



Public Sector
Commission

Leadership Expectations

Agency Leader

**Building
Leadership
Impact**
in practice

Agency Leader



Context summary

Leadership in this context is about having end of line responsibility for shaping and delivering agency corporate strategy and governance that deliver key government services.

Leaders are accountable for leading an agency, creating strategic direction and envisioning the future. They make business decisions in the interests of the agency and the wider sector.

The work requires strong business acumen and creation of the strategic direction for the agency or several business areas in the agency. The size and complexity of the agency determines whether one or several leaders in the agency operate in this context. Some second tier leaders who have delegated end of line authority for aspects of the agency's work and directly liaise with high level influential stakeholders such as ministers and boards operate in the Agency Leader context.

Leaders monitor trends and read the local to global environmental contexts pertinent to their agencies to derive strategy, and protect and enhance services delivered by the agency.

They are cognisant of systems that are interdependent and how changes in one potentially impact others. They make collegial decisions about how best to account for change.

They are faced with decisions and problems which have greater impact, risk and increasing uncertainty than those faced by leaders in preceding contexts. They embrace the weight of this and work comfortably with the unknown.

They inspire, empower and influence to gain results that benefit the agency, sector and communities they serve.

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Leadership in this context involves leaders:

- shaping the agency by adopting a broad long term perspective, formulating what could be and how to get there
- reading social, political, economic and technological contexts to position the agency for success and guarantee sustainability
- monitoring trends to understand the local, regional, national and global contexts of the agency, recognising that task boundaries should be considered beyond just state parameters
- leading in culturally informed ways, taking into account diversity and inclusion as well as First Nations culture, history and experiences
- understanding and embracing complexities involved in running an agency, valuing multidimensional thinking, and integrating a variety of business needs and matters into a holistic plan
- applying strong business acumen; evaluating strategy for capital allocation; analysing business metrics to prioritise strategies with the greatest probability for success; and identifying business needs and sourcing the capabilities to address them
- working with and across community, industry and government; and networking with key people across a variety of fields to understand issues and trends that may impact the agency

- identifying, developing and coaching current and future senior leaders; valuing and prioritising their success; and inspiring and supporting the performance of the agency
- working successfully with high level influential stakeholders such as ministers and boards.

Development in this context focuses on leaders:

- understanding and navigating complex and ambiguous environments
- designing and implementing strategies which have a positive impact on the communities the agency serves.

Leaders in this context spend the majority of time:

- being responsible for the development and sustainability of the agency's human and business capital
- allowing space for thinking, reflecting, learning, analysing trends and strategising
- networking with and meeting key people across a variety of fields and industries that may enable the agency to better identify and understand trends.

Leaders in this context contribute to the work of others by:

- inspiring and supporting performance in the agency
- removing obstacles and challenges, and creating an environment that supports success
- identifying potential opportunities for the agency and maintaining strong networks.

Transitioning to the next leadership context:

In the sector, the opportunity to transition to the Statewide Leader context depends in part on the size and scope of the agency being led.

During the transition from the Agency Leader context to the Statewide Leader context, leaders focus on being responsible for multiple stakeholders that transcend the traditional single agency focus, for example by engaging with the private sector and industry experts. They show they are skilled at setting sector wide direction and thinking about the global business context.

The fundamental shifts that occur during this transition include:

- shifting their mindset from a single agency focus to a sector wide focus, evaluating and balancing sector needs with individual agency needs
- facilitating long term organisational effectiveness by building agencies to deliver longer term strategy
- moving away from high level strategic thinking to long term visionary thinking and execution.

Challenges of transitioning to the next leadership context

The most difficult aspect of this transition is that leaders are required to move away from a long list of goals to a short list of long time cycle initiatives. Capability to transition is usually developed through a series of diverse experiences over a long period. If they do not transition well, leaders risk isolating themselves, spending too much time on external relationships, not paying enough attention to people issues, or finding themselves being repeatedly asked the same questions by ministers and boards.



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Lead collectively

The expected behaviour is to **lead collectively**, consciously adopting the mindset **“I am part of something bigger.”**

You understand how your work and the work of the agency fit in the sector, recognising your role in creating and supporting value for the future of Western Australians.

You understand and leverage the interrelationships that exist in the sector and ensure that strategic decisions create value for the agency and sector, now and into the future.

You identify, synthesise, translate and articulate the interrelationships and connections between the work of your agency and the sector, and encourage your leaders to do the same. You address matters that are both internal and external to the agency and continually identify the impacts and consequences of your decisions on the sector.

You adopt a system wide perspective to ensure your agency is creating shared value. You identify and build key strategic relationships and partnerships across the sector.

To **lead collectively**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“I am part of something bigger.”**
Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.	You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.	You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.
You are considered in shaping the future direction of the agency with an understanding of the future needs of the sector.	You make decisions based on your understanding of how the work and future direction of the agency fits into the future needs of the sector. You understand the impacts and consequences of your decisions on other parts of the sector.	You build a shared understanding of the future needs of the sector. You ensure you have a solid appreciation of the impact of your decisions on other parts of the sector and take them into account in decision making.
You develop strategic goals which are mostly tactical in nature, focusing on delivering medium to long term value for the agency.	You develop strategic goals and priorities that have the greatest potential to positively impact the agency and sector in the medium to long term.	You develop strategic goals and priorities with the greatest potential for positive impact on the sector in the long term.
You identify key stakeholders and build partnerships for the agency.	You intentionally build and leverage partnerships with key stakeholders to ensure support for agency initiatives.	You maintain and leverage appropriate networks across the sector, ensuring strategic support for current and future initiatives.
You make strategic decisions that create future value for the agency and sector for the medium term.	You make decisions that add value for the medium to long term, having a clear understanding of current and future trends affecting the agency and sector.	You make strategic decisions that create future value for the agency and sector for the long term.



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Think through complexity

The expected behaviour is to **think through complexity**, consciously adopting the mindset **“There is more than one solution.”**

You are comfortable with a high level of complexity arising from ambiguity and uncertainty, creating value in an unknowable long term future.

You are able to distinguish between detail complexity (related to a large number of variables) and dynamic complexity (related to increasing timespan between the decision made and the outcome of that decision). You are comfortable with dynamic complexity and easily navigate detail complexity.

You take decisive action in the face of uncertainty. You think logically about the short, medium and long term variables that could impact your agency and the sector.

You ensure the viability of solutions that contribute to the sustainability of your agency and the sector. You have the confidence to change pathways when vital for the sector.

You develop innovative solutions in your agency and contribute to shaping innovative solutions for the sector. You establish strategic risk management processes and ensure risk is incorporated into your decision making. You continuously evaluate the risk of your decisions on the sector.

To **think through complexity**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“There is more than one solution.”**
Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.	You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.	You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.
You take a broader perspective by considering multiple factors and taking the wider context (macro and micro) into account.	You identify patterns, trends and connections between seemingly unrelated situations, along with the impact of any issues on the agency in the medium to long term.	You identify future potential problems, needs and trends through conceptualisation, forecasting and creative thinking, taking a medium to long term view.
You consider wider impacts that may arise from decisions which have been made. You acknowledge the need to take decisive action to create future value for the sector.	You take decisive action in the face of uncertainty and consider both shorter term predictable and longer term unpredictable variables.	You take strategic action in the face of uncertainty that arises from both shorter and longer term predictable and unpredictable variables. You use uncertainty as a resource and promote change as the only constant.
You select innovative but practical solutions to immediate problems that meet short, medium and long term needs.	You select and promote solutions with the greatest short, medium and long term benefits, minimal risks and other consequences to the agency.	You select and promote solutions with the greatest medium to long term benefits, minimal risks and other consequences to the agency and sector.
You proactively and strategically manage risk in the agency.	You provide oversight to ensure risk management processes are embedded in operations, systems and processes of the agency to be responsive to current and dynamic risk.	You manage agency and sector risk by establishing and developing broad scale, longer term risk and governance objectives, goals and projects.



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Dynamically sense the environment

The expected behaviour is to **dynamically sense the environment**, consciously adopting the mindset **“There is always more to the story.”**

You scan and decipher the internal and external environments, leveraging understanding to influence and persuade others so as to create value for Western Australians.

You identify patterns, trends and connections in the social, political and business context both internal and external to your agency. You monitor your environment, and proactively revise strategies and decisions to reflect the immediate and future needs of your agency and the sector.

You leverage your understanding of the environment to deliver key strategic priorities and proactively manage the risk of reactive decision making in your agency. You understand the social and political nuances of your agency and the sector, and use this understanding to create and deliver future value for the sector.

You adapt your personal style to influence key stakeholders. You lead your agency by winning the hearts and minds of others. You display competence, integrity and benevolence in your interactions. You establish trusting relationships with internal and external stakeholders to influence and deliver future value. You build partnerships and link strategic goals with the needs of stakeholders.

To **dynamically sense the environment**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“There is always more to the story.”**

Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
<p>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</p>	<p>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</p>	<p>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</p>
<p>You are aware of sector, society, government and legislative trends that may have an impact on community needs.</p>	<p>You identify and respond to key economic, environmental, technological, legislative, social and political forces. You manage their impact on the viability of the agency in the medium to long term.</p>	<p>You anticipate and proactively address emerging changes that may have an impact on the agency and sector in the medium to long term.</p>
<p>You identify key internal and external relationships that may have an impact on the sustainability of the agency.</p>	<p>You identify and foster key stakeholder relationships, leveraging your understanding of the social and political factors affecting the agency. You draw on these relationships and insights to advance changes that support the future sustainability of the agency.</p>	<p>You intentionally create value for the agency by influencing and shaping the social, political and economic strategy of the agency and sector.</p>
<p>You keep informed of political agendas and identify key stakeholders whose support would positively influence action.</p>	<p>You influence critical decisions by enlisting the support of key stakeholders who can gain the support of others through their perceived expertise, credibility and influence.</p>	<p>You represent both ‘a voice of reason’ and ‘the devil’s advocate’ in critical decisions. You negotiate skilfully at all levels internally and externally to achieve agency objectives.</p>
<p>You use personal influence rather than positional power to project authority and credibility, and to influence and motivate others to achieve results.</p>	<p>You link your ideas to shared goals as a means of influencing others. You use personal influence to make a positive difference across the agency and externally. You use your in depth understanding of stakeholder groups to move towards a specific agenda.</p>	<p>You are able to change the perspectives of key stakeholders by expressing ideas through careful use of language, symbolism and cultural signals, as appropriate, to influence key decisions for the good of Western Australians.</p>



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Deliver on high leverage areas

The expected behaviour is to **deliver on high leverage areas**, consciously adopting the mindset **“Some actions are more powerful than others.”**

You pursue with tenacity the high leverage priorities that are essential to your agency, key stakeholders and Western Australians.

You identify the strategic priorities that are essential for your agency and the broader sector. You demonstrate a drive to deliver against longer term strategic objectives for your agency and contribute to creating future value for the sector.

You pursue your goals with determination and navigate barriers to deliver on them, demonstrating a high level of personal resilience. You generate alternative pathways to reach your goals and adjust your course as necessary.

You explore new opportunities for your agency and challenge the status quo to contribute to the creation of long term future value.

To **deliver on high leverage areas**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“Some actions are more powerful than others.”**

Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
<p>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</p>	<p>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</p>	<p>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</p>
<p>With a clear understanding of future value, you set realistic but challenging goals for the agency.</p>	<p>You set clear, challenging objectives and standards of excellence for the agency, yourself and others, displaying enthusiasm and confidence.</p>	<p>You create a clear, ambitious direction for the agency and articulate the standards expected of yourself, others and the agency by quickly zeroing in on the critical few priorities.</p> <p>At the same time you ensure key stakeholder priorities are attended to.</p>
<p>You lead by example by seeking to outperform stakeholder performance expectations.</p> <p>You continually monitor the performance of the agency against set objectives and standards of excellence.</p>	<p>You manage the executive team and other direct reports for consistently high performance.</p> <p>You monitor performance against challenging objectives and standards of excellence that exceed requirements.</p> <p>You apply knowledge, experience and capability to deliver superior results even in novel situations where no precedent exists.</p>	<p>You identify high leverage areas and drive performance to exceed set objectives and standards of excellence.</p> <p>You embrace uncertainty by applying knowledge, experience and capability to deliver in new and challenging situations.</p> <p>You negotiate and access additional resources for critical work where necessary.</p>
<p>You generate innovative and practical solutions to problems, taking into consideration impacts in the short, medium and long terms.</p>	<p>You ensure the viability of solutions by forecasting the potential of ideas, projecting how they could play out in the sector in the medium to long terms.</p>	<p>You provide oversight to ensure efficient and economical use of agency resources (including budgets, people capability, facilities and time) to solve longer term problems and ensure sustainability of the agency.</p>
<p>You generate new and divergent thinking, provide fresh insights and make connections between previously unrelated ideas.</p> <p>You demonstrate good judgement about which creative ideas to endorse.</p>	<p>You challenge the status quo and assumptions which impact the performance of the agency.</p> <p>You encourage the development of viable alternatives.</p> <p>You champion continuous improvement initiatives.</p>	<p>You lead a culture of continuous improvement in the agency.</p> <p>You broadcast information about successful improvement initiatives in the agency.</p> <p>You celebrate examples of success.</p>



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Build capability

The expected behaviour is to **build capability**, consciously adopting the mindset **“We are only as good as our people.”**

You develop capability in the sector to create value for the future of Western Australians.

You proactively develop leaders to deliver future value to your agency and the broader sector. You engage in whole of sector talent identification, aligning agency specific protocols with sector processes and systems.

You develop the future capability requirements of your agency and ensure you contribute to developing a diverse talent pipeline in the sector. You create and support strategies in the agency that encourage talent to remain in the sector.

You understand the value of a diverse and inclusive sector, and develop and implement strategies to engage and promote diversity and inclusion in your agency.

You focus on developing the capability of your staff, paying particular attention to coaching and mentoring senior leaders. You align your agency’s structures and practices with the sector, encouraging a healthy and productive sector culture.

To **build capability**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“We are only as good as our people.”**
Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.	You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.	You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.
You use interpersonal styles and engagement methods that inspire, motivate, create enthusiasm and build passion and energy to develop the talent pipeline in the sector.	You lead an agency culture of people development and promotion of autonomy, demonstrating trust and confidence in the capability of others. You set an example by fully delegating significant initiatives to competent others, overcoming objections based on hierarchy.	You create a coaching culture in the agency, and coach and mentor talent and future leaders for the sector. You influence the executive team to follow this example of developing talent.
You create an environment where people can grow and contribute their diverse talents, experiences and perspectives.	You promote and advocate for diversity and inclusion in the agency. You recognise differences between people and acknowledge the value these differences bring.	You set up strategic development initiatives to develop the capabilities of a diverse workforce aligned to the current and future needs of the agency.
You provide oversight to ensure that implementation of people development programs and systems are aligned to agency strategy for the development of future leaders – including succession planning, identifying talent and building talent pools.	You provide oversight to ensure alignment between agency specific people development programs and systems and the broader sector. You provide oversight to ensure individuals in the talent pipeline are provided with accelerated development to meet future capability requirements.	You shape the agency’s people development strategies and systems to align with anticipated future needs of the broader sector. You provide oversight to ensure sustainability of the talent pipeline into the future for the agency and sector.
You identify leaders with talent and create tailored development opportunities.	You provide oversight to ensure talented individuals in the agency are provided with tailored and accelerated development which may include opportunities external to the agency.	You nurture and retain the next generation of leaders without disengaging solid performers. You support and encourage talent in the agency and employ retention strategies by pre-empting low engagement.
You demonstrate practices that support your personal wellbeing and enhance a healthy workplace culture. You are intentional in building this culture across the agency.	You are highly active in your role and responsibilities for building and creating a healthy workplace culture, ensuring this culture is aligned with the strategy of the agency.	You act as a champion for healthy work practices. You recognise and celebrate others for embedding practices that support a healthy workplace culture.



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Embody the spirit of public service

The expected behaviour is to **embody the spirit of public service**, consciously adopting the mindset **“We do everything for the public good.”**

You display and embody the spirit of public service in all your decision making, interactions and professional activities.

You show empathy and compassion, integrity and humility. You achieve results under challenging conditions while maintaining the reputation of your agency and the sector. You encourage excellence, and recognise and acknowledge outstanding performance in your agency. You ensure specific feedback is provided to staff who perform above expectations.

You are committed to and communicate the importance of good corporate governance practices and conduct. You promote respect for the sector in the agency and are proactive in dealing with ethical and misconduct matters. Your strong presence builds confidence in the agency.

You act as a guiding force for your agency and the sector, proactively managing your reputation, displaying a genuine passion for the sector and spirit of public service.

To **embody the spirit of public service**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“We do everything for the public good.”**

Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.	You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.	You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.
You create a culture in the agency where empathy and compassion for stakeholders are demonstrated consistently.	You develop an empathetic and compassionate culture across the agency, setting the standard for others.	You shape the reputation of the agency and sector as compassionate and empathetic. You challenge decisions and behaviours that do not uphold this reputation.
You ensure the implementation of best practice corporate governance for the agency to maintain compliance with relevant legislation.	You formulate, update and continually improve corporate governance for the agency.	You actively build confidence in the reputation of the agency in the eyes of stakeholders by applying best practice corporate governance.
You lead by example, making decisions and shaping priorities to continuously reflect the vision of the agency.	You set a clear and shared sense of direction, focus and expectation for the agency. You build support for the current and future work of the agency.	You demonstrate and communicate a passion for the sector and the agency’s decisions and direction to inspire enthusiasm and energy for the future.
You promote respect for the agency by being proactive when dealing with ethical issues.	You conduct business ethically. You display behaviours that enhance the reputation of the agency in the eyes of stakeholders.	You act as an ambassador for the agency, embodying the spirit of public service by acting ethically. You insist that others behave accordingly and respond when they do not.
You lead in a manner that ensures agency initiatives enhance the reputation of the sector.	You show concern for the reputation of the sector by challenging the actions of others which may not enhance the reputation of the sector.	You coach business leaders to communicate and lead in a manner that enhances the reputation of the agency and fosters support for and approval of the sector.



Agency Leader

Expected behaviour: Lead adaptively

The expected behaviour is to **lead adaptively**, consciously adopting the mindset **“I am forever curious, forever learning.”**

You are continually learning and adapting your personal style and approach to be effective in new and challenging contexts and positions.

You continually seek to understand your own strengths, limitations and blind spots. You acknowledge that your ability to understand yourself is linked to your capability to lead others effectively.

You demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn and apply your knowledge, skills and experiences in new and challenging situations. You actively pursue strategic learning opportunities that support both your development and your ability to create future value for the agency. You seek feedback, evaluate its merit and take appropriate action as required.

You are adaptive and willing to embrace change. You adjust your work methods and the structures and processes of the agency so you can create and deliver future value for your agency and the sector.

To **lead adaptively**, you consciously adopt the mindset **“I am forever curious, forever learning.”**
Examples of this behaviour in action at the 3 mastery levels:

Developing	Proficient	Mature
You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.	You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.	You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.
<p>You seek resources and stretch opportunities to support your ongoing growth and development as a senior executive.</p> <p>You bring this learning into your workplace to improve delivery of outcomes.</p>	<p>You actively seek resources and stretch opportunities that challenge your current knowledge and strengths to stretch and build your capabilities.</p> <p>You willingly engage in learning situations that are outside your comfort zone.</p>	<p>You create learning experiences that require you to act outside your comfort zone.</p> <p>You engage in and encourage learning experiences that challenge paradigms and drive performance to deliver agency value.</p>
<p>You develop personal and professional goals for yourself and others that align with the current and future development needs of the agency and sector.</p>	<p>You actively monitor the environment for learning experiences (both formal and informal) that stretch the capability of yourself and others.</p> <p>You make time for these experiences and promote opportunities for others.</p>	<p>You model a focus on continuous learning and development across the agency and sector.</p> <p>You ensure investment and resource allocation in the agency to support this focus.</p>
<p>You communicate the benefit of relevant strategic change projects to the agency.</p>	<p>You readily adapt to new agency demands and business environments.</p>	<p>You are effective in ambiguous and unpredictable situations.</p> <p>You manage transitions in a way that balances operational stability with agency renewal.</p>
<p>You champion strategic change projects to deliver future value for the agency.</p>	<p>You ensure the development of policies, systems and plans to support change processes across the agency and adjust as necessary.</p>	<p>You initiate change for the agency. You create a sense of urgency and enthusiasm around agency transformation to create future value.</p>
<p>You work effectively in different situations and with a variety of people and stakeholder groups. You can understand diverse perspectives and their impact on the agency.</p> <p>You shift gears comfortably.</p>	<p>You see matters from varying perspectives and integrate a range of diverse ideas into agency plans.</p>	<p>You create a focus on diversity and inclusion that demonstrates true assimilation of different ideas and perspectives for the future of the agency and sector.</p>

Acknowledgement of Country We are proud to deliver our services from Whadjuk Noongar boodja. We acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, Traditional Owners and Custodians from the many land and language groups of Western Australia.

This publication can be copied in whole or part with due acknowledgement.
Copies are available in different formats on request.

Public Sector Commission | 2 Havelock Street, West Perth WA 6005
08 6552 8500 | admin@psc.wa.gov.au | WA.gov.au

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