



Australian Government



Australian Government  
**Legal Service**

*The professional network for Australian Government lawyers*

## Statement of expectations of Australian Government lawyers

### What is this statement for?

This is a statement of expectations of all Australian Government lawyers.

This statement is intended to guide and support us in performing our roles as government lawyers, and to complement the General Counsel Charter.

### Obligations of government lawyers

Our obligations as government lawyers arise from different sources, which include:

- The ethical standards and conduct rules for admission to the legal profession, and registration, in each State and Territory
- The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- The *Judiciary Act 1903* and the *Legal Services Directions 2017*
- The rules, policies and procedures governing each of our agencies.

For those of us who are public servants, we have additional responsibilities under the APS Values and Code of Conduct in the *Public Service Act 1999*.

### Our expectations of ourselves

As government lawyers, we do the following:

- We conduct ourselves with integrity, objectivity and independence
- We discharge our role as government lawyers in a manner consistent with the law and the public interest, and we support the Attorney-General as First Law Officer to uphold the rule of law
- Recognising that generally our client is the Commonwealth, when we provide our advice to, or identify and manage legal risk for, our agency we do so with a whole-of-government focus
- We understand that our role requires us to balance managing legal risk with assisting our agency to achieve the government's objectives
- Because we are part of one Australian Government Legal Service, we collaborate and consult with each other to provide high quality work
- We drive and foster innovation in delivering our services
- We are committed to our own wellbeing, and continuous learning and professional development, and that of our colleagues
- We recognise that sometimes government lawyers have competing obligations (such as when working for corporate Commonwealth entities). However, as much as possible, we work together with a whole-of-government focus.

**Review**

The AGLS Board will review this statement at least every two years.

The statement may be amended by resolution of the AGLS Board if it is endorsed by the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department.

**Effective date**

The statement was approved by the Secretary on 13 December 2021.