

Part 2: Staffing of Agencies

Estimates of Average Staffing Levels of Agencies in the Australian General Government Sector

This Part reports on Average Staffing Levels (ASL) at the portfolio and agency level. Data is presented for two years – the Budget year (2026–27) and the preceding year (2025–26). The ASL reported is updated from the 2025–26 Budget.

Data for 2026–27 reported in Table 2.2 represent ASL estimates provided by general government sector (GGS) agencies. ASL figures reflect the average number of employees receiving salary or wages over the financial year, with adjustments for casual and part time employees to show the full time equivalent. It also includes uniformed employees and overseas personnel. The ASL figures exclude external labour. Any minor discrepancies in totals are due to rounding of partial ASL.

Data for 2025–26 reported in Table 2.2 represent the revised ASL estimate provided by GGS agencies. Caution should be taken when comparing these estimates with estimates from other years (in this Budget or previous budgets). Actual ASL outcomes realised by agencies can differ to estimates previously provided by agencies.

The staffing of agencies in 2025–26 and 2026–27

At the 2026–27 Budget across the GGS (excluding military and reserves):

- The ASL estimate for 2026–27 is 217,256.
- The revised ASL estimate for 2025–26 is 215,941 which is 2,592 above the estimated level (213,349) at the time of the 2025–26 Budget.

Changes in the 2025–26 ASL estimate compared to the 2025–26 Budget largely reflect Government decisions since the 2025–26 Budget, including an additional 1,250 contractor conversions at Services Australia to support frontline service delivery, which represents almost half the increase in ASL. Changes in the 2025–26 ASL estimates also reflect the impact of agencies' internal recruitment strategies and workforce planning decisions where agencies may have temporarily increased or decreased ASL within existing resources.

The 2026–27 ASL estimate reflects the Government's strong focus on reprioritising funding and staffing across the public sector to deliver new priorities. While the 2026–27 Budget includes significant investments to deliver essential services, enhance integrity and reduce fraud in government-funded services, build national resilience and make Australia's economy more competitive and productive, staffing levels remain broadly steady from 2025–26 to 2026–27, with estimated growth of only 1,315 ASL (0.6 per cent) across the GGS.

Measuring the size of the public service

In addition to the ASL estimates published each year in Budget Paper No. 4, the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) also publish estimates of the size of the public service. These data sources are complementary but not directly comparable.

- ASL reported in Budget Paper No. 4 is the annual average of full-time equivalent employees by agency who work in the General Government Sector (GGS). This measure includes ongoing and non-ongoing employees, an adjustment for work hours per person, and those employed outside the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- In the twice-yearly APS Employment Data release, the APSC publishes the headcount of ongoing and non-ongoing employees by agency, not adjusted for work hours per person, employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* as at 30 June and 31 December each year.
- In the annual Public Sector Employment and Earnings release, the ABS publishes the number of ongoing and non-ongoing employees, not adjusted for work hours per person, employed by the Australian Government. This includes Defence personnel and those employed outside the *Public Service Act 1999* who are paid over one month, typically the month of June each year.

Reducing reliance on contractors, consultants and labour hire

Consistent with the Government’s commitment to reduce the Australian Public Service’s reliance on contractors, consultants and labour hire (collectively known as external labour) and the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework’s purpose to strengthen capability by insourcing core work, the Government has agreed to convert around 1,400 roles previously undertaken by external labour to public service roles since the 2025–26 Budget (see Table 2.1). This accounts for more than one third of the increase in ASL between the 2025–26 ASL estimate in the 2025–26 Budget and the ASL estimate for 2026–27.

Since the 2022–23 October Budget, the Government has created over 13,000 public service roles to replace work previously undertaken through outsourced arrangements. This accounts for just under one third of the total increase to public service staffing levels since 2022.

Table 2.1: Estimates of conversions of external labour to additional ASL of agencies in the Australian Government General Government Sector

Portfolio	2026–27 ASL estimates reflecting conversions of external labour ^a	Total conversions of external labour to ASL from the 2022–23 October Budget ^b
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	0	665
Attorney-General's	0	218
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	56	336
Defence	0	1,298
Education	0	30
Employment and Workplace Relations	0	264
Finance	1,329	4,471
Foreign Affairs	0	233
Health and Ageing	0	5,195
Home Affairs	0	79
Industry, Science and Resources	0	74
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts	0	142
Parliamentary Departments	0	0
Prime Minister and Cabinet	7	142
Social Services	0	33
Treasury	0	13
Total	1,392	13,194

a) This data is included in the updated ASL estimates for 2026–27 in Table 2.2 below.

b) This data reflects changes to portfolio structures as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

**Table 2.2 Estimates of ASL of agencies in the Australian Government
General Government Sector**

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	6,561	6,654
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	179	181
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	222	222
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	21	21
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	46	46
Grain Research and Development Corporation	130	130
Regional Investment Corporation	93	107
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (trading as AgriFutures Australia)	86	86
Wine Australia	53	53
Total	7,391	7,500

Attorney-General's		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Attorney-General's Department	1,938	1,795
Administrative Review Tribunal	1,230	1,227
Australian Human Rights Commission	165	154
Australian Law Reform Commission	26	23
Federal Court of Australia	1,517	1,603
High Court of Australia	78	78
National Anti-Corruption Commission	266	266
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	147	153
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	176	175
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman	334	330
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	477	488
Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	60	80
Office of the Special Investigator	120	105
Total	6,533	6,475

Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	4,816	4,438
Australian Energy Regulator ^a	0	534
Australian Institute of Marine Science	436	471
Australian Renewable Energy Agency	74	164
Bureau of Meteorology	1,803	1,803
Clean Energy Finance Corporation	177	190
Clean Energy Regulator	453	534
Climate Change Authority	65	65
Director of National Parks	459	459
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	272	272
Murray–Darling Basin Authority	387	327
National Environmental Protection Agency ^b	0	698
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust	63	63
Total	9,004	10,017

- a) The Australian Energy Regulator will commence as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity on 1 July 2026. Its functions in 2025–26 are delivered within the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in the Treasury portfolio.
- b) The National Environmental Protection Agency will commence as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity on 1 July 2026. Its functions in 2025–26 are delivered within the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Defence		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Defence – Civilian	19,786	20,169
Department of Defence – Military	61,711	63,345
Department of Defence – Reserves	22,475	23,315
Department of Veterans' Affairs	3,528	3,417
Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator ^a	77	92
Australian Submarine Agency	883	1,209
Australian War Memorial	323	353
Defence Housing Australia	631	643
Defence and Veterans' Services Commission ^b	22	48
Total	109,435	112,591

- a) The Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator was established as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity on 1 November 2025.
- b) The Defence and Veterans' Services Commission was established as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity on 29 September 2025.

Education		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Education	1,701	1,638
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority	96	96
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited	69	69
Australian Research Council	140	140
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	109	123
Total	2,115	2,065

Employment and Workplace Relations		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	4,139	4,288
Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency	21	21
Australian Skills Quality Authority (National Vocational Education and Training Regulator)	252	246
Comcare	730	646
Fair Work Commission	417	417
Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman	997	983
Safe Work Australia	112	101
Total	6,668	6,703

Finance		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Finance	1,929	1,956
Australian Electoral Commission	1,039	1,045
Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation	629	629
Digital Transformation Agency	277	273
Future Fund Management Agency	349	362
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority	65	70
Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	67	72
Services Australia ^a	30,887	30,212
Total	35,243	34,619

a) Services Australia transferred from the Social Services portfolio as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

Foreign Affairs and Trade		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	7,010	6,990
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	90	90
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	1,166	1,138
Tourism Australia	207	207
Total	8,473	8,425

Health, Disability and Ageing		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing ^a	7,073	6,883
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	1,881	1,927
Australian Centre for Disease Control ^b	126	269
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	153	158
Australian Digital Health Agency	524	652
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	650	649
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	178	178
Cancer Australia	75	75
Food Standards Australia New Zealand	121	121
Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority	1	1
National Blood Authority	75	75
National Disability Insurance Agency ^c	10,509	9,840
National Health Funding Body	28	37
National Health and Medical Research Council	205	205
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission ^c	892	1,083
Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care	22	22
Organ and Tissue Authority	30	30
Professional Services Review	40	40
Total	22,582	22,245

- a) This portfolio was known as the Health and Aged Care portfolio prior to the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.
- b) The Australian Centre for Disease Control was established as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity on 1 January 2026.
- c) The National Disability Insurance Agency and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission transferred from the Social Services portfolio as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

Home Affairs		
	2025–26	2026–27
	ASL	ASL
Department of Home Affairs	15,745	15,519
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission ^a	883	886
Australian Federal Police ^a	8,094	8,195
Australian Institute of Criminology ^a	32	38
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre ^a	799	799
National Emergency Management Agency	411	425
Total	25,964	25,861

a) The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, Australian Federal Police, Australian Institute of Criminology and Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre transferred from the Attorney-General's portfolio as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

Industry, Science and Resources		
	2025–26	2026–27
	ASL	ASL
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	3,344	3,296
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation	1,479	1,479
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	5,300	5,100
Geoscience Australia	757	764
IP Australia	1,100	1,105
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	195	192
National Reconstruction Fund Corporation	119	134
Net Zero Economy Authority ^a	1	158
Total	12,295	12,228

a) The Net Zero Economy Authority transferred from the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts		
	2025–26	2026–27
	ASL	ASL
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts ^a	2,172	2,264
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	4,413	4,454
Australian Communications and Media Authority	704	731
Australian Film, Television and Radio School	160	160
Australian Maritime Safety Authority	492	491
Australian National Maritime Museum	141	141
Australian Sports Commission ^b	545	529
Australian Sports Foundation Limited ^b	30	23
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	110	110
Bundanon Trust	50	50
Civil Aviation Safety Authority	832	832
Creative Australia	159	163
High Speed Rail Authority	33	56
Infrastructure Australia	41	41
National Archives of Australia	361	346
National Capital Authority	68	68
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia	256	226
National Gallery of Australia	217	217
National Library of Australia	410	410
National Museum of Australia	257	216
National Portrait Gallery of Australia	55	55
National Transport Commission	44	44
Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility	1	1
Old Parliament House	124	105
Screen Australia	105	105
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation	1,369	1,363
Sport Integrity Australia ^b	178	178
Total	13,327	13,379

a) This portfolio was known as the Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts portfolio prior to the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

b) The Australian Sports Commission, Australian Sports Foundation Limited and Sport Integrity Australia transferred from the Health and Aged Care portfolio as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

Parliamentary Departments		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Parliamentary Services	1,085	1,025
Department of the House of Representatives	167	182
Department of the Senate	179	175
Parliamentary Budget Office	44	44
Total	1,475	1,426

Prime Minister and Cabinet		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	1,222	1,154
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	396	400
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	168	179
Australian National Audit Office	435	421
Australian Public Service Commission	385	339
Indigenous Business Australia	244	261
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation	167	167
National Australia Day Council Limited	14	14
National Indigenous Australians Agency	1,424	1,434
Northern Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation	37	37
Office of National Intelligence	413	438
Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General	105	106
Outback Stores Pty Ltd	183	183
Torres Strait Regional Authority	169	165
Workplace Gender Equality Agency	58	52
Total	5,420	5,348

Social Services		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of Social Services	2,529	2,363
Australian Institute of Family Studies	98	90
Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission	22	22
National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People	14	24
Total	2,663	2,499

Treasury		
	2025–26 ASL	2026–27 ASL
Department of the Treasury	1,676	1,648
Australian Bureau of Statistics	3,482	3,409
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission ^a	1,765	1,468
Australian Financial Security Authority ^b	455	430
Australian Office of Financial Management	51	51
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority	907	900
Australian Securities and Investments Commission	2,491	2,431
Australian Taxation Office	19,938	21,410
Commonwealth Grants Commission	34	34
Housing Australia	211	216
Inspector-General of Taxation	35	35
National Competition Council	1	9
Office of the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board	12	13
Office of the Australian Accounting Standards Board	32	33
Productivity Commission	170	170
Royal Australian Mint	278	280
Total	31,538	32,536

- a) The decrease in ASL reflects the Australian Energy Regulator commencing as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity in the Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water portfolio on 1 July 2026.
- b) The Australian Financial Security Authority transferred from the Attorney-General's portfolio as part of the 13 May 2025 Machinery of Government changes.

Note: The ASL for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and Australian Signals Directorate have not previously been included in ASL collections for national security reasons, and therefore are not included in the tables.

Historical Estimates of Average Staffing Levels of Agencies in the Australian General Government Sector

Table 2.3: Estimates^(a) of the total ASL in the General Government Sector

	ASL excluding military and reserves	Military and reserves	Total ASL
2006–07	167,596	71,026	238,622
2007–08	175,531	72,686	248,217
2008–09	175,422	75,144	250,566
2009–10	178,970	79,351	258,321
2010–11	181,018	80,873	261,891
2011–12	182,505	79,132	261,637
2012–13	179,953	76,678	256,631
2013–14	177,258	76,595	253,853
2014–15	166,261	76,874	243,135
2015–16	165,648	77,399	243,047
2016–17	166,181	78,314	244,495
2017–18	165,276	78,497	243,773
2018–19	165,491	78,815	244,306
2019–20	166,762	80,540	247,302
2020–21	168,912	81,671	250,583
2021–22	171,938	81,074	253,012
2022–23	181,062	79,903	260,965
2023–24	197,108	79,632	276,740
2024–25	209,913	80,390	290,303
2025–26	215,941	84,186	300,127
2026–27	217,256	86,660	303,916

a) To provide continuity with previous years, estimates are the latest revised ASL estimates published in the following Budget year, except for 2026–27 which is the ASL estimate.