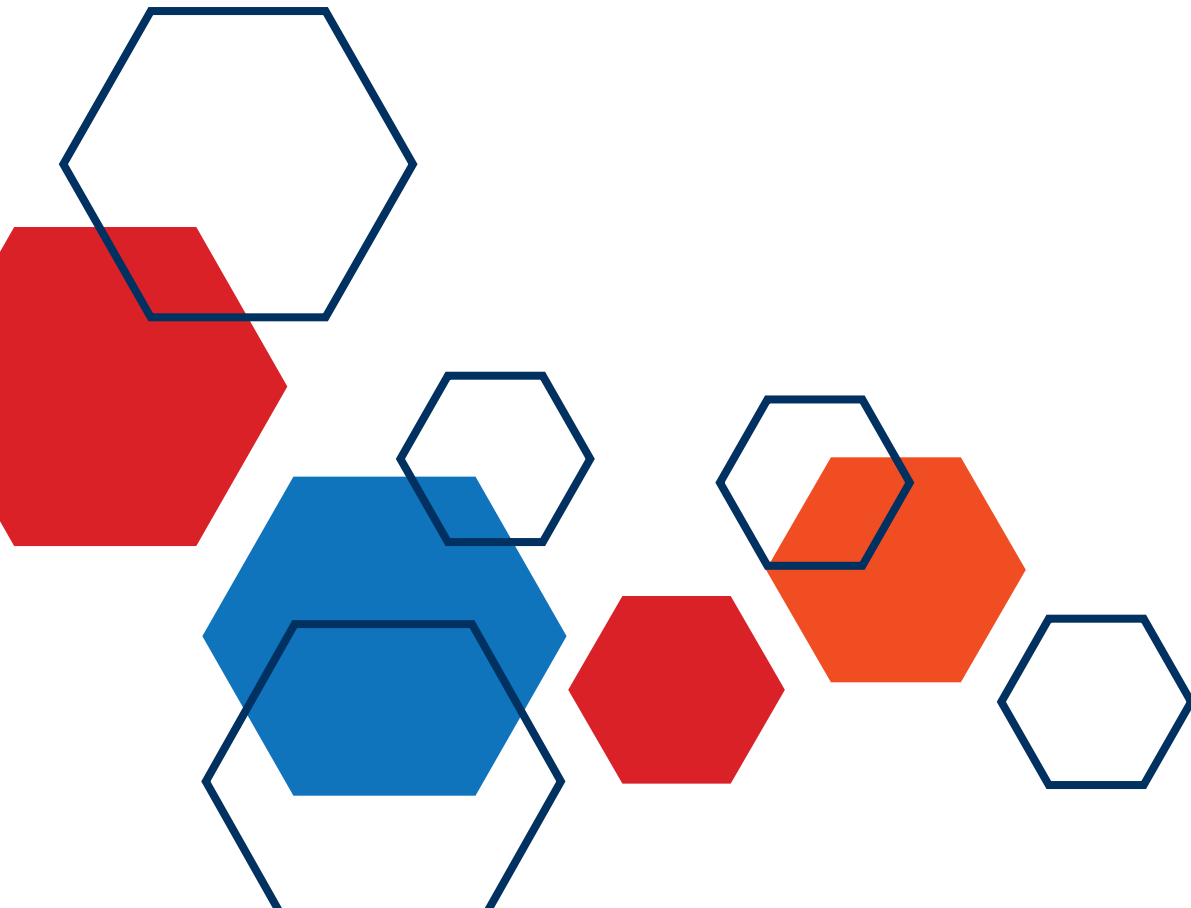


White Paper

Leadership in the APS: Insights from the Hogan 360

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THE APS LEADERSHIP ENVIRONMENT

Leadership in the Australian Public Service (APS) is shaped by a complex operating environment in which authority is exercised through formal mandates and decisions are subject to sustained scrutiny. While leadership responsibilities vary across policy, regulatory, and service delivery contexts, APS leaders typically operate within clearly defined authorising frameworks that require careful navigation of legislation, governance arrangements, and public accountability.

Decision making authority is exercised through legislated mandates and established processes, with accountability extending well beyond organisational performance. APS leaders are subject to ongoing ministerial oversight, audit and assurance mechanisms, judicial review, and high levels of public transparency. As a result, leadership is exercised in an environment where the quality of judgement, the consistency of decision making, and the defensibility of actions are as important as outcomes themselves.

Several features of this environment are particularly relevant for interpreting the leadership patterns evident in the Hogan 360 data. These include:

- Persistent resource constraints that limit flexibility in how outcomes are delivered
- High consequences of error, which elevate the importance of diligence, accuracy, and oversight
- Strong values based expectations around fairness, integrity, and stewardship of public resources
- Complex stakeholder landscapes in which influence must be exercised carefully, legitimately, and often without formal authority

In this context, leadership effectiveness is often defined less by pace or discretion and more by reliability, sound judgement, and risk-aware decision making. Over time, APS leaders learn which behaviours protect trust, sustain legitimacy, and enable delivery under scrutiny, and these behaviours are reinforced through both formal accountability mechanisms and shared expectations about what good leadership looks like across the APS.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH: WHAT THE HOGAN 360 TELLS US

The insights in this paper are drawn from aggregated results of the Hogan 360, a multi-rater feedback instrument designed to assess leadership effectiveness. The analysis is based on data from 1,818 APS leaders and 20,677 raters (excluding self-ratings). The Hogan 360 captures how leaders are experienced by others, reflecting how behaviour and performance are perceived by managers, peers, and direct reports. This perspective is particularly valuable in senior APS roles, where leadership impact is largely mediated through others.

The Hogan 360 assesses leadership behaviours using a validated leadership framework organised around four domains:

 <p>Hogan 360 Leadership Model</p>	<p>Self Management</p> <p>Integrity Resilience</p>	<p>Relationship Management</p> <p>Communication People Skills Team Player Engaging</p>	<p>Working In the Business</p> <p>Capability Efficiency Results Customer</p>	<p>Working On the Business</p> <p>Accountability Motivation Strategy Innovation</p>
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- Self Management: how leaders manage themselves, act with integrity, and respond under pressure
- Relationship Management: how leaders build relationships, communicate, and work with others
- Working in the Business: how leaders deliver outcomes, manage operations, and ensure quality
- Working on the Business: how leaders set direction, build capability, and contribute to longer term value

Together, these domains provide a comprehensive view of how leaders manage themselves, work with others, deliver results, and contribute to sustained organisational capability.

To support interpretation within the Australian Public Service context, Hogan 360 items have also been mapped to the Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours (DRIVE). The Charter articulates the leadership behaviours Secretaries expect of themselves and SES leaders, and the behaviours they seek to see demonstrated by leaders at all levels of the APS. This mapping enables Hogan 360 results to be considered not only through the Hogan leadership framework, but also in relation to APS-specific leadership expectations.

Throughout this paper, findings are interpreted through both lenses, allowing leadership patterns to be understood in terms of which behaviours are most visible in practice and how closely they align with the expectations set out in the Secretaries' Charter.



Australian Government

The Charter of Leadership Behaviours sets out the behaviours that we, as Secretaries, expect of ourselves and our SES, and want to see in leaders at all levels of the APS.

The Charter focuses on behaviours that support modern systems leadership within the construct of the APS Values and Code of Conduct. These behaviours build on the Integrated Leadership System and the APS Leadership Capability Framework.



LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

When examined collectively, the Hogan 360 data reveal a clear pattern of leadership strengths among APS leaders. These strengths reflect behaviours that, on average, are more prominent relative to other leadership behaviours and are most visible to those who work with APS leaders day to day. The strength themes outlined below describe these patterns at a group level, providing insight into how leadership is typically enacted and experienced across the APS.

INTEGRITY, FAIRNESS AND PROFESSIONALISM

One of the prominent strength-related themes to emerge from the Hogan 360 data relates to integrity, fairness, and professionalism. Items reflecting ethical conduct, diligence, impartiality, and respect for standards are rated highly on average, indicating that APS leaders are widely experienced as acting with integrity and professionalism in how they approach their roles.

This pattern reflects a leadership approach grounded in ethical decision-making and a strong sense of responsibility. Leaders are seen as working hard, behaving in line with high ethical standards, and treating people fairly and without favouritism. Professionalism is experienced not only in interpersonal conduct, but also in the quality, consistency, and care applied to work, particularly in complex, sensitive, or high-stakes contexts.

In the APS environment, where public trust, transparency, and stewardship of public resources are central, these behaviours are both expected and reinforced. High ratings on these items suggest that leaders are navigating competing demands with care, adhering to established standards, and exercising judgement in ways that protect legitimacy and confidence in decision-making.

Taken together, this theme highlights integrity and professionalism not as abstract values, but as observable leadership behaviours that shape how APS leaders are experienced by others and underpin effective delivery within a high-accountability system.

HIGH QUALITY DELIVERY AND WORK STANDARDS

A second prominent theme to emerge from the Hogan 360 data relates to high-quality delivery and strong work standards. Items reflecting diligence, follow-through, consistency, and the ability to sustain performance on demanding work are rated highly on average, indicating that APS leaders are widely experienced as dependable and effective in delivering outcomes.

This pattern reflects a leadership approach characterised by sustained effort, attention to detail, and a strong commitment to quality. Leaders are seen as performing to a high standard on challenging assignments, delivering reliable results, and maintaining focus even when work is

complex, time-pressured, or constrained by competing priorities. Effectiveness in this area is experienced through consistency and thoroughness, rather than speed or visibility.

In the APS context, where errors can carry significant consequences and rework is costly, this emphasis on quality and dependability is both rational and highly valued. Higher ratings on these items suggest that leaders place strong emphasis on meeting standards, maintaining accuracy, and ensuring work is completed carefully and reliably.

Taken together, this strength highlights delivery not as rapid execution, but as a disciplined and dependable form of leadership. The ability to consistently deliver high-quality outcomes under constraint contributes to confidence in leadership capability and supports effective organisational functioning within complex governance and accountability environments.

RESPECTFUL AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

A further strength theme to emerge from the Hogan 360 data relates to respectful and collaborative leadership. Items reflecting civility, consideration, fairness in interpersonal treatment, and collaboration are rated highly on average, indicating that APS leaders are widely experienced as respectful in how they engage with others and effective in working collaboratively to achieve outcomes.

This pattern reflects a leadership style characterised by professionalism in interpersonal conduct and a strong emphasis on constructive working relationships. Leaders are seen as polite and considerate, treating people with respect and avoiding abrasive or dismissive behaviour, even under pressure. Collaboration is experienced as an everyday feature of how work is done, with leaders actively working with others rather than relying solely on formal authority.

In the APS context, where progress often depends on cooperation across teams, agencies, and stakeholder groups, these behaviours are particularly important. High ratings on collaboration-related items suggest that leaders are effective at engaging others, contributing to shared goals, and navigating complex working relationships in environments where influence must often be exercised without direct control.

Taken together, this strength highlights respect and collaboration not as interpersonal niceties, but as core enablers of effective leadership within the APS. The ability to maintain respectful relationships and work productively with others supports coordination, reduces friction, and enables sustained delivery in a system characterised by interdependence and shared accountability.

LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINED EFFORT UNDER PRESSURE

A further theme to emerge from the Hogan 360 data relates to resilience and sustained effort under pressure. Items reflecting steadiness, perseverance, and the ability to maintain performance despite obstacles or demanding conditions were rated highly on average, indicating that APS leaders are widely experienced as resilient and committed in how they approach their work.

This pattern reflects a leadership approach characterised by persistence, reliability, and emotional steadiness. Leaders are seen as continuing to pursue goals despite setbacks, maintaining a positive and constructive attitude, and sustaining effort over time even when workloads are high or challenges are ongoing. Rather than reacting visibly to pressure, resilience in this context is experienced through consistency of behaviour and the capacity to keep work moving forward.

In the APS environment, where leaders are often required to operate under sustained scrutiny, manage complex issues, and respond to competing demands, this form of resilience is particularly important. Higher ratings on these items suggest that leaders are able to absorb pressure without allowing it to disrupt delivery or working relationships, supporting continuity and stability in demanding circumstances.

Taken together, this strength highlights resilience as the capacity to remain effective, composed, and engaged over time. The ability to sustain effort under pressure contributes to confidence in leadership dependability and supports organisational performance in environments characterised by complexity, constraint, and long time horizons.

CAPABILITY AND CONTEXTUAL EXPERTISE

The final strength-related theme to emerge from the Hogan 360 data relates to capability and contextual expertise. Items reflecting knowledge, experience, and the ability to be effective in one's role are rated highly on average, indicating that APS leaders are widely experienced as capable and well-equipped to meet the demands of their positions.

This pattern reflects a leadership profile characterised by strong technical and professional capability, as well as familiarity with the operational and organisational context in which work is carried out. Leaders are seen as having the knowledge, experience, and understanding required to perform effectively. Capability in this sense is experienced through confidence in leaders' competence and their ability to contribute meaningfully to problem solving and delivery.

In the APS, where effectiveness depends not only on general leadership skills but also on navigating intricate policy, regulatory, and institutional frameworks, contextual

expertise is especially important. Higher ratings on these items suggest that leaders are able to draw on their experience and role relevant knowledge to support sound execution and maintain credibility with colleagues and stakeholders.

Taken together, this strength highlights capability as a practical and observable aspect of leadership effectiveness. Leaders who are experienced as knowledgeable and competent provide reassurance to others, support continuity, and enable progress within systems characterised by complexity, constraint, and high expectations.

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

Viewed as a whole, the strength themes described above point to an APS leadership profile that is strongly values-driven, dependable, and grounded in respectful ways of working. APS leaders are, on average, experienced as ethical and professional, committed to high work standards, collaborative in their approach, resilient under sustained pressure, and well equipped with the capability and contextual expertise required to operate effectively within complex environments.

When interpreted through the Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours, these strengths align most closely with Have Integrity and Be Respectful. The prominence of ethical conduct, professionalism, reliability, and respectful engagement reflects areas where APS leaders are experienced particularly positively by those they work with, and highlights the central role of values-based and relational leadership in the APS context.

LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

Strength	How This is Typically Experienced	Implications and Recommendations
Integrity, Fairness and Professionalism	<p>Leaders are experienced as ethical, impartial, and diligent, with strong adherence to standards and a clear sense of responsibility.</p>	<p>These behaviours are foundational to public trust, legitimacy, and defensible decision-making in the APS. Their prominence reflects the central role of integrity, fairness, and professionalism in operating within legislated mandates, ministerial accountability, and high levels of public scrutiny, particularly in complex or sensitive policy and delivery contexts.</p>
High-Quality Delivery and Work Standards	<p>Leaders are experienced as dependable, thorough, and consistent, delivering high-quality outcomes even under constraint or complexity.</p>	<p>This emphasis on quality and reliability supports confidence in leadership capability and effective functioning within the APS. Sustained delivery to a high standard is particularly critical in environments where error carries significant consequences and work must withstand audit, review, and external scrutiny.</p>
Respectful and Collaborative Leadership	<p>Leaders are experienced as courteous, fair, and constructive, working collaboratively and engaging others to achieve outcomes.</p>	<p>These behaviours support effective coordination and influence in the APS, where leaders must work across teams, agencies, jurisdictions, and stakeholder groups. Maintaining a focus on respectful engagement and collaborative problem solving helps build alignment and sustain delivery in operating environments characterised by interdependence and shared accountability.</p>
Resilience and Sustained Effort Under Pressure	<p>Leaders are experienced as steady and persistent, maintaining performance and constructive behaviour despite obstacles or demanding conditions.</p>	<p>This form of resilience contributes to continuity and stability in APS leadership, particularly under sustained scrutiny and competing demands. The ability to maintain focus and constructive engagement under pressure supports confidence in leadership dependability and organisational continuity.</p>
Capability and Contextual Expertise	<p>Leaders are experienced as knowledgeable, credible, and well equipped to operate effectively within complex policy, regulatory, and organisational environments.</p>	<p>Contextual expertise underpins sound judgement, effective execution, and credibility within the APS. Leaders who are experienced as capable and knowledgeable provide reassurance to colleagues and stakeholders and support progress within environments shaped by complex policy frameworks, regulatory requirements, and high expectations of stewardship.</p>

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The strengths outlined in the previous section provide a solid foundation for leadership effectiveness in the APS. At the same time, the Hogan 360 data point to areas where certain leadership behaviours are less prominent within the overall leadership profile. These opportunities do not detract from the strengths described above. Rather, they indicate where leadership impact could be extended by complementing existing strengths with more visible behaviours related to longer-term direction, performance management, development and morale, and influence.

LONGER-TERM STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND FOCUS

One of the most prominent opportunity themes evident in the Hogan 360 data relates to longer-term strategic direction and focus. Behaviours associated with future-oriented thinking, setting direction, and communicating longer-term priorities feature less strongly in the data than behaviours associated with delivery and self-management.

This pattern suggests that APS leaders are often experienced as highly effective in managing current demands and delivering quality outcomes, but less consistently experienced as making longer-term direction explicit in their day-to-day leadership. Strategic intent may be present, but it is not always visible to others through clear articulation of priorities or through connections between current work and longer-term goals.

Strategic direction in the APS is shaped by the priorities of the government of the day, with central agencies playing a key role in translating those priorities into policy and delivery expectations. As a result, strategic priorities can shift relatively quickly in response to emerging issues, changes in the external environment, or evolving community expectations. These dynamics can make it challenging for leaders to sustain a stable and clearly articulated longer-term narrative while remaining responsive to immediate demands.

The opportunity here is not to reduce focus on delivery, but to complement it by more deliberately signalling longer-term direction. Making priorities clearer over time, reinforcing what matters most, and helping teams understand how their current work contributes to future outcomes can strengthen alignment and shared purpose across work areas.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A second theme evident in the Hogan 360 data relates to managing performance and accountability. Behaviours associated with setting clear performance expectations, holding others accountable, using goals and performance indicators, and addressing under-performance did not emerge as strongly as delivery-focused behaviours within the data.

This suggests that APS leaders are often experienced as setting high standards through personal example and reliability, while being less consistently experienced as actively managing performance through explicit expectations, holding others accountable, and following-up on agreed outcomes. Expectations may be broadly understood, but are not always experienced as being clearly articulated, reinforced, or monitored in ways that are visible to others.

Leadership effort is often concentrated on managing work directly and ensuring quality outcomes in environments characterised by high delivery pressure and complex governance requirements. While this approach supports consistency and risk management, it can also limit opportunities to distribute responsibility clearly, build ownership, and reinforce accountability through others.

Viewed through the Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours, this opportunity aligns closely with Empower People. The opportunity is not to increase pressure or reduce fairness, but to complement existing strengths by making expectations clearer, accountability more visible, and responsibility more consistently shared across teams and work areas.

DEVELOPING OTHERS AND SUSTAINING MORALE

Another theme evident in the Hogan 360 data relates to how intentionally APS leaders are experienced as developing others and sustaining morale. Behaviours associated with providing regular guidance and feedback, effectiveness in coaching and developing others, and working to improve morale feature less prominently than behaviours associated with professionalism, respect, and delivery.

While APS leaders are often experienced as fair, respectful, and supportive, their investment in others' development and motivation may be less visible as a deliberate and ongoing leadership focus. Development may occur informally or on an ad hoc basis, rather than being experienced as a sustained feature of how leaders build capability, confidence, and engagement over time.

The APS places strong emphasis on professionalism, equity, and reliability. While these qualities support trust and consistency, they can also mean that morale and development are assumed to flow from fair treatment and steady delivery, rather than being actively shaped through explicit coaching, feedback, recognition, and encouragement.

The opportunity here is not to introduce additional programs or formal processes, but to make development and morale-building more intentional and more visible, so that people experience leadership not only as dependable and fair, but also as actively invested in their growth, learning, and sustained contribution.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

INFLUENCE AND LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

A final theme evident in the Hogan 360 data relates to influence and leadership presence. Behaviours associated with influencing others, asserting views, and visibly shaping priorities are less prominent within the overall leadership profile than behaviours associated with delivery, professionalism, and relationship management.

This pattern suggests that APS leaders may often rely on credibility, expertise, and relationship-based approaches to influence, rather than more overt forms of assertion or advocacy. Results orientation, for example, appears to be expressed more frequently through persistence, reliability, and quality delivery than through visible drive, assertiveness, or competitive energy.

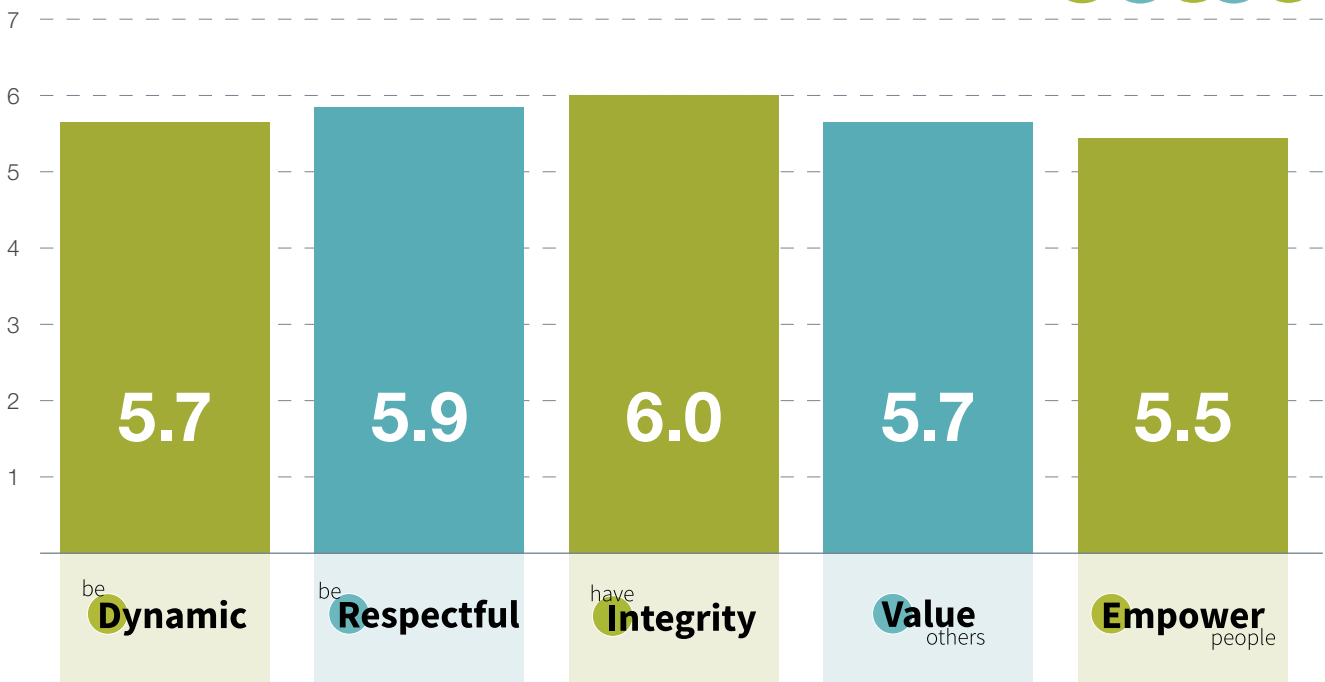
Within the APS, this reflects longstanding norms around impartiality, careful judgement, and respect for process. While these norms support trust and legitimacy, they can also reduce the visibility of influence, particularly in situations that require leaders to signal priorities, frame issues, or actively build momentum for change.

The opportunity here is not to adopt a different leadership style, but to use leadership presence and influence more deliberately where it adds value. Being clearer about priorities, articulating trade-offs, and consciously asserting perspective in complex or ambiguous situations can help extend leadership impact across systems where authority is constrained and outcomes depend on alignment and shared commitment.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Viewed collectively, the opportunity themes highlight ways in which APS leadership impact could be extended by building on existing strengths. Making longer term direction more visible, strengthening accountability through others, investing more intentionally in people’s development and morale, and using influence and leadership presence more deliberately each represent complementary levers for enhancing leadership effectiveness. Together, these opportunities reflect the realities of leading in complex, high accountability public sector environments, where leadership impact depends not only on personal capability and delivery, but on how direction, responsibility, development, and influence are experienced by others.

SES 360 AVERAGE SCORE ACROSS DRIVE FRAMEWORK



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity	How This Is Typically Experienced	Implications and Recommendations
Longer-Term Strategic Direction and Focus	<p>Leaders are often experienced as highly effective in managing current demands and delivering quality outcomes, but less consistently experienced as making longer-term direction explicit in day-to-day leadership. Strategic intent may be present, but is not always visible to others through clear articulation of priorities or links between current work and future outcomes.</p>	<p>The opportunity is to complement strong delivery by more deliberately signalling longer-term direction. Making priorities clearer over time and helping teams understand how current work contributes to future outcomes can strengthen alignment, shared purpose, and confidence in leadership direction amid competing demands.</p>
Managing Performance and Accountability	<p>Leaders are often experienced as setting high standards through personal diligence and reliability, while being less consistently experienced as actively managing performance through explicit expectations, follow-up, and visible accountability. Expectations may be understood but not always experienced as being clearly articulated or reinforced.</p>	<p>The opportunity is to extend leadership impact by making performance expectations and accountability more visible to others. While high standards are often set through personal diligence and reliability, clearer articulation of expectations, ownership, and follow-through can strengthen shared responsibility and consistency.</p>
Developing Others and Sustaining Morale	<p>The opportunity is to make development and morale-building more intentional and more visible. Explicit attention to coaching, feedback, recognition, and encouragement can help ensure that leadership is experienced not only as dependable and fair, but also as visibly invested in supporting others.</p>	<p>The opportunity is to make development and morale-building more intentional and more visible. Explicit attention to coaching, feedback, recognition, and encouragement can help ensure that leadership is experienced not only as dependable and fair, but also as actively invested in others.</p>
Influence and Leadership Presence	<p>Leaders are often experienced as influencing through credibility, expertise, and constructive relationships. As a result, influence and leadership presence may be effective but less overt.</p>	<p>The opportunity is not to adopt a different leadership style, but to use influence and leadership presence more deliberately where it adds value. Being clearer about priorities, trade-offs, and perspective can help build momentum, alignment, and shared commitment in environments where authority is constrained and outcomes depend on influence.</p>

WHAT THE FINDINGS SUGGEST FOR APS LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

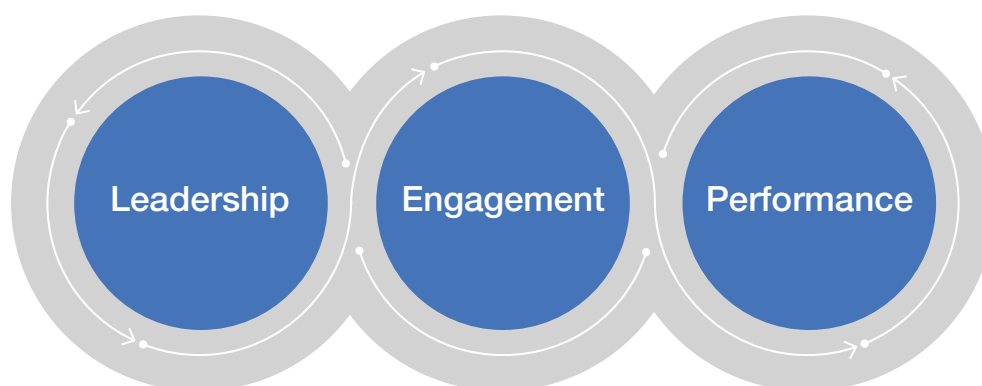
This paper provides insight into how APS leaders are most commonly experienced by others, and how those insights can be used to guide leadership development and reflection. Based on aggregated Hogan 360 results, the data point to a leadership profile that is widely experienced as ethical, professional, hardworking, respectful, resilient, and capable. These strengths are highly beneficial in a system characterised by legislated mandates, sustained scrutiny, and complex accountability requirements, and they represent behaviours that the APS relies on in day-to-day leadership.

Alongside these strengths, the data also highlight areas where certain leadership behaviours are less visible or less consistently experienced by others. These areas include making longer-term direction more visible, strengthening accountability and ownership, investing more intentionally in people's development and morale, and using influence and leadership presence more deliberately. These opportunities should not be interpreted as gaps in commitment or capability. Rather, they reflect the realities of leading in environments where delivery pressure, governance requirements, and system constraints shape what tends to receive attention in day-to-day leadership practice, and therefore what is most visible to colleagues and teams.

From a practical standpoint, the findings provide APS leaders with guidance on where development effort is likely to be worthwhile. The insights can be used to help leaders prioritise a small number of behaviours that, if made more visible to others, are likely to have the greatest impact on how their leadership is experienced. The findings suggest value in using the insights to:

- Reflect on whether longer-term direction is visible to others amid competing priorities
- Consider how clearly expectations and ownership are communicated and reinforced through teams
- Make development and feedback a more consistent part of everyday leadership conversations
- Be deliberate about when and how influence and presence are used to signal priorities and guide others

Viewed in this way, the findings can be used as a reference point for ongoing leadership reflection, coaching, and development conversations, helping leaders focus on how their intentions and effort are translating into lived experience for others. Used in this way, the insights support practical and sustainable leadership development by building on behaviours that are already valued, while strengthening how consistently they are experienced over time.



About Peter Berry Consultancy (PBC)

Peter Berry Consultancy (PBC) is a global leadership advisory firm grounded in the science of personality and organisational psychology. We combine rigorous psychometrics with expert consulting to deliver deeper insight into human behaviour at work.

Through evidence-based diagnostics, research, consulting and coaching, we help organisations make better decisions about talent; strengthening leadership, improving team performance, succession planning and enabling sustainable organisational success.

PBC is the developer of proprietary diagnostic tools, including the Hogan 360 Suite, and is an authorised distributor of Hogan Assessments.

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