



Australian Government

Geoscience Australia

## GEOSCIENCE AUSTRALIA PEOPLE STRATEGY 2012-14




2012-14



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## Message from the General Manager Corporate Services

**Geoscience Australia (GA) is an agency that is contributing significantly to the economic, environmental and social well being of the nation. Our strength lies in our people, the diversity of our skills and professionalism as well as our demonstrated role in enhancing Whole-of-Government capabilities.**

Some of the key challenges ahead of us include maintaining the ability to rapidly respond to emerging Government needs, and to flexibly redefine priorities and redeploy skills to deliver on time and within budget.

GA must continually reshape, realign and equip its workforce to be flexible and to rapidly respond to the challenges the Government faces within the current tight fiscal environment. The People Strategy 2012–14 reflects GA's direction and commitment to attracting and supporting the workforce with the development and support needed to deliver quality performance.

The Geoscience Australia People Strategy outlines all people related priorities for implementation. The overarching goal of the Strategy is to support and enable the agency to achieve its strategic priorities as outlined in the Geoscience Australia Strategic Plan 2011–14.

The Strategy will deliver greater clarity and shared understanding regarding the state of GA critical skills and how to attract, develop and maintain required talents.

Corporate Services in collaboration with all key stakeholders will drive the implementation of the Strategy as part of its annual work plan and deliverables.

Achieving the objectives of this strategy will require partnering and collaborating with GA businesses to ensure real solutions are developed and delivered.



**Tony Marks**  
General Manager  
Corporate Services



## Introduction

The People Strategy sets out a unifying framework for workforce related investment decisions and activities within Geoscience Australia (GA) for 2012–14, the strategy:

- outlines the purpose, vision and business context for the Strategy.
- outlines the strategic themes and the actions to address these.

Geoscience Australia is a prescribed agency within the Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio. The agency Mission and Vision Statements are outlined in the Geoscience Australia Strategic Plan 2011–2014 as:

**Mission:** Meeting the geoscience needs of the nation to build Australia's future.

**Vision:** Geoscience Australia is custodian of the geographic and geological data and knowledge of the nation. We create, maintain and disseminate geographic and geological knowledge for the future well being of all Australians.

### Drivers

The drivers of Geoscience Australia's investment focus and priorities are influenced by major trends including economic growth in the region, population growth in Australia and the surrounding region, the impact of natural

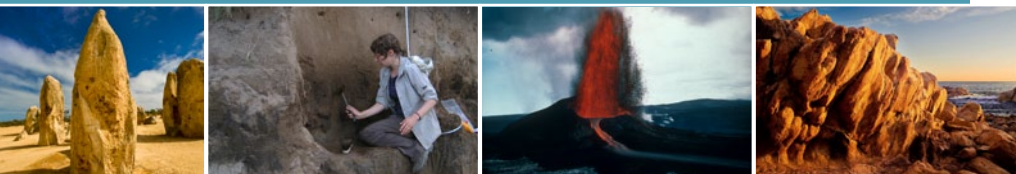
hazards, climate change, the availability and efficient use of energy, water and other resources, and pressure to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in order to mitigate growth in global greenhouse gas levels.

### Government Outcome

GA's data, products and services inform government, industry and community decisions on the economic, social and environmental management of the nation's natural resources through enabling access to geoscientific and spatial information.

GA enhances Government policy decisions through evidence-based data and plays a key role in Whole-of-Government capability building.





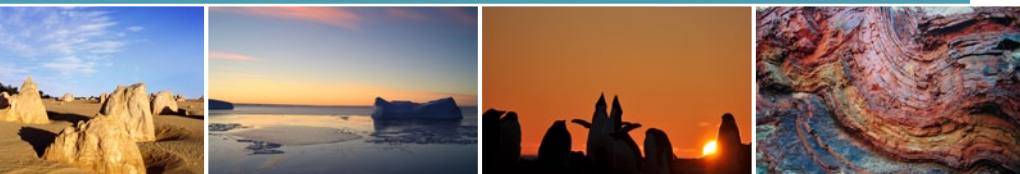
## Purpose of People Strategy 2012-14

The purpose of the People Strategy is to position the agency to pro-actively identify and address current and emerging workforce capability/capacity risks that may constrain the agency from continually meeting Government expectations and standards. The Strategy aims to support GA to plan, attract, develop and maintain a highly skilled professional workforce and to drive a high performance culture.

The Strategy enables the pursuit of GA's People Vision and provides visibility to internal and external stakeholders as to how Corporate Services intends through its priorities to support the agency in its Strategic Plan strategies.

### The People Strategy 2012-14 is aligned to and will support the implementation of:

- **Geoscience Australia's Strategic Plan 2011-14**—which sets out the agency's strategy, sub-strategy and priorities, and identified capability building as one of the agency's valued behaviours.
- **The Review** Confirmed that GA's products and services draw on a common base of skills and capabilities providing scale economies and increased scope for cross sectoral innovation.
- **Project DARWIN** A major business improvement change initiative that aims to improve product and service design, packaging, data management and delivery.
- **Australian Public Service Commission Agenda on building skills** as set out in *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint For Reform of Australian Government Administration*.
  - Reinvigorate strategic leadership
  - Strengthen workforce planning and development
  - Ensure agency agility, capability and effectiveness.



## Geoscience Australia People Strategy Vision Statement

The Geoscience Australia People Vision Statement captures the value, uniqueness and commitment of our workforce.

GA's workforce is unique and well respected by government, industry and the general public as trusted advisors on the application of geoscience to Australia's most important challenges.

We offer diverse opportunities for our people to develop their skills and knowledge and apply their expertise to find solutions to significant environmental, economic and social challenges in Australia and overseas.

We work with state-of-the-art technology and the agency's breadth of work, depth of expertise and our combined capability allows us to respond to issues including resource development, energy security, community safety, marine planning and protection, and earth monitoring.

### To achieve the GA People Vision Statement:

- Apply our skills, knowledge, experience and passion in seeking and applying solutions to national challenges;
- Seek innovation in work practices, tools and technology;
- Strive for excellence;
- Uphold the APS Code of Conduct;
- Take professional responsibility for outcomes;
- Commit to nurture, mentor and assist employees to achieve career objectives that are of mutual benefit;
- Actively engage in Learning and Development to enhance skills, agility and ability to work as a team to respond to changing clients' needs, and anticipate future needs; and
- Invest wisely in HR policies and systems to strengthen our position as an employer of choice.



## People Strategy Themes

The themes of the Strategy are summarised under five headings.





## People Strategy Themes

### 1. Workforce Planning

The *Australian National Audit Office Better Practice Guide* cites workforce planning as 'a continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure that it is capable of delivering organisational objectives now and in the future'.

To enable GA to shape and sustain an agile, capable and responsive workforce a comprehensive workforce plan/critical skills gap analysis is required.

This will enable management to understand both the external supply environment and our internal capacity demand.

It will also enable GA businesses to understand their critical roles/skills and the baseline requirements for sustaining the long term capability and viability of the agency.

### 2. People Management and Culture

GA's values as outlined in the Geoscience Australia Strategic Plan 2011–2014, as set out below, underpin the agency culture:

- **Influence** Use our geoscientific information and knowledge to inform evidence-based decision making;
- **Capability** Seek innovation in work practices, tools and technology to continue to build the capability of our people and organisation;
- **Excellence** Strive for excellence and improvement in everything that we do and in the quality of the services we provide; and
- **Accountability** Ownership of work results, personal actions and being answerable for outcomes.

The focus of this theme is to enhance and improve people management, communication and engagement across the agency. It is to promote and value diversity and to actively support and nurture a high performance culture.

### 3. Leadership and Learning and Development

GA performance is underpinned by the skills, knowledge, experience, personal attributes and passion of its workforce to make a difference.

The aim of L&D activities is to enhance scientific, people management and business acumen skills and competencies and to enhance the agility of the workforce in response to change.

### 4. Work Health and Safety, and Rehabilitation

Work Health and Safety and Rehabilitation aims to maximise the safety, health and productivity of all GA staff.

### 5. Effective processes and the delivery of service

The aims of HR systems investment and activities are to maximise efficiency and cost effectiveness.

This will be supported through streamlined policies and procedures and high quality client services.





## Strategic Theme

# 1

GA needs to improve its capacity to respond speedily to Government needs by pro-actively identifying and aligning skills to Government priorities. This will enable the agency to respond to increasing funding opportunities. As part of this process the agency will need to review its skills mix in order to make evidence-based decisions regarding skills retention and attraction.

### Workforce Planning

#### **The following strategic actions will be undertaken:**

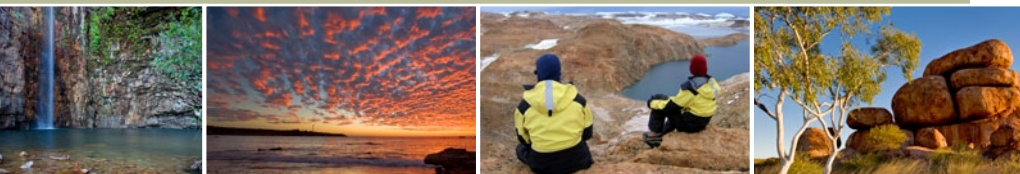
**Action 1.1** Work with business areas to develop workforce plans and integrate into work planning.

**Action 1.2** Provide guidelines and tools to enable managers to develop succession and retention strategies.

**Action 1.3** Develop and implement a competency framework, work level standards and job families for occupational streams to enhance career path and staff retention.

**Action 1.4** Review and update job descriptions to enhance role clarity and overall staff performance.

**Action 1.5** Review Entry Level Development Programs to ensure they are targeted and integrated into succession strategies.



## Strategic Theme

# 2

### People Management and Culture

Based on staff survey results, GA needs to improve its workforce engagement in order to foster a higher culture of collaboration, innovation and performance improvement.

#### The following strategic actions will be undertaken:

**Action 2.1** Develop and implement an Internal Communication Framework to enhance GA culture of staff engagement and information sharing.

**Action 2.2** Ongoing commitment to staff engagement through survey mechanisms.

**Action 2.3** Implement the 2012 Staff Survey Action Plan.

**Action 2.4** Design resource tools and guides for managers to strengthen their knowledge, skills and confidence in:

- Career Planning and holding conversations; and
- Performance planning and managing underperformance.

**Action 2.5** Revise and update the Recognition and Award Program.

**Action 2.6** Design and provide training to boost managers' knowledge and experience in coaching for results, mentoring and managing underperformance.

**Action 2.7** Review the GA Diversity framework including supporting policies and plans.



## Strategic Theme

# 3

GA's role in building government capabilities calls for equipping its current and future leaders with the skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to be more strategic, resilient and responsive to emerging strategic and operational challenges.

GA needs to continually sustain leadership strength as future budget constraints may make it harder for the agency to compete in the open market for leaders.

## Leadership and Learning and Development

**Action 3.1** Refocus GeoNEXT leadership development Program to include a combination of tailored group and individual based experience.

**Action 3.2** Refocus GeoPLUS as a management development program to improve people and resource management results in GA.

**Action 3.3** Refocus GeoESSENTIALS as a frontline management and supervisory development Program to enhance understanding of GA business, governance and systems and to boost supervision skills.

**Action 3.4** Continue to invest in eLearning through system enhancement and module improvements.



## Strategic Theme

# 3

### Leadership and Learning and Development

**Action 3.5** Implement a scientific competency model to enhance skills development and meet change of skills requirements.

**Action 3.6** Conduct a critical skills audit and introduce measures to maintain and sustain skills.

**Action 3.7** Establish a partnership and collaboration framework and projects with universities, state governments and mining industries for L&D purposes.

**Action 3.8** Capture field trips for L&D purposes.

**Action 3.9** Capture L&D scientific investment funds and traineeship/cadetship for developing specific expertise that are in alignment with emerging Government high priorities.



## Strategic Theme

# 3

*The State of the Service - Agency Report (2011)* indicates that the GA workforce is satisfied with their L&D opportunities. This notwithstanding, there is a need for continuous improvement.

Fiscal pressure compels the agency to become more innovative in developing and enhancing its non-scientific skills, which underpin the ability to operate efficiently. There is a need to centralise the provision of non-scientific and non-technical L&D programs to achieve economies of scale.

There is also a need to centralise funding for non-scientific and non-technical L&D investments to maximise Return on Investment by investing in areas of highest priority without duplication.

## Leadership and Learning and Development

**Action 3.10** Develop and implement an L&D Strategy.

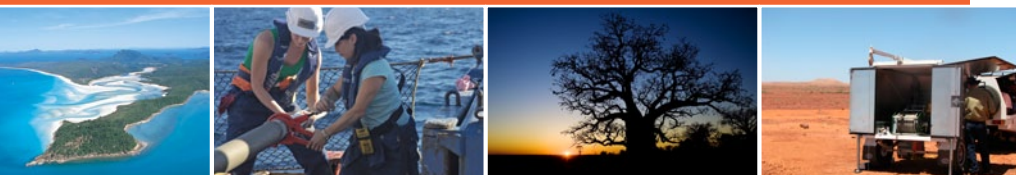
**Action 3.11** Review and implement centralised L&D data capture and reporting system to enable performance monitoring and reporting.

**Action 3.12** Review and update L&D policies and systems to address the changing needs of the agency.

**Action 3.13** Implement a one-stop-shop for all non-scientific and non-technical L&D investment and program delivery.

**Action 3.14** Develop and implement an L&D calendar.





## Strategic Theme

# 4

## Strategic Theme

# 5

### Work Health and Safety, and Rehabilitation

The agency is required to be in a state of continual improvement to sustain business continuity and ensure compliance with prevailing legislation and codes of practice.

#### The following strategic actions will be undertaken:

**Action 4.1** Manage and ensure compliance with the *Work, Health and Safety Act 2011*, including employee wellbeing.

**Action 4.2** Effective case management efforts using inclusive case management practices including the involvement of all stakeholders from the treating doctors through to supervisors within the workplace.

### Effective processes and the delivery of service

GA's ability to respond effectively to its workforce needs is underpinned by HR policies and processes.

#### The following strategic actions will be undertaken:

**Action 5.1** Review recruitment systems and policy, and streamline processes to achieve cost effectiveness and the attraction of quality staff.

**Action 5.2** Streamline business processes and reduce administrative overheads

**Action 5.3** Gather and consider people management information to monitor and improve our performance.