



Public Sector  
Commission

# Leadership Expectations

## Executive Leader

**Building  
Leadership  
Impact**  
in practice

<b>Overview</b>	pg 3-4
<b>Lead collectively</b>	pg 5-6
<b>Think through complexity</b>	pg 7-8
<b>Dynamically sense the environment</b>	pg 9-10
<b>Deliver on high leverage areas</b>	pg 11-12
<b>Build capability</b>	pg 13-14
<b>Embody the spirit of public service</b>	pg 15-16
<b>Lead adaptively</b>	pg 17-18



## Executive Leader



### Context summary

Leadership in this context is about shaping complex initiatives covering multiple business areas as well as having a key responsibility in corporate governance.

Leaders need to balance both vertical and horizontal responsibilities in and across the agency, being accountable for the business areas they lead as well as for redefining and shaping the agency.

Leaders demonstrate considered and purposeful positioning of what they lead along with the timing for future growth. The work is characterised by shaping large scale, complex initiatives while balancing the requirement to deliver both short and long term strategic goals.

In this context and beyond, people leaders and knowledge leaders are no longer distinct from each other. The emphasis is now on leading and managing people as the span of accountability is broad, covering multiple business areas as well as the agency.

Leaders contribute strategic leadership by valuing contributions from all business areas, with a requirement to translate the agency's strategy into operational objectives for their business areas.

They consciously take time to reflect and analyse strategic approaches.



**Leadership in this context involves leaders:**

- balancing the need to deliver short and medium term operational requirements with the agency's long term, strategic goals
- determining the internal and external services the agency provides
- working and leading in culturally informed ways
- managing operational excellence while redefining and shaping their business areas and the agency
- viewing all reporting business areas as equally important and actively seeking feedback from leaders
- allowing Multiple Area Leaders the autonomy to lead while taking personal responsibility for shaping the agency's brand and reputation
- analysing their approach, considering key processes as well as the conflict between short and longer term goals
- attracting, selecting and developing competent leaders.

**Development in this context focuses on leaders:**

- understanding business areas that are less familiar
- working with a wider variety of people
- developing social and political astuteness
- learning to communicate complex information clearly and effectively across a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

**Leaders in this context spend the majority of time:**

- thinking longer term – 5 to 10 years
- deliberately setting aside time to reflect on key processes and on the conflict between short and long term goals
- meeting with both other senior agency leaders and direct reports for successful planning
- consciously taking time out from 'doing' to reflect on and analyse their approach and their leadership performance.

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

- helping to establish a high functioning organisational system by developing synergies across their business areas
- keeping their teams aligned and focused, monitoring business strategy and ensuring a fair distribution of resources across their business areas
- valuing and attending to the cultural matters of the agency, and putting effort into defining what they and their business areas stand for
- creating and articulating clear connections between the skills of the workforce and the strategic directions of the agency.

**Transitioning to the next leadership context:**

In the sector, the size and scope of an agency determines whether an Executive Leader has the opportunity to transition to the Agency Leader context in their agency.

During the transition from the Executive Leader context to the Agency Leader context, the focus is on the leader seeing themselves as an executive with responsibility for factoring in the complexity of running a number of business areas. They become skilled at succeeding by indirect means through the development of other business leaders and connecting the agency to the broader sector.

The fundamental shifts that occur during this transition include:

- becoming skilled at evaluating strategy for capital allocation and deployment purposes
- developing leaders at the Executive Leader context and measuring capability
- building and managing internal and external high stakes relationships
- creating a long term portfolio strategy, making trade offs between quarter by quarter performance and long term strategy
- letting go of individual services and customers, and focusing on the whole
- shifting from valuing the success of their own agency to valuing the success of all agencies
- understanding, accepting and supporting different business models across agencies.

**Challenges of transitioning to the next leadership context**

The most difficult aspect of this transition is that leaders are required to see issues in the broadest terms possible, acting as a key player at community, industry and government levels. If they do not transition well, they risk acting as general managers rather than corporate executives and spending an inadequate amount of time on corporate activities while ignoring uncovered issues, pursuing their own agendas and passing up development opportunities.



**Executive 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 decisions you make connect with other parts of your agency and the sector. You recognise your role in creating and supporting value for the future of Western Australians.

You take a system wide perspective to deliver value for the agency and sector. You proactively shape strategy to align with the collective needs of the agency and sector, balancing delivery of tactical short term requirements with creating value in the medium term.

You support the integration of business areas in your agency to align system wide strategy and direction. Your agency is then able to contribute to delivering future value for the sector.

You create value by fostering strong relationships across the agency to deliver value. You continuously seek opportunities and build key strategic 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
	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b>
	You make tactical decisions that meet the current and future requirements of your business areas by drawing on a deep understanding of their challenges and needs.	You make strategic decisions that create short term value for your business areas and the agency to deliver future value to the sector.	You contribute to making strategic decisions that create value for the agency and sector for the short and medium terms.
	You consider the impacts and consequences of your decisions, keeping a balance between prioritising the needs of your business areas and the needs of the agency and sector.	You monitor the short and long term impacts of your decisions to ensure your business areas have the understanding, incentive and ability to provide a consistently high quality service to the communities they serve.	You consider how your decisions and the future direction of your business areas align with the future needs of the agency.  You weigh up the future impact and consequences of your decisions across the agency.
	You maintain relationships with existing strategic stakeholders and partners for your business areas.	You proactively create and leverage strong partnerships across a number of business areas in the agency to drive synergies and ensure support for initiatives.	You identify and build strategic relationships and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.
	You set clear priorities and strategic goals for your business areas.	You align the priorities and strategic goals of your business areas with the strategy and direction of the agency.	You contribute to business planning and seek opportunities to align key priorities and strategic objectives across the agency.



**Executive 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 work with a high level of complexity arising from ambiguity and uncertainty, and create value for an unknowable long term future.

You are able to deal with and consider a large number of variables, and make tactical and strategic decisions for the short and medium terms.

When you do not have the full picture or information is missing or not available, you are able to take decisive action and evaluate the short and medium term impacts of your decisions and strategies. You foresee the consequences and risks of your decisions even when they may only be evident in the medium term or are external to your business areas.

You proactively manage the implementation of the risk management strategies in your business areas, and take reasonable steps to mitigate any risks to your business areas and agency.

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
<p><b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b></p>	<p><b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b></p>	<p><b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b></p>
<p>You understand the core issues in your sphere of influence and how solutions align with your strategy for your business areas.</p> <p>You select innovative but practical solutions that meet short to medium term needs or have short to medium term benefits.</p>	<p>You contribute to addressing whole of agency challenges by empowering your leaders to take responsibility for issues and challenges.</p> <p>You foster your leaders’ skills and encourage them to problem solve short and medium term issues through practical, evidence based solutions.</p>	<p>You have confidence in your knowledge and experience to provide innovative but practical solutions that address the long term needs of your business areas and take into account how these impact the agency and wider sector.</p>
<p>When analysing information to inform decisions and solutions, you assess the medium term benefits, risks and consequences of the solutions you are considering.</p> <p>You consult your leaders, subject matter experts and intra-agency counterparts to test and inform the conclusions you draw.</p>	<p>To further enhance your analysis, you encourage and invite diverse perspectives, asking the right questions to better understand the issues.</p> <p>You recognise and strategically consider the impact of solutions in the medium to long terms.</p>	<p>When assessing and analysing the long term impact of a solution, you accept there are unknown risks and consequences and display the confidence to fill these gaps using your experience and knowledge.</p>
<p>You recognise that risk has a broad impact across your business areas.</p> <p>You proactively and strategically develop strategies to mitigate risks.</p>	<p>You demonstrate an appetite for risk that reflects the right balance between managing it and not stifling innovation.</p> <p>You ensure your leaders implement strategic risk management systems.</p>	<p>You identify, evaluate and review the risks facing your business areas and contribute to defining the risk tolerances of the agency. You provide guidance to Agency and Statewide Leaders to inform their responses.</p>
<p>You accept that you are required to make decisions without the full picture, and with information that is missing or unknowable.</p> <p>Despite this uncertainty, you interpret and use themes emerging from consultations you complete and information you do have to make strategic decisions without undue delay.</p>	<p>You are comfortable to make decisions without the full picture, strategically interpreting and analysing the information you do have.</p> <p>You understand the short and medium term impacts of these decisions on your business areas and the agency.</p> <p>You ensure your leaders make appropriate decisions about the matters that impact their business areas.</p>	<p>You take decisive action despite incomplete and ambiguous information.</p> <p>You easily differentiate between essential and non-essential matters for your business areas and the agency and then take action to deliver value.</p>



## Executive 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 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 between situations, and the impact of issues and strategy on your business areas. You identify and acknowledge trends at societal, political and economic levels relevant to and likely to have an impact on your business areas.

You are proactive in ensuring short term tactical decisions in your business areas are aligned with the direction of the agency. You recognise shared agendas and work towards mutually beneficial outcomes for all business areas.

You are conscious of your personal style and how it impacts on your ability to influence key stakeholders. You proactively build your networks to deliver value for your business areas and the agency. You establish trusting relationships in all interactions both internally and externally.

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
<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b>
You react appropriately to internal and external triggers by applying an awareness of societal, political and environmental changes.	You ensure you are aware of and respond to societal, government and legislative trends that may impact the viability of your business areas.	You proactively investigate and identify emerging societal, government and legislative trends that may have an impact on the viability of your business areas and the agency in the future.
You anticipate and forecast changes in your business areas, going beyond merely extrapolating from past data.	You identify patterns, trends and connections between situations and apply this insight when identifying the impact of issues on your business areas.	You take a wider perspective, considering multiple factors and taking the broader contexts (macro and micro) into account.
You collaborate, influence and persuade across all levels in the agency to further the outcomes of your business areas.	You recognise shared agendas and work towards mutually beneficial outcomes.  You encourage and assist others to develop internal and external networks.	You influence others to align with agency objectives without having positional authority.
You use personal influence to reach compromise and deliver results for your business areas.  You negotiate skilfully to resolve conflict and reach agreement.	You present key points of an argument persuasively and are able to convince others to follow and collaborate across the agency even when views are unpopular and conflict may be anticipated.	You use personal influence rather than positional power to project authority and credibility, and to influence and motivate others to achieve results.



## Executive 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 business areas and agency. You balance tactical short term objectives with delivering value in the medium term. You understand and recognise how the strategies and decisions in your business areas support the strategic direction of the agency.

You demonstrate a drive to deliver both short and medium term strategic objectives for your business areas while also contributing to the delivery of future value to the agency.

You pursue your goals with determination. When faced with challenges, you demonstrate personal resilience and proactively build your wellbeing resources. You seek support to help navigate setbacks and risks, and when making decisions that have a high level of uncertainty.

You develop alternate plans and strategies to overcome barriers to delivering the goals and strategy of your business areas. You seek counsel when necessary to identify the most appropriate plan. You explore new opportunities for your business areas, and drive and encourage continuous improvement that contributes to delivering excellence for the agency.

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
<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b>
You set and monitor clear performance objectives by applying a deep understanding of agency priorities.	You determine priorities, distinguishing between long term and urgent issues and those with greatest impact. You monitor progress against priorities.	You implement controls to monitor progress against set parameters, and adjust plans and priorities as required.
You implement strategic direction by resourcing your business areas adequately and setting reasonable timelines.	You strategically balance resourcing and timelines for your business areas to deliver future strategic value for the agency.	You leverage internal resources to create present and future value for the sector. You set targets that positively stretch the capacity of your business areas.
You lead by example, striving to exceed stakeholder performance expectations and encouraging others to do the same.	You take full responsibility for the performance of your business areas. You drive operational execution and ensure goals are achieved with excellence.	You look to the future and anticipate, adjust and create contingency plans for roadblocks and possible problems in your business areas.
You operationalise strategic improvement imperatives by proactively identifying improvement opportunities in each of your business areas.	You encourage and drive continuous improvement initiatives that focus on creating and maximising value. You identify and release latent talent.	You build and promote a culture of continuous improvement in your business areas.
You actively move towards obstacles rather than away from them, seeing them as opportunities to develop and grow (growth mindset*). You are resilient and able to cope with stressful circumstances.	You are resilient and able to manage challenges and cope with stressful circumstances over the long term. You maintain a high level of professionalism at all times, even when under pressure. You lead others to build their wellbeing resources and practices.	You demonstrate a high level of personal resilience. You identify and articulate times when your challenges outweigh your wellbeing resources. You proactively build your wellbeing resources and practices and coach others to do the same.
You respectfully challenge long held processes and thinking that limit the agility of the agency. You encourage new ideas and options, and apply the lens of what is best for stakeholders.	You take bold and innovative measures by doing things differently. You select innovative but practical approaches to drive value for your business areas.	You consider what can create future value for your business areas and the agency, and engage your peers in developing and implementing innovative approaches.

\* A **growth mindset** is when people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Professor Carol Dweck, 2006



## Executive 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 proactively build long term capability in the sector to create value for the future of Western Australians.

You proactively develop leaders to deliver value in your business areas and agency, and enhance capability in the sector. You support and contribute to whole of sector talent identification, aligning the processes and systems in your business areas with those of the agency.

You develop the future capability requirements of your business areas and ensure you contribute to developing a diverse talent pipeline in the agency. You support and manage strategies in the agency that encourage talent to remain in the sector. You understand the value of a diverse and inclusive sector, and support and implement strategies to promote diversity and inclusion in your business areas.

You focus on supporting the development of long term capability in your business areas, providing development, coaching and mentoring opportunities for leaders. You understand your role and responsibility for creating a healthy culture in your business areas, contributing to a 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
<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b>
You instil a people development culture in your business areas by holding leaders accountable for the development of their teams.  You provide others with the opportunity to learn from mistakes in a positive frame.	You motivate, empower and energise others by creating a sense of belonging.  You provide challenging assignments, and delegate full authority and responsibility to develop specific skills, competencies and behaviours in others.	You act as a coach and mentor to develop your leaders and focus on maintaining a development culture across your business areas.
You create an environment where staff can grow and contribute their diverse talents, experiences and perspectives.	You act as the champion for developing diverse talent in your business areas and the agency.	You establish strategic development initiatives across your business areas to develop the capabilities of diverse talent aligned to the current and future needs of the agency.
You intentionally identify and drive processes for the development of future leaders in your business areas.	You identify skill requirements in your business areas with the future in mind.  You ensure development focuses on and meets these requirements.	You monitor the development of skills and knowledge in your business areas to ensure future capability requirements are met for your business areas and the agency.
You actively identify high potential individuals in your business areas and include them in appropriate development opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the sector into the future.  You differentiate between high performing individuals and those with high potential.	You support and encourage high potential individuals when they encounter difficulties and setbacks to ensure their engagement and retention.	You ensure high potential individuals in your business areas are provided with stretch opportunities.





## Executive 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 embody the spirit of public service by displaying empathy and compassion, integrity and humility. You deliver results under challenging conditions while maintaining the reputation of your business areas and the agency. You encourage excellence by recognising and acknowledging outstanding performance in your business areas. You ensure specific feedback is provided to staff who perform above expectations.

You are committed to maintaining good corporate governance and proactively identify potential reputational risk and areas of non-compliance. You promote respect for the sector, monitor ethical issues and deal appropriately with any misconduct.

You understand and manage the impact of your leadership style on others. You proactively seek to build a presence that shapes confidence in your agency and the sector. You understand how your reputation is linked to your business areas and manage the impression you have on others when necessary. You demonstrate a genuine passion for your business areas, the agency and the work of the sector.

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
<p><b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b></p>	<p><b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b></p>	<p><b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b></p>
<p>You create a culture where empathy and compassion for stakeholders are highly valued.</p>	<p>You develop an empathetic and compassionate culture across your business areas, setting the standard for others.</p>	<p>You shape the reputation of the agency as being compassionate and empathetic.</p>
<p>You proactively identify areas of reputational risk and take steps to mitigate these risks and preserve the reputation of your business areas and the agency.</p> <p>You develop and implement plans and systems that promote integrity and best practice in corporate governance.</p>	<p>You coach your senior leaders to identify and manage potential reputational risks.</p> <p>You implement strategies to embed best practice in corporate governance and promote integrity.</p>	<p>You identify and suggest updates and improvements to corporate governance strategies to build the agency's reputation and support strong governance.</p> <p>You contribute to creating a philosophy of best practice in corporate governance and integrity in the agency.</p>
<p>You lead by example and communicate objectives for your business areas in a way that inspires excellence.</p>	<p>You communicate a compelling vision and strategy for your business areas founded on the desire for excellence.</p> <p>You display passion for your work and inspire your leaders to do the same.</p>	<p>You demonstrate and communicate a passion for excellence in the sector.</p> <p>You lead in a manner that creates enthusiasm and energy to deliver the highest quality.</p>
<p>You operate ethically and proactively manage unethical behaviour in your business areas.</p>	<p>You ensure others conduct business, work and activities ethically and in line with the spirit of public service.</p> <p>You identify potential conflicts of interest and unethical behaviour early.</p>	<p>You coach leaders in your business areas, with a particular focus on the importance of leading ethically.</p> <p>You outline the role you each play in reinforcing the spirit of public service in teams in your business areas.</p>
<p>You conduct business activities in a manner that is consistent with enhancing the reputation of the agency and the sector.</p>	<p>You coach your senior leaders to create a culture where business activities are carried out in a manner that enhances the reputation of the agency and sector.</p>	<p>You lead and engage with stakeholders in a manner that builds the reputation of the sector, setting the standard for others.</p>



## Executive 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 vary your personal style to engage and influence the performance of your teams and business areas. You demonstrate a high level of self awareness and reflect on your own strengths, limitations and blind spots. You display a willingness to learn from your past experiences and apply those learnings to new and unfamiliar situations.

You engage in learning opportunities that contribute to your future development needs, actively seeking guidance and support from your mentors. You obtain feedback regularly from your peers, direct reports and leaders, exploring the merit of the feedback and creating action plans to support your development.

You are open to change and willing to adapt your work methods and revise your processes to effectively lead your business areas.

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
<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are evolving and starting to add value in this context.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate for this context and have room to grow.</b>	<b>You demonstrate behaviours that are expected for someone who is fully developed in this context and can stretch.</b>
You develop personal and professional goals for yourself and others that align with the future development needs of your business areas.	You identify personal learning opportunities that lead to the development of new skills and knowledge to support the future needs of your business areas.  You make time for these experiences and encourage others to invest in learning opportunities.	You intentionally role model a practice of continuous learning across your business areas, sharing your development journey with your leaders.
You are able to adapt to new agency demands and changing environments.	You determine what needs to be changed in your business areas by analysing what is missing in the context of the agency’s strategy and adapt accordingly.	You are able to deal and cope with difficult issues during change initiatives.  You provide strong leadership across your business areas in times of change.
You are receptive to change and innovative approaches in your business areas.  You demonstrate a willingness to adopt changes in practices and approaches.	You embrace strategic change initiatives in your business areas.  You lead change efforts with confidence and consider intended and unintended impacts of changes.	You coach leaders in your business areas to overcome resistance to change and deal constructively with difficult situations during times of change.  You empower and encourage leaders to coach others.
You demonstrate commitment to your personal growth as a leader by regularly seeking and responding to feedback.	You demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement of personal and agency performance.  You actively seek feedback from multiple sources to improve performance.	You continuously analyse the successes and failures of both individuals and agencies.  You apply this learning to yourself, the agency and sector.
You work effectively in different situations and with a variety of people and stakeholders. You can understand diverse perspectives and their impact on your business areas and the agency.  You shift gears comfortably.	You see matters from varying perspectives and integrate a range of diverse ideas into plans for your business areas and the agency.	You create a culture of diversity and inclusion that demonstrates true assimilation of different ideas and perspectives for the future of the agency.

**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.

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Copies are available in different formats on request.

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