

Design high-performing, future-focused public sector agencies

Supporting best-practice organisational design will ensure agencies are responsive to changing needs, can unlock the value hidden in existing resources and boost performance. This framework can help practitioners understand drivers for change, organisational design opportunities and possible areas of focus.



Where to start when thinking about organisational design or redesign

These questions can help you understand the scale of transformation required.

Primary drivers for change

- What are the current realities of the agency – drivers, challenges and limitations?
- Where does the agency want to be in three, five and 10 years' time?
- How is the environment already changing?
- How is the agency managing impacts of change?
- How will digital disruption impact the agency, including resources and service delivery?
- How could technology, different ways of working, organisational culture, systems and processes enable, or hinder, the achievement of outcomes?

Opportunities to change the current design

- Is the current organisational design fit-for-purpose? Are there opportunities to change the way the organisation operates?
- Are there functions that currently run in multiple streams within the agency. Is there value in consolidating? Are there different functions that could be co-located or joined to drive innovation, or are there benefits in a different approach?
- What is the executive profile of the agency? What opportunities does the resource profile of the agency create?
- How can existing resources be best used to achieve outcomes?
- How does the culture influence the current operating model?
- How has the history of the agency influenced where it is now? (including machinery-of-government, operating models, corporate service delivery, alternative structures. What has worked, what proved challenging?)



What kind of organisational redesign is required?

Consider what can be achieved without hard structural changes.

- Will different ways of working address challenges? Consider increased social connections, collaboration, project teams and sprints, embedding activities in different work areas.
- Can governance be streamlined for example, to increase transparency or delegate decision-making?
- How can employees be empowered to develop and implement creative solutions to common problems?



Organisational design encompasses more than structure

Consider equally how to optimise these four areas of focus in designing your approach.





If structural change is required, ground your ideas in best-practice design principles

Consider these principles when undertaking redesign.

Customer centric

- Responsive to government's strategic priorities
- Place-based and human-centred
- Drive effective and efficient services
- Reduce red tape
- Only as many organisational layers as necessary

Agile and flexible

- Leverage the capability and capacity of the whole workforce
- Design for innovation and agility
- Responsive to change
- Drive accountability and transparency
- Integrate systems across boundaries

Inclusive

- Promote collaboration, co-design and partnerships
- Foster continuous learning and innovation
- Decisions are made at the lowest practical level
- Support knowledge sharing

Outcomes driven

- Align with strategic direction
- Consider systemic and broader impacts
- Co-create and prioritise outcomes with impact
- Remove duplication
- Create increased public value



How will the design enable delivery of business priorities?

Consider your current ways of working and desired future state.

Ways of working

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- Minor shifts in the business and service delivery models with minimal disruption to current workforce designs and practices.
 - Teams are organised around discrete functions, opportunities for collaboration or shared insights are adhoc.
 - Decision-making is hierarchical.
 - The organisation looks like it did 10 years ago.
 - Significant shifts in the way business is delivered to the community requiring a fundamental rethink of existing structures, systems and models.
 - Multidisciplinary teams organised around a common vision.
 - Decision-making may be located closer to the delivery of services.
 - Major paradigm shift in the way the needs of the workplace and community are matched to the workforce.
 - Place-based and human-centred design are common place.
 - Organisations have reinvented themselves to operate as agile networks of teams able to scale up/down and mobilise to meet demand.
 - Decision-making is rapid and delegated.



Flexible and future-focused:

transforming organisations to be more open, networked and horizontal, adept at collaboration inside and outside of government.

Formal and flexible structures can coexist.