

ACT Small Agencies HR Forum Chair Report AGM 2025

Overview

I have had the privilege of leading the SAF Management Committee (SAF MC) during a time of major transition for the Small Agency HR Forum (SAF). Today, I complete my final job as Chair of the SAF MC, delivering the 2025 SAF MC Chair report. I have enjoyed my time on the SAF MC, and I am excited to pass the torch to a new committee; I know they will bring new ideas and enthusiasm to their roles.

Over the past year, SAF has taken steps to modernise by:

- transitioned to primarily online courses and events
- worked to bring hybrid events to the SAF cohort where possible
- been working diligently behind the scenes to improve systems and processes to build a SAF that meets the needs of current and future members
- reviewed and updated the SAF Constitution.

Following the SAF Member Survey in 2024, the results were presented to the SAF cohort in August 2024. This became the SAF strategic review, the outcomes of which were collated into 26 recommendations. The themes of the recommendations were: administrative, website function and design, content, membership, and costing feasibility. The outgoing SAF MC has implemented 12 recommendations, with a further 9 relating to future website functionality. The remaining tasks will be reviewed by the incoming committee to determine whether they are still beneficial to our members.

Below is an overview of the activities and undertakings of SAF during the 2024-2025 year.

Forum Topics

Date/Style	Topic
September 2024	Live Panel Discussion on Flexible Work Arrangements Pui-Chi Cheung, Harrison Miller & Natasha George from APSC Michael Silva from Commonwealth Grants Commission
October 2024	APSC APS Induction Jarad Wilkins WR Inter-Agency WR forum Kirsty Morris
November 2024	APS Academy - Establishing a pro-integrity culture in organisations Jarad Wilkins, APSC Performance Management research Shannan Quain, Australian Digital Health Agency Improving Culture Emma Kavanagh, Australian Transport Safety Bureau
December 2024	How the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Workers is equally crucial for long-term success Dr Eleanor De Ath-Miller, Transitioning Well Christmas Quiz Natasha Williamson, SAF MC Chair

February 2025	<p>APS Learn Bank Krystal Kinnish, APSC</p> <p>SES welcome session SES team, APSC</p> <p>AHRI capability framework Anna Calder and Nicole Lisle, AHRI</p>
March 2025	<p>Before Blue Mental Health and Research Team, Comcare Marion Chua & Tara Woodfull, Beyond Blue</p> <p>Performance Research Management Update Shannan Quain, Australian Digital Health Agency</p> <p>Campuses Pilot Policy Initiative Meredith Padgett, APSC</p>
April 2025	<p>Neurodiversity and the Small Agency Workforce Callie Elward-Barrett, Executive Functioning Leadership Andrew Crane, Comcare</p>
May 2025	<p>The Work Integrity Unit Galina Druc & Natasha Banfield, APSC</p> <p>Superannuation Legislation Update Timothy Hart, Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation</p>
June 2025	<p>Leadership Training Danette Fenton Menzies, Magical Learning</p>
July 2025	<p>HR Professional Stream & AI in the APS Jacqui Curtis</p> <p>Building a Speak Up Culture (psychological safety in the APS) Capability and Workforce Committee Taskforce, APSC</p>
August 2025	<p>Fair Work Act and non-ongoing employment Bede Gahan, Norton Rose Fullbright</p> <p>Burnout, Managing Staff and Competing Priorities Professor Antonio Dio</p>
September 2025	<p>Building Manager Capability in Good Work Design, WHS and RTW Lynn Gunning & Andrew Crane, Comcare</p> <p>APS Heads of Small Agencies Forum and the COO Resource Hub Nina Gallop, APSC</p>

Committee Member Information

Managing an entity as unique as SAF work, in the current HR climate, could not be done without the involvement of a dedicated group of Committee members. Our Committee work to identify topics and presenters to ensure we offer a thoughtful and valuable program of events. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have been involved with the Committee in the past year.

The 2024/2025 committee are Natasha Williamson – Chair, Michael Silva – Treasurer, Andrew Crane, Cheryl Ingold, Stacey Crisp, Nanette Windeyer, Fei Choi and Kerry Cox. I thank these members for their involvement in the SAF committee on behalf of our members.

The most valuable contribution an agency can make to SAF is investing in the SAF Management committee; many hands make light work.

Membership Information

SAF membership levels are stable, at 87 agencies.

Agencies that are not renewing SAF membership this year gave the following feedback:

- Machinery of Government arrangements (no longer separate entities)
- Administrative purposes (agency-wide membership review/limitations)
- No reason provided

Audit

SAF continues to be a sound organisation. We will follow with the Treasurer's report.

Venue & Meetings

As a result of the feedback from the 2024 SAF Member Survey, online meetings have been increased to support accessibility and member attendance. Where possible, we have facilitated hybrid SAF meetings.

Face to face events continue to be held quarterly and have transitioned from our former primary location, Eastlake Football Club in Griffith, to the training rooms at Comcare. It is noted and appreciated that SAF Management Committee member, Andrew Crane, has supported and facilitated this arrangement on behalf of Comcare. The SAF Coordinator and Management Committee have received positive feedback on both our locations.

How can you help?

The commitment to keep SAF running rests with all members, both agencies and individuals. While there are the more visible pathways, such as committee membership or suggesting topics for discussion, there are various, largely unseen, actions and projects that the management committee are working through:

- Upgrade of SAF IT equipment
- Upgrade of SAF website/infrastructure
- Contracted IT services, including backups, technical support and security updates
- Member email sanitation project
- Strategic review planning and implementation
- Supporting members through networking

To ensure we can maintain the diverse range of forums and events that our community values, the SAF Management Committee would be very pleased to welcome anyone interested in joining the Committee or contributing to ad hoc SAF projects.

Please continue to let us know topics that might be of interest or relevant to your agencies, how we can help meet your needs and about topics/activities you want to see SAF undertaking.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the speakers and presenters who have made themselves available to present at SAF forums. An even bigger thank you to all our members who have provided feedback, volunteered, attend events and contributed to the conversations about issues and have shared their experiences.

Thank you to all those who have been involved in the committee and for all the wonderful ideas and suggestions. Thank you to our dedicated SAF Coordinator, Cassandra, for her enthusiasm and support. Without her hard work with the committee, SAF could not function as well as it does.

I am sad to be leaving the SAF Management Committee today, but I am excited to see where our new committee take SAF and to share the experience as a keen member.

Thank you.

Natasha Williamson
Chair
21 September 2025