



Australian Government

2026 Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Conference and Awards for Excellence

In Person – Southern Cross Club, 92-96 Corinna Street Woden, Canberra
9:00am to 5:00pm AEST, Tuesday 1 September 2026



Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners

The Department of Finance acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land in which we live and work, and we acknowledge their continuing connection to Country, waters and community.

We pay our respects to all Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

About the Conference

The Department of Finance is hosting the second biennial Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Conference and Awards for Excellence on 1 September 2026 in Canberra. This flagship event brings together procurement and contract management officials from across the Australian Public Service (APS), alongside private sector leaders and experts from Australia's state and territory governments.

Through expert panels and presentations, the Conference provides a valuable opportunity to connect with peers, hear from specialists, share better practice and explore practical ways to deliver stronger outcomes for government and the Australian community.

This year's Conference features an opening, plenary session on integrity and innovation followed by concurrent sessions on contract management and market engagement. These themes reflect areas of key importance and rapid change.

About the Awards for Excellence

The Conference concludes with the Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Awards for Excellence, celebrating outstanding achievements across the APS. Since its inception in 2019, the Awards for Excellence have continued to grow in prominence, providing a platform to showcase strategic approaches to Commonwealth procurement and contract management and raising the profile of procurement and contract management across the APS and beyond.

This year's Award categories are:

APS Leader in Procurement and/or Contract Management

This category recognises individuals who are making a positive and influential impact on raising the profile and driving procurement and/or contract management best practice within their entity.

Collaboration and Engagement with Industry

This category acknowledges entities that have demonstrated excellence in market research and collaborating with industry to inform key elements of a procurement, and/or the design of a procurement activity to achieve greater value for money outcomes.

Contract Management Capability

This category recognises teams that have demonstrated excellence in strengthening contract management capability across their entity to assist officials to consistently deliver value for money, build effective working relationships with suppliers and deliver outcomes when managing contracts.

Keynote address

We are pleased to welcome Senator the Hon. Katy Gallagher, Minister for Finance, Minister for Women, Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Government Services, to open the 2026 Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Conference.



Welcome to Country

The Department of Finance is grateful that Ngunnawal Elder Aunty Serena Williams will deliver a Welcome to Country at the opening of the Conference.



Agenda

Item	Time	Topic	Lead
8.30 am Arrival and registration			
1	9:00 am	Conference opens and Welcome to Country Join us for welcoming remarks and a Welcome to Country, setting the scene for a day of learning, connection and collaboration across the APS procurement and contract management profession.	Mr Andrew Danks First Assistant Secretary Department of Finance Aunty Serena Williams First Nations Elder
2	9:15 am	Opening address Hear the Finance Minister's perspectives on the broader government context and priorities shaping procurement, contract management and the APS.	Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher Minister for Finance, Minister for Women, Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Government Services
3	9:30 am	Integrity Insights Hear insights from the National Anti-Corruption Commission and Australian National Audit Office on corrupt conduct, emerging procurement and contract management vulnerabilities, recent case studies and audit findings. Explore practical prevention, oversight and assurance measures, common pitfalls and better practice, and how leadership, professional judgement and accountability can strengthen capability in complex, high-value and high-risk environments. Format: Presentations followed by a fireside chat	Ms Carla Jago Deputy Auditor-General Australian National Audit Office Ms Kylie Kilgour A/g Commissioner National Anti-Corruption Commission
4	10:20 am	Leveraging Technology for Smarter Procurement Explore how government procurement can keep pace with increasingly complex technology, interconnected systems, rising risks and supply-chain pressures. Learn how collective buying power, improved digital marketplaces, practical guidance, and whole-of-government coordination can strengthen outcomes—and why procurement expertise and professional judgement will remain essential as technology evolves. Format: Presentation	Mr Chris Fechner Chief Executive Officer Digital Transformation Agency
5	10:50 am	Morning Tea	



Item	Time	Topic	Lead
6	11:10 am	AI-Enabled Procurement: Insights from the Queensland Government Discover how the Queensland Government is using artificial intelligence and emerging technologies to support more efficient, effective and informed procurement. Explore practical applications, implementation considerations, governance arrangements and lessons learned from embedding AI-enabled tools in a public sector procurement environment. Format: Presentation	Mr Andrew Bennett Deputy Director-General Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works
7	11:40 am	Co-Heads of PCM Profession Join the Co-Heads of the Procurement and Contract Management Profession for a fireside chat on the Profession's impact and future direction. Explore its shift from compliance-focused practice to capability-building and community across the APS, the value of strong contract management, the importance of professional judgement, and responsible use of artificial intelligence and technology. Format: Fireside chat	Ms Marisa Purvis-Smith Deputy Secretary Department of Finance Ms Julia Pickworth A/g Secretary Department of Industry, Science and Resources
8	12:10 pm	Stream sessions (your choice)	

Stream sessions

Item	Time	Room 1: Contract Management	Room 2: Market Engagement
8	12:10 pm	Best practice in contract management Hear practical insights from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and Clean Energy Regulator on managing contracts in complex service delivery environments. Explore clear performance requirements, contractor monitoring, successful service delivery and the processes supporting a strong contract management framework. Case studies will highlight challenges, risks, opportunities, critical success factors and practical recommendations. Format: Separate presentations Mr Mike Wytcherley Manager Assets and Capability Australian Maritime Safety Authority Ms Jennifer Bradley A/g Executive Manager Clean Energy Regulator	Case study: Effectively engaging the Market Through case studies from the Australian War Memorial and Veterans in Construction, explore how early, structured market engagement tested assumptions, drew on supplier expertise and improved outcomes. Hear how engagement design informed requirements, evaluation, risk allocation and delivery, supported mobilisation and relationships, and translated veteran participation, skills and training commitments into measurable results. Format: Separate presentations Mr Chris Widenbar former Deputy Project Director Australian War Memorial Mr Dave Farrell General Manager Veterans in Construction
9	12:50 pm	Lunch	



Item	Time	Room 1: Contract Management	Room 2: Market Engagement
10	1:50 pm	Complex contract management Gain practical insights from the Department of Defence and the Australian Border Force on managing complex, strategically significant contracts. Drawing on major programs, explore security controls, supply chains, performance requirements, supplier management and emerging risks. Hear how disciplined governance, oversight and relationships support implementation, service delivery and alignment with government procurement objectives. Format: Presentations Mr Chris Crozier Chief Information Officer Department of Defence Dr Ben Evans Commander Australian Border Force	How to use market engagement to build industry capability Explore how early, genuine market engagement can strengthen industry capability and procurement outcomes. Hear approaches to engaging Australian businesses, small and medium enterprises, Indigenous businesses and social enterprises, managing supply chains, fostering innovation and partnerships, and creating lasting benefits for government, industry and communities. Format: Fireside chat Mr Phillip Dowsett A/g Industry Advocate South Australian Government Mr Cameron Wood Executive Director IPS Management Consultants
11	2:30 pm	Delivering on time and within budget – contract management case study Hear how Western Sydney International Airport achieved on-time and on-budget delivery. This major-project case study will explore best-practice contract management, challenges and responses, and the disciplines, decisions and relationships supporting success. Gain practical insights into critical success factors, lessons, emerging trends, opportunities, risks and transferable examples of good practice. Format: Presentation of case study Mr Glen McCrea Executive Manager Regulatory Affairs Western Sydney International Airport	How to identify, analyse, allocate and treat risk and probity Explore practical approaches to identifying, analysing, allocating and treating risk and probity across the procurement and contract management lifecycle. Learn to recognise issues early, assess likelihood and consequences, allocate risks to those best placed to manage them, apply proportionate controls, document decisions, maintain transparency and adapt treatments as circumstances change. Format: Facilitated panel discussion Ms Samantha Haddon Partner Holding Redlich Mr Shane O'Keeffe Partner MCGRATHNICOL Mr Andrew Marsden Partner O'Connor Marsden & Associates

Item	Time	Room 1: Contract Management	Room 2: Market Engagement
12	3.10 pm	ICT best practice contract management Hear practical perspectives on information and communications technology contract management in major government operating environments. Explore fit-for-purpose governance, clear accountability, supplier performance, relationships, delivery assurance, service continuity, and security and implementation risks. Speakers will share lessons on changing requirements, under-performance and maintaining alignment between contractual obligations, operational needs and intended outcomes. Format: Facilitated panel discussion Ms Kim Laybutt Branch Manager Digital Sourcing Digital Transformation Agency Ms Rhianne Jory First Assistant Commissioner Australian Electoral Commission Mr Peter Walker Assistant Commissioner Australian Taxation Office	Supplier perspective – effective market engagement Hear directly from suppliers about effective government market engagement. Explore how timely, consistent information, accessible channels, realistic requirements and timeframes, and meaningful dialogue influence participation. Speakers will share practical perspectives on reducing barriers, supporting diverse and competitive markets, and using supplier insights to strengthen procurement strategies, requirements and outcomes. Format: Facilitated panel discussion Ms Tina Chawner Managing Director Yellow Hat Consulting Ms Nadia Pessarossi Director Unearth Talent Mr Joel Deans Managing Director 1LM
13	4:00 pm	Afternoon tea	

Awards for Excellence

Item	Time	Topic
Awards for Excellence		
Awards for Excellence ceremony		
14	4:20 pm	Celebrate achievement and leadership across the Commonwealth Procurement and Contract Management Profession at the Awards Ceremony, presented by the Secretary for Finance, Matt Yannopoulos PSM.
Conference close		
15	4:55 pm	Reflect on the day's key themes and practical insights as the conference draws to a close.
5:00 pm Conference ends		

Speakers

The Department of Finance thanks all speakers for sharing their expertise and time with us.



Matt Yannopoulos PSM, Secretary, Department of Finance

Matt commenced as Secretary of Finance in September 2025, following appointment as the Associate Secretary at the Department of Defence, and senior APS leadership roles including at Health, Education and Immigration. He has a background in accounting and IT, is a FCPA and in 2019 was awarded a Public Service Medal for his achievements in Child Care Reform Implementation.



Kylie Kilgour, Acting Commissioner, National Anti-Corruption Commission

Kylie is the Acting Commissioner of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), bringing extensive experience in integrity, justice and public sector leadership. She has previously held senior roles with the NACC, Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Victoria, the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants and the Victorian Government.



Carla Jago, Deputy Auditor-General of Australia, Australian National Audit Office

Carla is the Deputy Auditor-General of the Australian National Audit Office. Carla has over 28 years' experience in public sector auditing and is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand and a Graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Chris Fechner, Chief Executive Officer, Digital Transformation Agency

Chris is the Chief Executive Officer of the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) and Head of the Digital Profession. With extensive experience in large scale digital and ICT reform and transformation programs, Chris is responsible for ensuring the DTA delivers on the Government's digital transformation agenda.



Julia Pickworth, Acting Secretary, Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Julia is the acting Secretary of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources. She has held senior roles across multiple Australian Government departments, collaboratively leading complex policy, program and stakeholder initiatives. Known for her collaborative leadership, Julia has extensive experience in infrastructure, regional policy, government transitions and intergovernmental engagement.



Marisa Purvis-Smith, Deputy Secretary, Department of Finance

Marisa is the Deputy Secretary of the Commercial Group at the Department of Finance, leading the Commonwealth's commercial policy, advisory and governance functions. She has extensive experience across commercial policy, infrastructure, regional development and Commonwealth-state relations, with previous senior leadership roles in Infrastructure and Treasury, including major transport, aviation and emissions reform initiatives.



Andrew Bennett, Deputy Director-General, Queensland Government

Andrew is the Deputy Director-General at the Department of Housing and Public Works. With 30 years of public sector leadership experience, Andrew is responsible for procurement policy, compliance, category management and whole-of-government purchasing frameworks that support efficient, ethical and value-for-money outcomes for Queenslanders.



Andrew Danks, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance

Andrew Danks is head of the Procurement Division at the Department of Finance. He leads the Australian Government's procurement policy, capability and engagement functions, driving reforms that strengthen value for money, integrity and better procurement outcomes. Andrew works across government and industry to build capability, support innovation and advance procurement professionalisation.



Mike Wytcherley, Manager, Assets and Capability, Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Mike is the Manager for Assets & Capability at the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). With over 10 years' experience as a lawyer specialising in aviation-related matters, Mike manages AMSA's aviation, marine aids to navigation and pollution response capabilities. He leads the management of major non-ITS contracts and a national network of physical assets.



Jennifer Bradley, Acting Executive General Manager, Clean Energy Regulator

Jennifer is the Acting Executive General Manager at the Clean Energy Regulator. With more than 10 years' experience in climate change and environmental policy, she provides strategic leadership across key regulatory functions. She also holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Economics from the Australian National University.



Chris Widenbar, Acting Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance

Chris is an acting Assistant Secretary at the Department of Finance. He brings over 20 years' public sector experience, including senior roles in commemorative institutions. As former Deputy Project Director for the Australian War Memorial's Development Project, Chris led strategic governance, approvals, stakeholder engagement and operational integration for a major redevelopment program.



Dave Farrell, General Manager, Veterans in Construction

Dave is the Founder and Director of Veterans in Construction, a veteran-owned social enterprise connecting skilled workers with construction and infrastructure opportunities. Having served in the Australian Army, including the Special Air Service Regiment, Dave is passionate about veteran employment and helping Defence personnel transition to civilian careers.



Chris Crozier, Chief Information Officer and AI Officer, Department of Defence

Chris is Chief Information Officer at the Department of Defence and is Defence's Chief AI Officer. Leading the Defence Digital Group, Chris is responsible for delivering a modern, secure and sustainable ICT environment that supports Defence business and military operations. Chris has also held several senior executive roles in the mining and resources sector.



Dr Ben Evans, Commander, Australian Border Force

Dr Ben Evans is Commander Civil Maritime Sustainment in the Australian Border Force (ABF), overseeing sustainment of the ABF's maritime fleet and aerial surveillance contracts. He has held senior roles across government and the private sector, including Treasury, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, ThinkPlace and the Australian War Memorial. He holds a doctorate in archaeology and palaeoanthropology from the Australian National University.



Phillip Dowsett, Acting Industry Advocate, SA Government

Phillip is Acting Industry Advocate supporting the strategic implementation of the South Australia's Industry Participation Policy; increasing the number and diversity of South Australian businesses securing government contracts. With over 17 years of leadership experience, Phillip has held senior executive and leadership roles across sales, marketing, operations and contract management.



Cameron Wood, Executive Director, IPS Management

Cameron is a proud Noongar man of the Wilman clan and Executive Director at IPS Management Consultants. With over 20 years' experience in construction, leadership and project delivery, Cameron supports Australian Government agencies to deliver procurement, commercial advisory, and project outcomes. He specialises in First Nations engagement, supplier diversity, and cultural capability.



Glen McCrea, Executive Manager, Western Sydney International Airport

Glen McCrea is the Executive Manager – Regulatory Affairs at Western Sydney International Airport (WSI). He is responsible for working with Government and other stakeholders to ensure that WSI can operate as a successful international airport. Glen's previous experience included working in the financial services industry, Commonwealth Treasury and the Office of the Assistant Treasurer.



Samantha Haddon, Partner, Holding Redlich

Samantha is a commercial lawyer specialising in government procurement and contracting, providing advice and support across the procurement lifecycle. She has advised on procurement across infrastructure and capabilities, complex health, ICT and telephony services and panel arrangements. Samantha is recognised in Best Lawyers: 'Ones to Watch in Australia 2027' for Government Practice.



Shane O'Keeffe, Partner, MCGRATHNICOL

Shane leads McGrathNicol's Government Advisory service. He specialises in risk, governance, procurement and probity. As an independent probity adviser, Shane helps agencies undertaking major procurements and grants programs; advising on how to identify and manage complex risks while maintaining public confidence and achieving compliant, transparent and defensible outcomes.





Andrew Marsden, Partner, O'Connor Marsden & Associates

Andrew is a founding Partner of O'Connor Marsden and Associates (OCM) with 25 years' experience advising on governance, risk, procurement, probity, and ethics. A recognised leader in procurement integrity, he is responsible for ethics product quality assurance and best-practice standards, nationally. He helps organisations navigate complex procurement processes while maintaining transparency and accountability.



Kim Laybutt, Branch Manager, Digital Sourcing, Digital Transformation Agency

Kim leads the Digital Sourcing Branch at the Digital Transformation Agency, overseeing BuyICT.gov.au. With more than 20 years' experience in legal, procurement, and contract management across the Australian Public Service, Kim specialises in strategic sourcing, commercial and legal risk management, and end-to-end procurement and contract lifecycle management.



Rhianne Jory, First Assistant Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission

Rhianne is the Deputy Senior Responsible Officer and First Assistant Commissioner of the Australian Electoral Commission's Funding and Disclosure Reform Program. Rhianne holds degrees in law and public policy from Australian National University and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Harvard's Executive Leadership Program.



Peter Walker, Assistant Commissioner, Australian Taxation Office

Peter is the Assistant Commissioner for IT Commercial Services at the Australian Tax Office (ATO), responsible for the commercial management of IT operations. With over a decade of experience at the ATO, Peter has led IT strategy, program management and delivery of key sourcing initiatives and transformation programs.



Tina Chawner, Managing Director, Yellow Hat Consulting

Tina is the Founder and Managing Director of Yellow Hat Consulting, an Australian consultancy that works with government, private sector and not-for-profit organisations. Drawing on a career across UK and Australian public sectors, Tina works with leaders to solve complex problems, integrating change management, co-design and strategic communications into one approach.



Nadia Pessarossi, Director, Uneath Talent

As Director of Uneath Talent, Nadia's career spans the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. She has over 30 years' experience in business operations and improvement, HR, project management, people and culture, marketing and communications. Nadia champions ethical recruitment, people-first leadership and meaningful community impact, balancing strategy with action, helping individuals and organisations thrive.



Joel Deans, Managing Director, 1LM PTY LTD

Joel has more than 20 years' experience delivering professional services to the Commonwealth under major procurement and panel arrangements. Having held leadership roles across SME, mid-tier and ASX100 organisations, Joel brings practitioner-level understanding of how suppliers engage with government, manage contracts, and deliver value for money outcomes within structured procurement and governance settings.