



Corporate plan 2024–28

Helping shape the future of Australia

Acknowledgement of country

The Productivity Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.

The Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed most simply, is to help governments make better policies, in the long term interest of the Australian community.

The Commission's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Further information on the Productivity Commission can be obtained from the Commission's website (www.pc.gov.au).

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Publication enquiries:

Phone 03 9653 2244 | Email publications@pc.gov.au

Statement of preparation

I, Danielle Wood, Chair of the Productivity Commission, as the accountable authority, present the Productivity Commission *Corporate Plan 2024*–28 (the Corporate Plan), as required under paragraph 35 (1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth) (PGPA Act).

The Corporate Plan has been prepared in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (Cth) (PGPA Rule). It provides strategic direction to guide our activities from 1 July 2024 through to 30 June 2028.

The Corporate Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis in line with our legislative obligations.

The Corporate Plan was provided to the Treasurer and Finance Minister on 30 August 2024.

In this document, we refer to the Productivity Commission as the PC.

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Message from the Chair

It is my pleasure to present our Corporate plan 2024-28.

The Productivity Commission provides independent, evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing our nation. Our research spans a broad range of policy areas: from policies to support growth to managing the net zero transition, to sustainably managing our water resources, to improving our health and education systems. I am very proud of the work that we do.



As inflation continues to erode real living standards, our work to improve Australia's productivity performance is even more vital. Our *Advancing Prosperity* report, released last year, continues to set the course for productivity-enhancing reform. We're building on this research through regular unpacking of productivity trends, more detailed work on potential game changers like AI, as well as through detailed analysis of sectors such as construction.

Improving wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is another area of focus. Our *Review of the Closing the Gap Agreement*, released earlier this year, is important for anyone seeking to understand our mixed results when it comes to meeting the Closing the Gap targets. And while there are some bright spots, our annual data reporting shows that most targets are not on track to be met. We will continue to help governments make the transformations required to enable self-determination among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In 2024-25, and the forward years, the PC will continue to examine a variety of issues through its public inquiry and commissioned work. Commissioned projects underway include assessing the impacts of competition reforms under a revitalised National Competition Policy and looking at priorities for government in the circular economy.

The *Report on Government Services* – for which the PC provides the Secretariat – produces national, consistent data on how governments are performing in delivering a range of critical services. And our competitive neutrality compliance investigation function helps ensure public entities don't gain an unfair market advantage due to government ownership.

We are also navigating a period of renewal and change. The Statement of Expectations, provided to us from the Treasurer, the Hon Jim Chalmers, is the first of its kind for our organisation. Our response, the Statement of Intent, sets ambitious goals for our work.

We have committed to enhancing our skills base, data capabilities and analytical frameworks to use the right tools for the research problem at hand. We are improving our communication and external engagement. We have recently expanded our editorial functions and have set high targets for media engagement and public events. We are also undertaking a website redesign to make it easier for our stakeholders to find PC work.

Importantly, we are strengthening the ways we work together.

We have restructured the PC to build expertise in key policy areas. The new workstreams, detailed below, will help our organisation build deeper relationships with stakeholders and allow us to engage on research long after our reports are complete.

We've also put enormous effort into cultural renewal. Our staff have helped develop our five PC values that inform how we work and interact.

Our organisation is set for a busy time over the next four years, but we are well up to the task. I have no doubt we will develop rigorous, relevant, timely and practical advice to steer governments through the many complex policy challenges on the horizon.

Danielle Wood Chair

About us

Vision

Our independent research and advice helps government make informed policy decisions that benefit all Australians.

What we do

The PC is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians.

Our work includes:

- holding public inquiries and delivering reports in response to referrals by the Australian Government
- · undertaking research on a range of economic, social and environmental issues impacting Australians
- reporting annually on productivity, economic performance, industry assistance and regulation through our Productivity Bulletin and Trade and Assistance Review (TAR)
- providing independent, ongoing reporting for governments including the:
 - Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report and dashboard, and
 - Report on Government Services (RoGS)
- · undertaking reviews of different government agreements and plans including the:
 - National Agreement on Closing the Gap and
 - Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- · investigating and reporting on competitive neutrality arrangements and complaints
- promoting public understanding of economic, social and environmental issues impacting Australians.

This work is underpinned by the in-house enabling services of strategic communications and engagement, digital technology, human resources, finance, and administrative support.

How we work



We are evidence based

Our findings and recommendations are supported by evidence-based research and analysis and input from our consultation and engagement activities.



We operate independently

The PC operates under the powers, protection and guidance of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998* (Cth). Our independence is formally exercised through the Chair and Commissioners, who are appointed by the Governor-General for fixed periods.

We have our own budget allocation and staff, which allows us to operate at arm's length from government. While our work is often initiated by government, our findings and recommendations are always based on our own analysis and judgments.



Our processes are transparent

Our inquiry reports and research studies are open to public scrutiny. We publish all working papers and models that have contributed to our conclusions. We run public hearings and use roundtables and seminars to seek input from stakeholders and community members.

The PC is committed to building and supporting a positive, safe and productive work culture for all. Our people possess a diverse range of skills and experience and come from a range of different backgrounds. What unites us is our shared commitment to better public policy.

Our PC values are the guiding principles for how we work and make decisions.

Together with the APS values, our values also provide the foundations we need to adapt and grow so that we meet the needs and expectations of each other, our stakeholders and the Australian community.

PC values



Our legislation and governance

The PC is an independent non-corporate Commonwealth entity established under the PC Act and PGPA Act.

The PC Act establishes the functions, powers, structure and operations of the PC that are overseen by the Chair, Deputy Chair and Commissioners, who are appointed by the Governor-General. The PC Act also instructs the PC to have regard to:

- · improving productivity and overall economic performance in Australia
- · reducing unnecessary regulation
- · encouraging efficient, innovative and internationally competitive Australian industries
- · facilitating structural changes in the economy in a way that avoids economic and social hardship
- · recognising the diverse views and interests of the Australian communities likely to be impacted by our work
- · increasing employment, including in regional areas
- · promoting regional development
- · recognising the progress made by other countries to reduce barriers to trade with Australia
- · making sure Australian industry develops in ecologically sustainable ways
- making sure Australia meets its international obligations and commitments.

The Chair is the Accountable Authority for the PC.

Our operating environment

As the pre-eminent independent research and policy advisory body to the Australian Government, we continually review, assess and consider a wide range of factors, forces, trends and views across all aspects of our work.

This section provides a summary of the internal and external factors we have considered when determining our strategic priorities and workplan.

Australian Government sets new expectations for the PC

In November 2023, the Australian Government delivered its first <u>Statement of Expectations</u> to the PC, which detailed a range of reform directions it expects the PC to consider in the course of its work (box 1). These directions build on and complement what is stated in the PC Act.

In response to the Statement of Expectations, we have outlined how we will deliver on these expectations in our <u>Statement of Intent</u> and <u>Portfolio Budget Statement</u>, and also in this Corporate Plan.

Box 1 - Overview of reform directions in the Statement of Expectations

The PC should take account of the Australian Government's productivity agenda and the practical implications of its recommendations in relation to:

- Creating a more dynamic, competitive, and resilient economy
- · Building a skilled and adaptable workforce
- · Harnessing data and digital technologies
- · Delivering quality care more efficiently
- Getting to net zero and becoming a renewable energy superpower

The PC should modernise and improve communications and engagement by:

- Strengthening engagement with federal, state and territory governments, departments and agencies
- · Improving our stakeholder and community engagement across the different stages of the research process
- Making sure our communications and engagement are accessible and inclusive to diverse audiences
- Producing shorter, more timely reports on priority topics

The PC should modernise and update its analytical and research methods, and use more diverse data sources by:

- · Identifying new priority data assets, modelling capabilities and information management practices
- · Ensuring its analysis and advice is well-informed by stakeholder and community engagement

The PC should invest in organisational culture and capability including:

- · Recruiting people with diverse skills and expertise
- · Increasing leadership capabilities
- · Implementing all the recommendations of the Independent Review of Workplace Culture of the PC

The PC should invest in organisational governance, transparency and financial management including:

 Introducing a Commissioner Code of Conduct that includes expectations around how conflicts of interest will be managed

Box 1 - Overview of reform directions in the Statement of Expectations

- Promoting and upholding the APS Values
- Ensuring compliance with the whole-government performance management framework
- Integrating performance measures into the Corporate Plan and reporting on them in the Annual Report
- · Improving governance, transparency and financial management capability

Independent performance reporting more important than ever

In an age of increasing misinformation, disinformation and 'fake news', having access to reliable, independent data, analysis and reporting from a trusted public institution is more important than ever.

For 50 years we have built a reputation for delivering robust, high quality independent reporting that helps policy makers make informed decisions that will secure a more prosperous future for all Australians.

Our independent and systematic approach to reporting supports transparency, openness and rigour in government and government decision making. Our work continues to generate high levels of interest internationally, with more than 20 meetings held with international organisations and governments in 2023-24.

This year saw the release of the 50th annual TAR, which provides data, analysis and reporting around trade and industry policy settings as well as government assistance to industry. While quotas and tariffs at-the-border are largely a thing of the past, governments – including Australia – are providing more assistance to industry behind-the-border. Irrespective of the direction of future policy, it is important that governments maintain a continuing commitment to open and transparent data and reporting. Sunlight is the best disinfectant, and Australia is a world leader in tracking government assistance to industry.

Similarly, for nearly 30 years, we have delivered reliable and robust performance reporting on government service delivery to Australians in our role as Review of Government Service Provision (RGSP) Secretariat. The RoGS provides important information on:

- · access to services (equity of access and timeliness)
- service quality and safety and
- · costs to governments and individuals.

RoGS indicators are focussed on what is needed to understand performance, rather than data availability. If there isn't data available, we keep the indicators in the report and work with governments to address these gaps.

At a time when productivity growth is sluggish and unstable, a focus on delivering quality outcomes that represent value for money across the public sector is critical. The availability of this information is particularly vital in sectors where governments are the primary or sole providers and where service users may experience vulnerability.

Last year, National Cabinet instructed the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) to review the RoGS and the <u>Performance Reporting Dashboard</u> produced by the PC. Our <u>submission to the Review</u> details our world-leading approach to performance measurement of government services and the opportunities that exist to:

- improve the accessibility, timeliness and use of the report
- improve governance, particularly relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation
- reduce administrative burdens while maximising accountability and transparency.

Similarly, we have brought much needed transparency to the work of governments in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the:

- · Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report and
- first <u>Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap</u>.

But there is still more work to be done. While data never gives us the full story, extensive data gaps are preventing a full assessment of progress made against Closing the Gap targets. Giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the resources and authority to generate and control their own data in line with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles will be a vital part of addressing these gaps.

Investing in our organisational culture and capability

The capability and commitment of our people – and the culture and environment in which they work – are two key ingredients for delivering on our vision and purpose.

Following the release of the <u>Intersection Review report</u> in October last year, we have invested heavily in building a safe, inclusive and culturally safe work culture for all. We are on-track to implement all 23 recommendations and will report on our progress in October 2024.

Some of our recent achievements in building culture and capability include:

- developing a new Project Management Framework that supports greater role clarity, manageable workloads and the efficient and effective delivery of our work
- establishing an external complaint handling service for staff to report inappropriate workplace behaviour, supplementing our existing internal reporting mechanisms
- · co-creating new organisational values for the PC with staff
- · delivering an updated Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and
- · delivering a Commissioners' Charter.

Our strategy

This section details how we will deliver on our vision and purpose over the next 12 months and achieve the key performance indicators listed in the Portfolio Budget Statement.

A summary of our performance framework is illustrated below.

Our purpose	Well-informed policy decision making and public understanding relating to Australia's productivity and living standards							
What we do	Inquiries Government commissioned public inquiries		Research Government commissioned and Commission-initiated research		P	Performance reporting and analysis		
How we do it	Transparency	_	Robust nalysis	Community-w perspective		Best practice communication activity		
Our performance criteria	Impact • Valuable source of robust evidence-based analysis to inform public policy in Australia • Generating effective public debate • Recognition that our approach to evidence-based policy analysis is worthy of consideration by other governments Delivery • Engaging effectively with the community • Open and transparent processes • Timely reporting • Accessible and coordinated communications							
Our core capabilities	High calibre staff Systems and support engage effectively							

Where necessary, we will adapt and change our strategy and workplans in response to new and emerging priorities and challenges impacting Australia.

Our aspirations

- · We are a trusted, credible and authoritative leader in economic and public policy discussions in Australia.
- We deliver timely, rigorous and impactful research, analysis and advice that drives positive change.
- Our work is shaped and informed by diverse government, stakeholder and community views and perspectives.
- We are a high performing, safe and inclusive organisation.

Our focus areas

We will respond to government requests for commissioned work as and when requested, and to help maintain capability for that have identified a number of focus areas for the Commission's work.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and reporting

- We will make sure our work is guided by our responsibilities under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the priorities and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- We will seek to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all stages of the research process.
- We will continue to develop and update the Closing the Gap dashboard in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- We will continue to deliver the *Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report*, which provides a point in time snapshot of progress towards the outcomes committed to under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- We will undertake the next three-yearly Review of governments' progress towards implementing their commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Climate change and energy

We will undertake research and provide policy insights and advice on climate change and energy. This will
include looking at ways to make sure Australians have access to secure, reliable and affordable electricity
as we transition to net zero. We will also look at ways to improve the way the economy and community
responds and adapts to climate change.

Environment and water

- We will examine the flow of materials and allocation of resources within the circular economy and provide actionable, useful policy advice for all levels of governments.
- We will continue to engage with governments, communities, industries, scientists and academics to broaden our impact in areas where environmental concerns and the economy interact.
- We will continue to deliver our responsibilities under the Water Act 2007 (Cth) including our Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the National Water Initiative assessments.

Health and ageing

- We will undertake research and provide policy insights on how to ease system pressures without sacrificing quality of care.
- We will explore how financial mechanisms can be used to drive better value healthcare and examine patterns of hospital service use across public and private patients.

Productivity

- We will continue to build on the findings and recommendations of our Advancing Prosperity report.
- We will explore the issues affecting productivity in the construction sector and services industries more broadly.
- We will continue to unpack productivity statistics and examine trends and developments in our quarterly *Productivity Bulletin*.

Report on Government Services

• We will continue to provide information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services through the release of the RoGS.

Trade and industry

- We will continue to deliver the annual TAR report ensuring high levels of transparency around industry
 assistance and protection, and providing intelligence about trade policies around the world as they affect
 Australian industries.
- We will continue to research new and emerging issues in industry and trade policy including the National Interest Framework (NIF) which supports the Future Made in Australia (FMIA) policy agenda.

Competitive neutrality

• We will continue to operate the Australian Government Competitive Neutrality Complaints Office (AGCNCO) and meet our legislative obligations in relation to competitive neutrality.

Corporate

• We continue to provide in-house support to the PC with the provision of Digital Technology, Finance and Human Resource expertise.

Strategic communications and engagement

 We will continue to provide in-house support to the PC with the provision of strategic communications and engagement expertise.

How we will deliver

We will lead public conversations on economic and public policy issues impacting Australians

- · We will proactively attend and speak about our work at a wide range of events and conferences.
- We will deliver a new website that meets the diverse information needs and expectations of our stakeholders and the broader community.
- We will deliver high quality public events on a range of economic and public policy issues.
- · We will build our capability to communicate plainly so that our work is easy to read and understand.

We will build deep subject matter expertise and stakeholder relationships in our focus areas

- We will continue to make use of secondments and short-term transfers to broaden and deepen our knowledge and capability, increase workforce diversity and support a greater focus on implementation.
- We will continue to provide a broad range of professional development opportunities to our staff including coaching and mentoring, formal courses and training, support to attend or present at professional conferences and events, as well as study leave and assistance.
- We will explore new and innovative approaches to stakeholder and community engagement.
- We will measure stakeholder sentiment and satisfaction through an Annual Stakeholder Survey and report on it each year in our Annual Report.

We will use a range of frameworks, methodologies and approaches in our work

- We will strengthen our data analytics and modelling capabilities through the development and implementation of a Data Strategy.
- We will continue to explore the use of different datasets including building our use of linked administrative data particularly the Person Level Integrated Data Asset.
- We will develop how we use qualitative data and evidence to address limitations in quantitative research, fill gaps in quantitative evidence and discover unexpected blind spots.
- We will continue to develop our use of Indigenous research methods along with other qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure our analysis and policy advice reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views and experiences in a respectful and culturally safe way.
- We will work to adopt and embed Indigenous data governance and sovereignty principles and practices when collecting, managing, analysing and storing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data.
- We will continue to improve our approach to project and change management to support the timely delivery and public release of advice and reports.

We will seek out and listen to diverse views and perspectives to inform our work

- We will invest in digital tools and technology that will make it easier for stakeholders and community members to engage with our work.
- We will build our cultural capability in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the implementation of new guidance, resources and peer-led training.
- We will share what we have heard from stakeholders and community members and how their views have informed our work in our reports.

We will attract and retain a talented and skilled workforce

- We will continue to build a positive, safe and inclusive work culture that ensures we are an employer-ofchoice for talent and skilled people from a range of backgrounds and disciplines.
- We will develop and implement a five-year Workforce Strategy that is aligned to the strategic aims of the PC and supports the strategic considerations required to build and safeguard the workforce of the future.
- We will review our internal performance frameworks, embedding a culture of transparency and accountability for all staff including our senior leaders.

Our performance

Our key performance outcome, outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statement, is to deliver well-informed policy decision-making and public understanding on matters relating to Australia's productivity and living standards, based on independent and transparent analysis from a community-wide perspective. However, we have also developed a wide ranging and ambitious set of performance indicators to track whether we are aligning with our broader performance aspirations.

Performance measures	Key performance indicators
Providing a valuable source of robust evidence-based analysis	80% of respondents in the Annual Stakeholder Surveys consider the PC's work high quality >6 reports Inquiry or commissioned study draft or final reports released >10 papers released, including research papers, productivity bulletins, Trade and Assistance Review reports and other ongoing products 100% of commissioned work completed on time 100% of ongoing products delivered on time and to agreed scope 180,000 report downloads >150 academic citations per year >10 per year international engagements Modelling results and methodology are made available for 100% publicly released reports 100% of released chart and table data made available in a usable and accessible format (excel or CSV files)
Generating effective public debate	>8,000 media mentions per year >20 Op-eds released per year >22,000 social media followers >150 speeches and panels per year, by Commissioners and Senior Executive Service (SES) >155 parliamentary mentions per year Participation in >5 parliamentary hearings per year
Engaging effectively with the government and community	>80% respondents in Annual Stakeholder Survey find PC reports easy to read and engaging Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) level AA compliance standards met >2,000,000 website page views >500 submissions received per year >1,000 meetings per year held with the community, by Commissioners and SES >50 meetings per year with government on policy issues, by Commissioners and SES Australian Government is offered briefings at the completion of all commissioned inquiries and reviews 100% of inquiries/commissioned studies consider preparation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement plan >90% of people are satisfied with their experience in engaging with the Commission >10 public events held per year

Risk governance

Our approach to risk management is to embed an understanding of risk, controls and mitigations in every aspect of the organisation from business planning, reporting, decision making and operations.

Consistent with our practice of identifying, escalating and mitigating key risks, we have identified four enterprise risks that have the potential to adversely impact our performance, and plans to manage these risks:

- 1. Our reputation for high quality, independent and influential work (rigorous and transparent analysis) with the opportunity to contribute to public debate and policy is not maintained.
- 2. We are unable to demonstrate our commitment to Priority Reform 3 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- 3. We are unable to attract and recruit high quality staff and develop, retain and reinvigorate staff and leadership.
- 4. Our critical business systems fail, including cybersecurity breaches, data loss, compliance, violations, ICT system failures, third-party risks and insider threats.

All staff have a responsibility to be risk aware. The Chair is assisted by the Head of Office, the First Assistant Commissioners, and the Assistant Commissioner, Corporate to support a culture of risk management. This includes:

- · regular communication to staff about risk
- · promoting the benefits of risk management and
- · risk management training.

Risk management is also supported by other plans and policies, in addition, and in accordance with the PGPA Act and Rules, we have an Audit and Risk Committee which:

- provides independent advice and assurance to the Accountable Authority, the Chair, on the PC's financial and performance reporting responsibilities, risk oversight and management, and system of internal control
- is assisted by the entity's contracted internal auditors who deliver an internal audit program in line with the Audit and Risk Committee's guidance and subject to approval by the Head of Office or delegate.

We periodically report to the Audit and Risk Committee and meet with them quarterly to review our Enterprise Risk Management Plan and ensure the risks we are monitoring are managed effectively.

Appendix

Table – Portfolio Budget Statement four-year estimates (\$m) in 2023-24 and 2024-25

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28
2023-24	37,023	37,817	38,329	38,853	N/A
2024-25	37,023	37,788	38,260	38,826	39,103