of its function transitioned into the new AAD People and Culture Branch. The other taskforce functions were absorbed into the department's People Division. The People Division continues to provide enabling services such as head office recruitment, performance management, training, workforce planning, people support, and professional and ethical standards.

The Reform Council was established in July 2023 and has met regularly. It includes three independent members from outside the Australian Public Service: Leigh Russell – Russell Performance Co, Sue Bird – Sue Bird Consulting, and Mark Tucker – Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. The Reform Council is chaired by the department's Deputy Secretary and includes the AAD's HoD and the five Branch Heads. It also includes five staff representatives whose membership is rotated regularly. Staff insights are highly valued at the Reform Council and several initiatives have directly resulted from their feedback including social events and AAD SES Q&A sessions.

Future Focus

Ongoing work to embed the divisional planning and governance frameworks to create clearer avenues of accountability and build staff trust in evidence-based decision-making.

"The fundamental issue with the AAD is the lack of focus on science and support for scientific endeavors. The real cultural shift that needs to happen is a move away from prioritising merely maintaining a presence in Antarctica to making science the primary focus."

"I like that the SES are visibly trying. They are doing their best to be transparent and consultative. The recent Q&A sessions have been excellent."

"All the cultural change in the world will achieve nothing if we continue to be understaffed and under-resourced. As long as this continues, staff will be burning out and we will be struggling to make do in the present instead of planning for the future."

"[We need] more coherent, timely and transparent planning and decision-making processes. A broader focus on a one AAD/AAP so that there is no us/them mentality."

— Staff comments, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024

1.3 Accountability

- f. Leadership accountability through reporting, 360-degree feedback and appraisal
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Progress Update

Each AAD Senior Executive reports twice-yearly to the Reform Council on their actions and challenges in supporting positive cultural change and regularly to their manager as part of the performance management framework. All Branch Heads have reported encouraging signs of progress, including cultural shares at branch meetings, staff engagement in governance frameworks and appreciation of increased opportunity to engage with SES members.

Leader and staff member cultural performance expectations and supporting resources have been rolled out to AAD staff and Australian Antarctic Program (AAP) partners. These have been included in all performance agreements and will be discussed as part of the performance review cycle. The AAD SES completed a 360-degree feedback process where each member completed a self-assessment as well as being assessed by their manager, their manager's manager, peers, direct reports and other colleagues or stakeholders. An accredited practitioner conducted one-on-one debriefs to help them reflect on what they had learnt to improve their performance, relationships and effectiveness at work.

Future Focus

Continuing to embed the cultural performance expectations through the performance review cycle.

2. Ensuring everyone is safe and supported



2.1 Expectations

- a. Reinforcing the obligation to prevent unacceptable behaviour and workplace harm
- b. Expanding risk management to include workplace harm and psychological safety
- c. Creating a safe reporting culture, ensuring support and no adverse consequences

Progress Update

A communication and engagement plan supports AAD leaders in reinforcing cultural change focuses and expectations to staff, including AAP partners. This includes communications to support branch meetings, Q&A sessions, intranet articles, email updates and one-on-one sessions.

In partnership with the People Division, the AAD approved a Safety Improvement Plan. The plan aligns with the department's Work Health and Safety (WHS) Strategy and lists the Russell Response work as a key action under the 'supporting our people' pillar. It will be monitored by the AAD's PMB and DMC and has been shared with the department's Culture and People Committee for oversight.

The Professional and Ethical Standards and People Support teams facilitated staff awareness sessions about the importance of reporting harmful conduct and the available mechanisms to safeguard people making a report. These sessions were attended by over 400 AAD staff in total, consisting of Hobart-based staff and expeditioners deploying to Antarctica and the Sub-Antarctic and working at sea.

The Professional and Ethical Standards Branch has established a person-centred approach around reporting harmful conduct. This approach focuses on putting the individual who has experienced or reported the inappropriate behaviour at the centre of any response to the behaviour. After reporting, the reporting person (or people) can determine the method and frequency of contact going forward, if at all. The branch can also provide support, policy, guidance and referral advice to staff with no obligation on the individual who has made contact to progress to making a formal report.

The department uses several tools to monitor, measure and act in areas affecting AAD staff safety and culture. These include WHS incident reporting, Workers' Compensation trends, Workplace Behaviour complaints, and enquiries to the HR Help service. Monitoring this information allows the department to take timely and active steps in response to trends.

Future Focus

Further training will be provided as part of the 'Safe to Speak Up' campaign which has been launched across the department. The campaign aims to empower staff to feel confident in speaking up early and raising concerns, fostering a supportive environment where calling out integrity problems and poor behaviour is safe. The campaign will also focus on educating staff and leaders about having difficult conversations early to prevent issues from escalating.

The Professional and Ethical Standards Branch will continue to work with the AAD People and Culture Branch to provide integrity-related training and awareness opportunities, to ensure all staff understand what inappropriate workplace behaviours are and the various reporting mechanisms and support available.

The AAD continues work to update the psychosocial safety risk registers for the department, division and season. The registers are guided by the Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work and ISO 45003:2021 guidelines for managing psychosocial risks. This work is ongoing in collaboration with AAD's Organisational Psychologist. Updates to controls and treatments will be ongoing and incorporate feedback from staff such as those identified through pulse surveys.

Training is planned for leaders that focuses on sexual harassment in the workplace and the role that leadership plays in preventing workplace harm more generally, providing practical tips and insights.

"It feels like there is a lot of time and effort being put into addressing past problems and the Q&A sessions are great - open, honest and give people a chance to feel heard."

— Staff comment, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024

2.2 Reporting

- d. More flexible options to report unacceptable behaviour and workplace harm
- e. Facilities to support 'Independent Safe Space'

Progress Update

Temporary 'quiet rooms' are available on stations and on the RSV Nuyina to ensure staff have better access to have private conversations, complete training, connect with support networks, and seek confidential support, including counselling. Permanent 'quiet rooms' with high-level soundproofing have been established in two of the Hobart offices.

'Psych-on-site', a confidential in-office service that allows employees to discuss their personal and professional issues with registered psychologists in a safe environment, has been piloted at department offices across Australia.

To provide staff with an additional alternative method to report concerns a direct link to a reporting form to report harmful behaviour has been published on the department's intranet. This complements the options to report via phone hotline or email.

Future Focus

As part of the 'Safe to Speak Up' campaign, extra training and awareness activities will be provided to all staff regarding options to report concerns.

The department will equip new meeting rooms to the same soundproofing standards as the established quiet spaces, ensuring that more private spaces are available to staff. These will provide additional spaces for leaders and staff to have difficult conversations as well as seek advice or report concerns.

Building permanent quiet spaces at stations is being prioritised among essential power and water works necessary to sustain stations. Analysis of reporting statistics shows that expeditioners on station are making reports.

"I will not report issues unless I understand the consequences of reporting better - reporting pathways are explained, but what happens after?"

— Staff comment, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024

2.3 Supports

- f. Additional resources in Hobart to provide advice, support and incident response
- g. Diverse, experienced mentors available to support expeditioners in Antarctica

Progress Update

The AAD has worked to ensure expeditioners are aware of all support mechanisms available to them while on deployment. These supports include the Station Leader, Doctor, Professional and Ethical Standards, AAD SES members, Workplace Contact Officers, Employee Assistance Program provider and key contacts based at head office. This is communicated through the expeditioner summit.

The People Division regularly reviews its reporting and case management frameworks for both historical and current workplace concerns, with the aim of building trust among current and former staff. Efforts are ongoing to increase staff trust in engaging with the Professional and Ethical Standards branch and People Support Section.

Future Focus

The AAD is establishing a mentor panel to support expeditioners throughout their deployment, including pre and post-deployment phases. The panel will comprise former expeditioners who demonstrate desired personal qualities, and who will serve as peer mentors, on topics such as equity, diversity, and inclusion.

2.4 Follow through

- h. Accountability and consequences for both harmful behaviour and inaction

Progress Update

The department has developed a Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination Policy to support consistent and appropriate management of harmful behaviour. The policy has been reviewed by the Culture and People Committee and provided for staff consultation.

Expectations are set for all leaders to appropriately respond to incidents and reports of harmful behaviours and to be accountable for their responses. The Professional and Ethical Standards and People Support Branches have provided training to leaders on integrity, performance management and the AAD cultural performance expectations.

Future Focus

The Professional and Ethical Standards Branch will revise the Workplace Behaviour Policy and the Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination Policy in line with feedback from staff consultation, and publish the policies on the intranet.

3. Building awareness and practical skills



3.1 Awareness

- a. Raising awareness of the nature and impacts of bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- b. Training for all staff in unconscious bias and bystander obligations

Progress Update

Staff awareness sessions facilitated by the Professional and Ethical Standards and People Support Branches addressed the nature and impacts of bullying, sexual harassment, and all forms of discrimination.

The AAD engaged Griffith University to provide training in bystander intervention and unconscious bias to head office staff and expeditioners on station. A total of 430 AAD staff attended sessions throughout 2023 and 2024, including expeditioners.

Future Focus

Refresher training will be provided to staff to maintain ongoing awareness and understanding of harmful behaviours. This includes mandatory integrity training completed within one month of joining the department and annually thereafter.

The Mandatory Integrity Essentials training module is being updated to include content that clearly defines inappropriate workplace behaviour and articulates its impacts on individuals and the workplace.

Work is underway to act on feedback from staff about updating the bystander refresher training to ensure it remains engaging for those who have already completed the foundational training.

3.2 Leadership capability

- c. Training for all leaders to address unacceptable behaviour and provide support
- d. Coaching for all people leaders to reinforce inclusive and collaborative leadership

Progress Update

The AAD has coordinated delivery of several leadership training packages. These include coaching for all AAD SES members and training for leaders and aspiring leaders in giving and receiving feedback, as well as evaluating themselves and their staff against cultural performance expectations. The training program was attended by 40 participants. A total of 62 leaders received training in trauma-informed incident response.

Bystander training has been offered to all staff, coaching them in how to appropriately respond to inappropriate behaviour. Refresher training will be offered annually.

Future Focus

Training in fostering a psychologically safe work environment is being offered to all staff.

Work is underway to source inclusive and collaborative leadership training.

"I feel like I'm getting better direct feedback from my immediate supervisor."

— Staff comment, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024

3.3 Contextual skills

- e. Specialised training for expeditioners tailored to the Antarctic context
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Progress Update

Tailored training addressing behavioural expectations, integrity, bullying and harassment, reporting and expeditioner support, personal qualities and expeditioner performance reviews has been provided to 229 expeditioners before they deployed south. The training aimed to support them to navigate challenging community scenarios and foster strong relationships with their colleagues. This training has been delivered through expeditioner summits held in Hobart and online and adapted based on participant feedback.

Collaboration with staff and subject-matter experts has ensured that the training aligns with APS values and expectations, while adhering to best practices for Antarctic operations.

Future Focus

Tailored training on behavioural expectations, integrity, bullying and harassment, reporting and expeditioner support, personal qualities and expeditioner performance reviews will continue to be included as part of the expeditioner training program in future years.

"Work on diversity, equity and inclusion during pre-departure training is highly valuable and appreciated. Bystander training is very good."

— Staff comment, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024



4. Working together to deliver results



4.1 Collaboration

- a. A more supportive relationship between the AAD and the department
- b. Working with our contractors and partners to help prevent workplace harm
- c. International collaboration to prevent workplace harm in Antarctica

Progress Update

SES leaders are working collaboratively across the department, through departmental committees and forums, and through less formal connections on problem solving and issues management.

The AAD and People Division actively engage, co-design and deliver actions such as workplace training, information and awareness sessions, and support services to staff. This has been reinforced through strong engagement with the department's IT and Finance divisions, to enable these activities.

The AAD People Partner role has provided a connection between People Division and the AAD, supporting the AAD with its people strategy. The People Partner also plays an active role in enabling the AAD to identify, monitor and respond to people matters.

To actively identify the AAD as part of the wider department, new email signature blocks have been rolled out across the division and department artwork has been installed in the head office foyer. Document templates and logo usage guidelines have been updated to ensure clear links with the whole department's visual identity.

The department continues to work with contractors and partner organisations to prevent workplace harm. All contracts currently incorporate compliance with legislation, Work Health and Safety plans and Codes of Conduct.

The AAD represented Australia at the October 2023 Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) meeting. Co-sponsored by France, Republic of Korea, and the US, Australia submitted a proposal for a CCAMLR Code of Conduct.

The objective of the code is to foster a safe and respectful meeting environment, while promoting collaboration, learning from global experiences, and support for international efforts to respond to workplace harm. The proposal received support from most members but was unsupported by others.

The AAD has also established regular meetings with representatives of the US Antarctic Program to collaborate and share best practices for preventing and responding to workplace harm, including psychosocial harm.

Future Focus

Utilising the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting to provide insights on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the AAP. The AAD will also continue to advocate for collaboration and bilateral efforts on these issues through the Polar Summit and the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs. The AAD is considering options for raising the Code of Conduct again at the CCAMLR meeting later this year.

Engagement has begun with AAD EL2 staff to gather information on collaborations with other areas of the department. The aim is to foster greater awareness of these connections and to support business areas to engage on the delivery of strategic initiatives.

DCCEEW is reviewing the existing Code of Conduct, and will focus on ensuring that contracts and Memoranda of Understanding continue to comply with the code.

4.2 Inclusion

- d. Breaking down barriers to progression based on gender or background
- e. Antarctic workplace facilities and equipment designed for safety, inclusion and respect
- f. New expectations for on-station leadership and alternative avenues for support

Progress Update

The AAD reviewed the expeditioner recruitment process with the aim of attracting a greater diversity of applicants. A two-person panel was introduced for expeditioner technical interviews to increase transparency and reduce the possibility of unconscious bias affecting selection outcomes, particularly for underrepresented groups. Bystander intervention training sessions also covered unconscious bias and its relevance when hiring both expeditioners and head office staff.

The current station leadership framework has been assessed to ensure alignment with best practices for leadership in isolated and confined environments. As a result, there is a plan to formalise the role of deputy station leader at Casey station. Work is ongoing to determine necessary training and competencies, particularly those related to people support for deputy station leaders at the other stations.

A role of senior station support officer was piloted at Casey station during the 2023-24 summer season. The aim was to provide a people support presence in Antarctica and offer an alternative avenue for staff to raise concerns while on expedition.

Future Focus

The 'Guide of Master Planning Design' documents will inform the development in 2024 of an 'Inclusive and Safe Design Principles in Engineering' policy.

"Make sure the people that are in the head office understand what it's like to be on the ice."

"We're not terrifically diverse here on station."

"The long daily hours and Saturday work every week and limitations on drinking has killed the social aspect with most people too exhausted to socialise knowing that they have only one day off before being back to work."

— Staff comments, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024



5. Ongoing measurement and improvement



5.1 Measurement

- a. Team pulse checks and surveys to track collective performance and progress
- b. Standardised psychological assessments and debriefings for all expeditioners
- c. Measuring diverse group representation in leadership and leadership pipeline

Progress Update

The first AAD Pulse Survey was launched in October 2023 and the second was conducted in February 2024. Both surveys had an overall response rate of 58%. The surveys measured a range of metrics including team-level satisfaction, reporting of harmful behaviours, and psychological safety. Compared to the first survey, the second showed some minor cultural improvements.

The AAD undertakes standardised adaptability assessments before expeditioners are selected to deploy south and offers individual debriefs to all returning expeditioners, conducted in a safe and suitable setting. During the psychological debriefing process, expeditioners are assisted in accessing appropriate support if needed. The AAD's organisational psychologist prepares a deidentified 'debrief summary report' at the conclusion of each season outlining feedback and raised issues.

Gender balance is achieved in key leadership cohorts. The AAD currently has more women SES members than men, and equal gender representation among station leaders.

Future Focus

Regular pulse surveys will be conducted three times a year and the results communicated with AAD staff and Program partners.

An audit of current psychological assessment and debrief processes is underway and actions and improvements will be considered by the Reform Council.

The department will systematically track key diversity metrics across the leadership cohort and progression through the leadership pipeline over time.

This will be supported by the introduction of Aurion as the department's Human Resources Information System, which will provide a pathway for greater reporting across all levels.

"The opportunity to provide feedback via the Pulse survey is a good first step. Whether the data will be understood for what it is, rather than glossed over remains to be seen."

— Staff comment, AAD Pulse Survey February 2024

5.2 Continuous improvement

- d. KPIs and dashboards to monitor workplace harm, reporting and action taken
- e. Ongoing evaluation of implementation, year-1 audit and year-2 independent review

Progress Update

Culture change takes many years and the department is committed to continuous progress and meaningfully evaluating that progress. Metrics on integrity have been presented for monitoring levels of workplace harm and reporting. The information has been used by the Reform Council to discuss key issues and areas of focus.

This document comprises the department's 12-month review of progress towards developing a positive culture at the AAD through implementing the Russell Response plan. A summary of progress to date is available in Appendix A.

Future Focus

A suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be established to track progress. Consideration will be given to including indicators that will track longer-term outcomes for individuals who have reported incidents or have previously been implicated in harmful behaviours.

A two-year external independent review of the department's response to the Russell Review will be conducted.

6. Next steps

Feedback through the pulse surveys has indicated that staff see the structural changes that have been made and are aware of some of the initiatives, but they don't clearly see how these changes link to culture.

The departmental change team will assist in developing a cultural progress plan to guide the next 12 months of implementing the departmental response to the Russell Review and deliver positive culture change.

The plan will create a narrative for change that reflects the AAD's current operating landscape and challenges, and engages people more fully in owning and actioning the change at all levels.

Appendix A: Snapshot of Russell Review Response Progress

As at 31 March 2024

Leadership commitment to a culture that enables the mission

- Completed
- In progress



Commitment

- Statements of commitment made by Secretary and AAD Executive with frequent all-staff updates driven by leadership team
- All senior executives engaged in reform including undertaking leadership development
- Deputy Secretary recurring visits to Hobart to communicate face to face updates on the Response Plan and Reform Council meeting outcomes
- EL2 cohort engaged in monthly SES leadership meetings



Governance

- New branch established within AAD incorporating leadership, culture, expeditioner recruitment, training and support functions
- Respect & Equality Reform Council has met 5 times, with the staff representative function proving to be an important conduit for bringing key perspectives to the forum
- Program Management Board has been established to ensure clear accountabilities; 8 meetings held to date
- Divisional Management Committee established; 3 meetings to date
- 3 year plan in development



Accountability

- Response plan accountability shared across department's branch heads
- SES are engaged in reform including reporting to the Reform Council on their actions to ensure a safe and respectful work environment
- Cultural performance expectations have been implemented for people leaders and staff including program partner staff/students
- 360-degree feedback process completed for SES leadership cohort

Ensuring everyone is safe and supported

● Completed

● In progress



Expectations

- Inappropriate behaviour - reporting pathways awareness sessions held in August and November 23
- Continued evolution of psychosocial risk assessments to thoroughly identify, manage and document psychosocial risks.
- The department continues to progress policy documents and mechanisms around reporting harmful behaviours



Reporting

- Temporary quiet spaces established at all stations and on the ship to enable private conversations
- Dedicated quiet spaces for private conversations has been established at Kingston
- Department has reviewed its reporting process and embedded a person-centered approach, focused on empowering the affected person with knowledge, engagement and more frequent connection with the Professional and Ethical Standards team
- An e-form is available as part of a suite of more flexible options to report unacceptable behaviour and workplace harm
- Develop permanent solutions for quiet spaces on station and the vessel to enable private conversations



Supports

- Awareness session facilitated in September 23 to help leaders understand the support channels within the People Division and People & Culture Branch for addressing people-related issues
- Mentor program under development to support expeditioners deploying in 23/24 season



Follow through

- Bystander training sessions held to increase awareness across the division in the Bystander Intervention Framework and unconscious bias. Training has now been delivered to 437 attendees in total - 167 AAD Hobart staff, 263 expeditioners and 7 Parks staff
- 58 reports of inappropriate behaviour were reported to the Professional and Ethical Standards team between 1 July and 31 December 2023.

Building awareness and practical skills

● Completed

● In progress



Awareness

- Bullying, harassment and discrimination training package developed and delivered to 295 leaders and staff in August and November 23
- Staged rollout of a culture-related training plan underway, with sessions in performance management, bystander awareness, unconscious bias, bullying and harassment, addressing harmful behaviours and creating psychological safety



Leadership capability

- Trauma-informed response training completed by all AAD Senior Executives, EL2s and Station Leaders
- Branch workshops conducted to build staff awareness of the Russell Review outcomes, the Response Plan and to facilitate feedback and engagement
- Executive coaching in collaborative leadership in place for all SES
- Performance management training sessions held in August 23 and November 23
- Mid-cycle performance review training delivered in February 24 to build psychological safety by helping leaders coach their staff to see mistakes as learning opportunities



Contextual skills

- Specialised expeditioner training, contextualised to the Antarctic experience, was delivered to 230 attendees across four expeditioner summits held in August and October 23 and January and February 24. Summit content has been digitised for online delivery as required

Working together to deliver results

● Completed

● In progress



Collaboration

- Strong partnerships formed and genuine collaboration between AAD and the department to drive positive culture
- Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) members endorsed new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion working group focused on respect and safety
- Regular meetings scheduled with AAP partner organisations to discuss cultural changes underway
- AAD led intersessional work on developing a CCAMLR Code of conduct
- Monthly meeting rhythm between SES and AAD EL2s established
- Finalise visual identity guide



Inclusion

- Safety, inclusion and respect have been included in Antarctic Infrastructure Renewal projects
- A series of workshops has taken place to develop masterplans for stations that identify and address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as principles related to habitability and wellbeing
- Implement recommendations made by external partner to enhance the end-to-end expeditioner recruitment process including best practice recruitment training sessions
- Review Station leadership model trial at Casey to determine the effectiveness of the support officer role as an alternative avenue for staff to raise any concerns while on expedition

Measurement and continuous improvement

● Completed

● In progress



Measurement

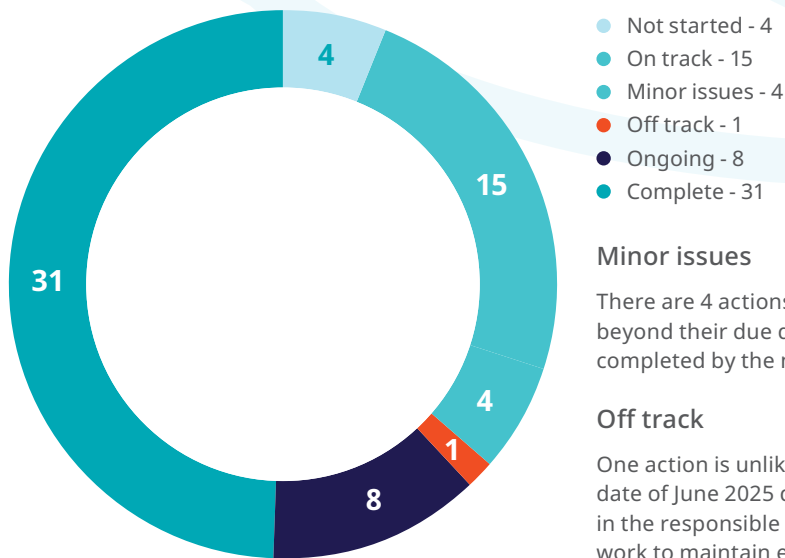
- The first two staff pulse surveys were run in October 23 and February 24 with a response rate of 58%
- Psychological debriefs for all returning winterers with option for summer expeditioners
- Broaden debrief process to include focus groups of underrepresented expeditioners



Improvement

- 57% response rate for APS staff census
- Further refine People Indicators Dashboard to increase visibility of reporting and data relating to people matters and harmful behaviours.

Response Plan Actions



- Not started - 4
- On track - 15
- Minor issues - 4
- Off track - 1
- Ongoing - 8
- Complete - 31

Minor issues

There are 4 actions which remain incomplete beyond their due date but are anticipated to be completed by the next reporting cycle.

Off track

One action is unlikely to be completed by its due date of June 2025 due to a shortfall of resourcing in the responsible branch and a need to prioritise work to maintain essential services on station.

Key Dates

April 2024

12 April – Sixth Reform Council meeting

May 2024

9 May – Executive Board meeting

June 2024

11 June – Psychological Safety training commences

20 June – Seventh Reform Council meeting



Australian Government

**Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water**