

Why mobility and what is the executive mobility program?

Queensland public sector SES4 mobility program

The SES4 mobility program is coordinated by the Public Sector Commission (PSC) to enhance a potential pipeline for our future chief executive appointments, and to build a resilient, innovative and future-ready senior executive service. Facilitating short to medium-term development opportunities, it will provide an immersive experience for individuals in another public sector entity or another area of their entity.

The program offers opportunities across Queensland Government at the SES4 level and is open to current SES4 officers, and SES3 High officers who have been deemed suitable for an SES4 role (or above) through an open merit in a previous recruitment process. Participants will be encouraged to seek support through mentoring and/or an optional executive coach and be exposed to work, and deliver outcomes aligned to their development needs.

Movement of employees is a way to address surges in demand or to solve complex problems. The rotation of high performing employees through a formal mobility program also facilitates development, as well as knowledge sharing between participants and organisations.

Success of the program will be underpinned by strong support, advocacy and direct engagement from chief executives, contributing to building a more collaborative and connected public sector.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the [Workforce mobility directive](#).

The program objectives

This program will enable senior leaders to gain wider public service experience and grow their capability across diverse environments and industries. It is designed to support senior leadership development, elevating individual networks and cross-sector collaboration.

When senior executives are on placement, it may create opportunities for emerging leaders within the home entity to step up and act in higher roles. This can help develop the next generation of leaders, ensuring a robust talent pipeline and fostering a culture of growth and resilience.

In releasing senior executives, home entities contribute to a culture of cooperation and reciprocity. In the future, they may benefit from hosting executives from other organisations, gaining access to fresh perspectives and expertise. This further supports the sector principle of stewardship of the system.

Achieving the outcomes from this program will contribute to establishing a high-performing and agile public sector with a shared purpose for service delivery.

Quote from a senior executive on a current six-month placement:

"It's been great to meet new colleagues, understand different services and challenges, and focus on how I can use my skills to help. I've learnt a great deal about an entirely different and vital service. It's definitely made me a better public servant."

Support for the program

The PSC developed the program following consultation with the Queensland Public Sector Leadership Board, who indicated strong support for establishing a mobility program for SES development. They shared a preference for a program that would see high performers released to support their career goals and to create a more collaborative public sector.

The structured mobility approach addresses Professor Coaldrake's 2022 *Let the Sunshine In: Review of Culture and Accountability in the Queensland Public Sector* report recommendation relating to secondment and exchange of the SES cohort.

The program is developed in alignment with the *Public Sector Act 2022* (the Act) provisions about mobility arrangements (section 82) and secondments (section 160) for public service employees, and the workforce mobility directive (03/25).

Program principles

- Chief executives must actively support the program by releasing high-performing executives to participate, ensuring the program achieves its objective to develop a high performing future chief executive pipeline, promoting cross-entity collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- There is a shared understanding of the mutual benefits of participation for the individual, the home and host entity, ensuring all parties gain from the placement.
- Mobility placements are temporary and ensure the continuity of employment, with no disruption to the executive's ongoing employment status.

- Key stakeholders, including participating executives, home entities and host entities contribute to the evaluation of the program to facilitate continuous improvement and maximise outcomes for the public sector.

Scope and eligibility

- All SES4 officers who are engaged under the *Public Sector Act 2022*.
- SES3 High officers, who have been deemed suitable for an SES4 role (or above) through an open merit in a previous recruitment process, can self-nominate with endorsement from their delegate.

Placement opportunities for program participation would fall under the following types:

- Filling short-term planned or unplanned leave (anticipated vacancy of longer than 4 weeks but less than 12 months) from across the public service or internal to current entity.
- Establishing or leading a new or existing taskforce.
- Filling a temporary vacancy during a recruitment process.
- A direct swap of two (or more) SES4 level employees, facilitated by the PSC.

Process for participation

Participants

- SES4 officers and SES3 High officers, who have been deemed suitable for a SES4 role through a previous recruitment process, can self-nominate for a placement through the online nomination form hosted on ForGov with endorsement from their chief executive. Officers are required to express interest during regular performance and development discussions, highlighting development goals that could be met through a mobility placement. Officers identify the type of experience being sought to meet development goals (for example, industry, size and complexity of entity, type of role or function).
- When required, participate in an appropriate selection process with a host entity chief executive.

Host entity chief executive

- The chief executive is to consult with the PSC about upcoming SES4 level vacancies via sesmobility@psc.qld.gov.au or by contacting Deputy Commissioner, Rhiannan Howell (rhiannan.howell@psc.qld.gov.au), who will discuss options with the chief executive, including whether mobility is suitable, and provide any suitable candidates for consideration.
- The PSC to provide options for consideration.
- Lead an appropriate selection process. The process will be dependent on the circumstances of the placement. For example, length of placement or number of suitable candidates and in alignment with agency specific recruitment and selection policies.
- Discuss the offer of placement with the home agency delegate.

Selecting your preferred candidate

- Document the selection process in accordance with the [guideline about SES employment arrangements](#).
- Invite the successful officer to participate in the placement.
- Arrange for appropriate documentation to be completed. For example, the mobility arrangement template or secondment form in consultation with the participant and home entity.
- Advise the PSC of the selection outcome.

Home entity chief executive

- Proactively lead performance discussions to identify development goals of SES4 officers, or SES3 High officers who have been deemed suitable for a SES4 role through a previous recruitment process.
- Support release of the officer for SES4 Program Mobility participation.
- Arrange for the appropriate documentation to be completed in consultation with the host entity (for example, the mobility arrangement or secondment form) and send to payroll.
- If required, liaise with the PSC, via sesmobility@psc.qld.gov.au, if the placement results in a vacancy that needs to be filled.

Support during the placement

- The host entity identifies a buddy from within the organisation to support the onboarding of the employee.
- The participant may choose to identify and connect with a mentor internal to the sector to provide support and guidance during the placement.
- The PSC can provide options for participants to engage an external executive coach to access during the placement period. This could be instead or in addition to a mentor. There is flexibility around support needs, depending on experience of officer, complexity of role or duration of placement.

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders following participant selection

Participant

- Identify any potential conflicts of interest before commencing the placement and manage accordingly.
- Engage in performance discussions with the host entity supervisor and agree to performance expectations and processes for feedback.
- Identify a mentor from within the sector to engage for the duration of the placement and/or choose one of the external executive coaches to guide career development.
- Engage in development opportunities offered during the placement to meet agreed performance goals.
- Participate in pre, mid and post-placement evaluation processes.
- Consider taking on a mentor role for others who participate in the program.
- Share the experience post-placement to encourage participation of others in the sector.

Home entity supervisor

- Ensure a respectful and meaningful return of the participant following their placement, including ongoing professional development identified as part of the placement.
- Approve and cover development costs during placement. For example, optional executive coaching.

- Ensure ongoing connection to the participant during the placement, sharing any significant organisational changes or other relevant information.

Host entity supervisor

- Ensure the participant has declared any conflicts of interest before commencing the placement and a plan is in place to manage any identified conflicts of interest.
- Identify an entity “buddy” to support the onboarding of the participant.
- Provide a safe, respectful and inclusive work environment for the participant.
- Lead ongoing performance conversations with the program participant, discussing clear performance expectations and processes for feedback.
- Identify internal learning opportunities to support the participant meet development goals.
- Participate in an evaluation process to support the participant’s development and the program’s ongoing improvement.
- Promote exposure to new and appropriate expertise, and stakeholder networks.

Executive coach

- Engaged as an independent professional to guide development and provide career coaching of the participant through the placement (optional).

Mentor

- Engaged by the participant, the mentor is a senior executive within the public sector who can provide practical guidance.
- Provide insights about professional experiences.
- Make themselves available for ongoing support.
- Strengthens the sector leadership capability by developing others.

Impact to conditions of employment

The impact of a program placement on employment conditions will depend on the specific circumstances of the arrangement and will be detailed in the placement documentation. For example, if the role in the host entity is classified at a higher level than the participant's substantive position, they may receive higher remuneration during the placement. There will be no financial disadvantage as a result of mobility placements, in alignment with the workforce mobility directive.

Change to the term of the placement

Should an extension to the initial agreed upon term of the placement be required, an alternative end date will be discussed, considering the needs of the participant and the home and host entity. Any extension requires the consent of all parties to the placement.

A mobility arrangement can be ended by either the chief executive of the home or host entity, and a secondment can only be ended by the host entity chief executive. Where an officer undertaking a placement is dissatisfied with the arrangement, both the home and host entity's chief executive should engage to resolve the concerns of the individual. This may or may not result in ceasing the placement early.

Program evaluation

Evaluation is important to gauge outcomes for participants, host and home entities, and the broader public sector.

Measures of success will relate to the experience of the individual participant, enhanced leadership competencies, contributions made to government priorities, improved cross-entity collaboration and the career pathway of individual participants.

There are a range of processes to measure the success of the program, including:

- individual participant reflective practice (pre, mid and post-program), to record experience and development gains
- online surveys, to be completed pre, mid and post-placement
- feedback from host entity supervisor via a survey or interview
- longitudinal career tracking of participants post-placement.

Further information

For further information email sesmobility@psc.qld.gov.au.