

# Policy Professional Capability Standard

Professional Standards Capability Program



Your public sector,  
your profession.



## IPAA POLICY PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY STANDARD

### USE OF THE IPAA POLICY PROFESSIONAL STANDARD

The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) has defined public sector professional policy capability standards to assist in developing the policy capability required for contemporary policy formulation and advice in the public sector by:

- creating a standard to review policy capability at the individual, team and organisational level
- supporting recruitment of appropriately skilled and experienced people to policy roles
- providing a framework to assess the policy related training needs of individuals and organisations
- supporting career and succession planning for policy roles
- providing guidance to individuals on the capabilities that they need to attain, and then maintain, as a policy professional
- providing a standard against which to manage the performance of policy professionals
- providing guidance to registered training organisation and universities of public sector policy capabilities to address in their curricula, and
- recognising policy as a skilled profession that requires an investment in continuous professional development.

This standard aims to be practical in nature, inclusive and descriptive rather than theoretical or prescriptive.

### DEFINITION OF POLICY

**“A purposive course of action (or inaction) designed to have a positive impact in the community.”**

Policy is an activity of government which is a process of decision making and realisation of government intent.

This definition reflects a widely agreed view that effective policy is designed to have a positive impact on a specific group within (and more broadly in) the whole community. Effective policy work takes account of the outcomes (or impacts) the government requires and formulates responses to deliver those outcomes whilst minimising potential negative impacts. The policy process in Australia can be seen to incorporate the effective integration of five key considerations:

- A clear definition of the problem for which solutions are sought and the outcomes (or positive impacts) required.
- The evidence on which to base decisions and courses of action in the immediate, mid and long-term.
- The political and institutional context in which the policy is to be developed.
- The stakeholders and interest groups and how they will be engaged in the development and implementation of the policy and in co-producing the outcomes.
- The design and delivery of workable and practical initiatives and solutions (programs, services, regulatory changes and activities) that have the most likelihood of delivering the government’s outcomes within the identified constraints in the political and policy context.

Policy development leads to government decisions, accountability for implementation and ultimately to outcomes and benefits in the community.

## CONTEMPORARY POLICY CONTEXT

Contextual issues to consider for the modern policy professional include:

- Many policy problems in the contemporary policy environment are complex and wicked in nature; they are cross-cutting, difficult to define and complex to solve.
- Policy issues emerge quickly and with little or no regard for traditional business hours – the 24/7 media cycle and the global context in which governments operate place new pressures upon the modern policy professional in terms of responsiveness to government. Judgements and decisions may need to be made on the basis of incomplete or shifting information.
- Social media and rapid communication technologies support an increasing number of special interest coalitions, presenting challenges for relevant stakeholder identification and management.
- Ever tightening fiscal constraints necessitate changes in priorities and directions. This calls for policy professionals to be mindful of fiscal efficiency and to consider and explain trade-offs when formulating and communicating new initiatives and proposals.
- New methods of operating are being borrowed from other professions, for example project management and design thinking approaches to the policy development and delivery process are being adopted, sometimes creating new working arrangements and shifting the expectations and core capabilities for policy professionals.
- The nature and interests of political actors and the citizenry themselves is dynamic and changing. Modern policy professionals operating in these volatile times require agility and flexibility.
- In Australia, responsibilities for many aspects of government services are split between different government departments and agencies and between the three differing layers of government. This requires that successful policy development not only comprehends the complexity of these responsibilities, but also addresses this complexity in policy design and implementation.

## THE ROLE OF POLICY PROFESSIONALS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

There are a variety of policy roles within line, central and coordinating agencies across the three public sector jurisdictions in Australia. Complex policy is generally developed by a team of policy professionals, policy officers and policy support/ admin officers selected for their complementary skills for the particular project.

Policy professionals will most likely have an undergraduate degree together with post-graduate qualifications in a policy or subject specific area relevant to their policy subject role. They are also likely to have significant and broad experience in both policy and operational roles.

Modern policy officers usually achieve results through leveraging networks and engaging groups and individuals (including citizens themselves) from a range of sectors, including academic, private and not-for-profit sectors. The modern policy officer is required to work across traditional boundaries; whole-of-government both within jurisdictions and inter-jurisdictionally. A specific characteristic of a policy professional is to be informed about the powers, constraints and operations of government and highly engaged with current affairs. Policy professionals understand and strategically align their work to the relevant political, organisational and strategic policy context, as well as plan for and manage appropriate stakeholder engagement and communications. These “softer” policy skills are supported by highly developed skills in critical thinking, analysis, research, a good understanding of policy development and implementation processes, as well as sound judgment.

Policy professionals themselves may be operating outside of the public sector– in think tanks, non-government organisations, lobby groups and tertiary institutions. These wide-ranging actors present potential partnering and other opportunities to which the modern public sector policy professional must be alert.

To support the governments in developing and implementing policy, the activities of a policy professional may include:

- designs and implements the policy development process, including establishing appropriate governance arrangements
- identifies information sources, compiles and summarises the evidence base and facilitates exchanges of information and intelligence
- identifies and builds networks of external stakeholders, and develops and promulgates communication materials for stakeholders
- consults, collaborates, engages and negotiates with other Governments, industry and community groups, including managing working groups as appropriate
- produces and edits written material including reports, briefing papers, submissions, speeches, correspondence, Cabinet submissions and discussion papers
- provides oral briefings to internal and external stakeholders, including the Minister and Parliament
- develops implementation, monitoring and evaluation plans for policy initiatives, and
- manages policy initiative changes including engaging with Government and other parties as appropriate.

A policy professional within government is expected to demonstrate and uphold the highest ethical standards of conduct and integrity. These include:

- acting with care and diligence and making decisions that are honest, fair, impartial, and timely, and consider all relevant information.
- treating people with respect, courtesy and sensitivity and recognising their interests, rights, safety and welfare, and
- acting responsibly and in an accountable manner to ensure the efficient, effective and appropriate use of human, environmental, financial and physical resources, property and information.

These ethical requirements of public servants are frequently outlined in a Code of Conduct or Ethical guidelines which are issued by the relevant public sector employment body. However a professional public servant is expected to not only uphold these values, but also be a champion for them in the workplace.

## **POLICY PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY DOMAINS- OVERVIEW**

### **1. Problem Clarification and Evidence Base**

Define and describe the problem or issue and the outcomes sought. Undertake a rigorous analysis to determine if a policy intervention is justified and develop a sound evidence base to support any desired change.

### **2. Policy and Political Strategic Alignment**

Shape and manage the development of policy options aligned to government policies and priorities and the public interest. Monitor and understand developments in the policy, organisational and political context and provide recommendations that respond to the changing context in which Ministers and Governments operate.

### 3. Communication, Collaboration, Partnering and Engagement

Build and manage productive and effective relationships and partnerships that engage stakeholders and citizens in understanding the problem, identifying innovative potential solutions and in supporting implementation.

### 4. Design, Implement and Evaluate

Design the policy solution and manage and evaluate implementation to ensure delivery of the desired outcomes.

### 5. Professional Development and Contribute to the Professional Body of Knowledge

Take responsibility for their own professional development and contribute to the policy profession.

## POLICY PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY DOMAINS, SUB-DOMAINS AND OUTCOME STANDARDS

| <b>1. Problem Clarification and Evidence Base</b>   |   |
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| Define and describe the problem or issue and the outcomes sought. Undertake a rigorous analysis to determine if a policy intervention is justified and develop a sound evidence base to support any desired change. |   |
| 1.1. Harness and apply a full understanding of the industry characteristics and/ or community settings within which the policy will operate.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and access information sources, and apply sector and subject current and historical knowledge, to fully understand the problem and its context.</li><li>• Recognise and engage with internal and external expertise and understand, evaluate and integrate their contribution.</li><li>• Keep informed and take account of local and global developments in the specific subject area and be alert to broader current affairs and developments in other related policy areas.</li></ul>  |
| 1.2. Determine an appropriate public policy development methodology to guide the policy development that allows for proper definition and consideration of the problem and the intended outcomes sought.            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate alternative approaches to policy development and understand the key determinants which will influence the choice of process in a particular context.</li><li>• Develop and apply practical tools and relevant processes within the chosen methodology e.g. risk analysis, cost-benefit analysis, business case development, decision-making analytical frameworks, regulatory impact statements, sensitivity testing and impact assessment.</li><li>• Select and apply governance arrangements for the policy development process that reflect the complexity of the particular policy task.</li><li>• Develop means to ensure credibility of the evidence such as through independent sourcing and providing for transparency of the analysis and outcomes.</li></ul> |
| 1.3. Analyse and model the problem and the potential  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate broad environmental factors to ensure appropriate research is undertaken and data sets are available for the policy development process.</li></ul>   |

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| <p>benefits using a variety of techniques and tools. Understand and apply research methodologies to the examination and interpretation of data and other information.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret information gathered from a wide variety of sources and perspectives and distil the key issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ establish and bring together relevant facts, figures, ideas, analysis and research</li> <li>○ incorporate evidence from accountability processes, the media and interested parties</li> <li>○ use evidence from lessons learned, evaluations, literature reviews, research, parallel initiatives and the experiences of other sectors and internationally, and</li> <li>○ interpret the impacts of the legislative frameworks and industry self-regulatory mechanisms on the current situation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reconcile and explain conflicting, divergent and incomplete data and information, engaging the expertise of others when necessary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ identify data and information deficiencies and their impact on the evidence base</li> <li>○ identify and allow for potential biases in data, and</li> <li>○ consider the implications of divergent or shifting information</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p>1.4. Compile, and keep updated as required, a credible, timely, sound and compelling evidence base to support the policy change (including a no change option).</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Ministers and decision makers have timely, relevant, succinct and reliable evidence to inform decision making and provide the policy change rationale at all stages of the policy development process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ identify and quantify potential direct and indirect policy impacts on all parties, both organisations and individuals</li> <li>○ identify the risks, uncertainties, assumptions and interdependencies, including those in implementation, and</li> <li>○ provide a view of the confidence levels supporting different aspects of the supporting analysis.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Monitor the ongoing validity of policy priorities in the light of new evidence.</li> <li>• Present relevant material in a variety of written and oral forms that is appropriate to the audience.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2. Policy and Political Strategic Alignment</b></p> <p>Shape and manage the development of policy options aligned to government policies and priorities and the public interest. Monitor and understand developments in the policy, organisational and political context and provide recommendations that respond to the changing context in which Ministers and Governments operate.</p> |  |
| <p>2.1. Understand and respond to political influences and government context.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build collaborative and professional relationships with Ministers and their offices using established agency protocols and develop a shared understanding of the policy drivers and what success would look like.</li> <li>• Identify and understand the source of Ministers' interest and anticipate and appropriately respond to challenges.</li> <li>• Understand and recognise the nuances of the current political context, including sensitive organisational issues, and translate Ministerial vision into a realisable course of action.</li> <li>• In providing advice, identify and address potential tensions between political imperatives and appropriate policy design.</li> <li>• Anticipate and assess the impact of changes in Government policy and initiate and contribute to appropriate responses.</li> <li>• Align the extent and breadth of the policy development process (e.g. evidence, consultation) with the scale and complexity of</li> </ul>   |

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|   | <p>the problem being addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide written and oral advice in a form and manner that is appropriate to the audience and context.</li> </ul>   |
| 2.2. Enable effective and accountable public administration.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Ministers' engagement with parliament and public accountability processes.</li> <li>• Represent government policy sensitively, ethically and accurately under public and parliamentary scrutiny.</li> <li>• Understand the role, accountabilities and obligations of public sector employees. Understand and manage the delineation between the roles, accountabilities and obligations of public servants, ministerial staff and elected parliamentary representatives.</li> <li>• Work within public sector wide standards and codes of practice, and in accordance with public administration guidelines and legislation.</li> </ul>  |
| 2.3. Understand and apply knowledge of the constitutional, parliamentary and legislative framework.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and effectively facilitate outcomes within <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ budgetary cycle and government funding arrangements</li> <li>○ parliamentary, legislative and election cycles and processes</li> <li>○ broader parliamentary and political structures e.g. Senate and Cabinet Committees, and</li> <li>○ Commonwealth, State/Territory and Local Government constitutional and intergovernmental arrangements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Within the applicable policy, ethical and legal frameworks, ensure compliance with government defined policy, budgetary and reporting processes.</li> </ul>   |
| 2.4. Reflect current policy context and whole-of-government objectives in advice and recommendations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and operate within agency and whole-of-government strategic policy directions, and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ identify and appropriately incorporate relevant whole-of-government policy objectives (including enduring public sector policy values such as equity and accountability), cross jurisdictional and international commitments and previous decisions</li> <li>○ identify cross agency and jurisdictional policy and program interdependencies and advice on potential impacts and implications</li> <li>○ engage and negotiate across government(s) to support coordinated progress towards shared goals, monitor progress, and establish joint briefing and decision making arrangements, and</li> <li>○ manage policy conflicts effectively.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop and contribute policy advice and recommendations to government policy processes such as the budget development cycle.</li> </ul> |

### 3. Communication, Collaboration, Partnering and Engagement

Build and manage productive and effective relationships and partnerships that engage stakeholders and citizens in understanding the problem, identifying innovative potential solutions and in supporting implementation.

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| <p>3.1. Define objectives for stakeholder consultation and engagement during evidence collection, policy design, implementation planning and front –line delivery.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify those groups whom have an interest in, or might be affected by the intended decision. Understand their potential level of influence and need to be engaged in the policy development process and their likely objectives.</li> <li>• Ensure that there are opportunities for a balanced range of stakeholders to be equitably engaged in all stages of the policy development process.</li> <li>• Decide on the objectives and priorities for collaboration, consultation, partnering and/ or engagement at different stages of the policy development process – problem definition, evidence collection, options generation and testing, feasibility testing, implementation design and evaluation processes.</li> <li>• Clearly define and articulate the reasons for engagement, the goals and rules of consultation, the limits of the exercise and the intended use of information.</li> <li>• Consider and evaluate partnering relationships with stakeholders and others as a mechanism for delivering policy.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>3.2. Design and develop communication and engagement processes, systems and structures to support the achievement of stakeholder engagement objectives.</p>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand strengths and weaknesses of methods of engagement and select best method or methods for the purpose.</li> <li>• Decide on the extent and timing of communication, collaboration, consultation, partnering and/ or participation throughout the policy development and implementation process.</li> <li>• Identify and use appropriate communications and media tools in the development and implementation of policy.</li> <li>• In determining which groups and individuals will be engaged and in what manner, considering coalitions of interest, attitude, sensitivity, corporate impacts, benefits , risks and the consequences of non-engagement.</li> <li>• Clearly define the expectations for both public servants and stakeholders involved in the engagement processes and ensure that these are clearly understood and managed.</li> <li>• Consider the unique needs, limitations and organisational structures of each stakeholder and interest group in the formulation of engagement processes, including the implications for timing and the means of communication.</li> <li>• Co-ordinate engagement across government with stakeholders/ interest groups and citizens to enhance knowledge management, ensure policy coherence, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of ‘consultation fatigue’.</li> <li>• Allow sufficient time and flexibility to allow for the emergence of new ideas and proposals, and ensure that there is a robust and functioning process that allows for their integration into the policy-making processes.</li> <li>• When required, engage experts in the design and delivery of communication strategies using agency procurement processes.</li> <li>• Ensure recording and feedback mechanisms are robust and intelligible.</li> </ul> |



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| <p>3.3. Constructively engage with interest groups and/ or the public to build consensus for the chosen course of action.</p>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate strong networks based as far as is possible on openness, trust and respect for individual diversity. Use facilitation and listening skills to create open and measured exchanges.</li> <li>• Collaborate with interest groups, stakeholders and other government agencies at all stages of the development and decision making process.</li> <li>• Liaise and negotiate with stakeholders to resolve issues and identify collaborative opportunities to enhance the support for the outcome and the delivery of the policy.</li> <li>• Build stakeholder consensus though appreciating diverse perspectives and using appropriate communication, negotiation and mediation skills.</li> <li>• Work with potential delivery partners inside and outside of government to resolve problems effectively and identify common efficiencies. Ensure those responsible for program delivery have the opportunity for input to policy options.</li> <li>• Understand and employ citizen-centric approaches (where appropriate) to define problems and consider innovative solutions.</li> <li>• At the outset of engagement clearly state to stakeholders, interest groups and citizens the intention to provide post-consultation feedback and follow through with that feedback.</li> <li>• Provide objective, reliable, easy to find and understand, complete and accessible information.</li> </ul> |
| <p>3.4. Analyse stakeholder engagement and consultation.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and analyse the results of the stakeholder engagement strategy including attainment of objectives, relevance of the methods used, participation in the process, feedback and satisfaction of interest groups with the engagement.</li> <li>• Integrate the lessons learned from the evaluation of stakeholder engagement into consultation strategies for future policy development processes.</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms to monitor stakeholder needs and trends.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>4. Design, Implement and Evaluate</b><br/>Design the policy solution and manage and evaluate implementation to ensure delivery of the desired outcomes.</p> |  |
| <p>4.1. Develop and evaluate a range of policy solutions that will achieve the change required.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design policy to achieve the desired outcomes while accepting that there are levels of uncertainty for solutions to complex policy problems that need to be accommodated.</li> <li>• Understand and apply the application of techniques such as field research, pilots and trials, to add valuable information about what works in practice as opposed to what is predicted to work from theory.</li> <li>• Assess potential options using decision analysis methods (e.g. cost /benefit, multi-criteria analyses, risk analysis and SWOT analyses).</li> <li>• Define and apply criteria for selecting preferred options, including their short and long term impacts, the impact of potential future events and the ability to respond to change.</li> </ul>  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use judgment to select policy solutions which are appropriate for the complexity of the problem, the resource and time constraints and in accord with government priorities.</li> <li>• Incorporate lessons learned from current and past similar policy implementations.</li> <li>• Evaluate the potential of economic, legal or other policy instruments (such as information, regulation, co-production, incentives and subsidies) used alone or in combination to deliver the policy outcomes.</li> <li>• Undertake system analysis including the potential and limitations of existing systems and practices.</li> <li>• Consider the public interest and how it is to be balanced with sectoral interests.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>4.2. Support informed decisions on the choice of policy instruments using rigorous, criteria and proven design frameworks to develop policy options that are innovative, sustainable and can be delivered.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate the outcomes from internal and external stakeholder engagement processes into the design process; predict the feasibility and expected outcomes of each policy options on the industry/ stakeholders and society as a whole.</li> <li>• Consider fully and develop policy options that are sustainable, affordable, commercially aware, offer value for money and that incorporate full consideration of implementation and front-line delivery.</li> <li>• Understand the change processes required and apply an understanding of behavioural theory and evidence to better predict impacts of policy changes.</li> <li>• In selecting the recommended policy approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ identify the relative merits, advantages and disadvantages of each instrument and when used in combination</li> <li>○ understand the community and government context needed for each instrument to be effective</li> <li>○ incorporate relevant considerations including the benefits, costs, risks, direct and indirect effects, implementation issues and other potential impacts including perverse incentives, and</li> <li>○ using a systematic approach to understand and address how the policies will work, and are working, in practice and the practicalities and risks to implementation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assess the extent to which the cultural environment will support a successful implementation outcome (both internal and external) and include compensating strategies.</li> <li>• Provide written advice on potential policy changes which is comprehensive, considers all planned and potential impacts, costs, risk and benefits.</li> <li>• Keep abreast of the application and effectiveness of innovative policy instrument choices used in other agencies, other Australian and overseas jurisdictions.</li> </ul> |
| <p>4.3. Develop and execute robust implementation plans to deliver the policy outcomes.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply project management principles to ensure policy implementation and desired outcomes are delivered within key milestones and targets.</li> <li>• Consider and acquire the required skill mix and knowledge for successful implementation, using multidisciplinary teams appropriately.</li> </ul>  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematically identify internal and external issues, challenges and risks that could affect implementation and ensure they are addressed during the design phase and beyond.</li> <li>• Work with stakeholders and delivery agents, and those with practical experience in the area, to build a common understanding of intended outcomes and to test the feasibility of planned implementation methods and timelines with stakeholders and delivery agents. Ensure implementation timelines are realistic and workable, constraints identified and factored into schedules.</li> <li>• Analyse and establish risk management and governance arrangements for implementation.</li> <li>• Understand legislative development processes and, where relevant, contribute to the development of legislation and legislative instruments.</li> <li>• Consider the planning, monitoring and management of implementation costs and expenses in line with budget requirements and constraints.</li> <li>• Define, clarify and communicate clearly and formally the roles and responsibilities of those involved in implementation.</li> <li>• Ensure the necessary delegations have been provided to those implementing the policy.</li> <li>• Establish robust dispute resolution processes.</li> <li>• For whole-of-government initiatives, develop an overarching implementation plan addressing roles and dependencies of those involved and incorporate the experiences of all contributing agencies/ sectors factored into the intelligence for implementation planning.</li> </ul> |
| <p>4.4. Maintain ongoing policy accountability and re-evaluate and adapt policy in response to delivery performance and changing circumstances.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement effective and timely feedback and reporting systems.</li> <li>• Build the results of systematic evaluation of early outcomes into the policy development process, and at subsequent stages in the policy life cycle.</li> <li>• Monitor the achievement of policy outcomes and the realization of benefits using accurate, timely and relevant, quantitative and qualitative assessments.</li> <li>• Establish sound processes to ensure ongoing policy is kept under review to ensure it continues to deal with the problems it was designed to tackle, takes account of changes in the external environment and maintains political legitimacy and mandate.</li> <li>• Keep government informed of practical implementation issues, and work with program deliverers to identify and resolve potential delivery issues and implement policy improvements. Take steps to mitigate gaps or weaknesses throughout the life of the policy and consider alternative approaches as required.</li> <li>• Extract lessons learnt in delivery, including about what works, to become part of the ongoing evidence base.</li> <li>• Keep thorough records to ensure a sound control environment including records of key decisions and the basis for those decisions.</li> </ul>   |

## 5. Professional Development and Contribute to the Professional Body of Knowledge

All policy professionals

- are responsible for the development of their own personal leadership and policy knowledge, skills and experience, including establishing and maintaining relations with policy professionals working in other areas of government
- accept the importance of more senior and experienced policy professionals supporting the development of more junior policy professionals, and act accordingly
- invest in the policy profession by undertaking on-the-job training, providing advice and feedback, coaching and mentoring other policy professionals, and attaining appropriate vocational, university and/or professional qualifications
- contribute to the body of knowledge supporting the profession and the development of new methods to improve the quality of policy outcomes, and
- encourage senior management to invest in up skilling policy professionals to improve organisational policy capability.

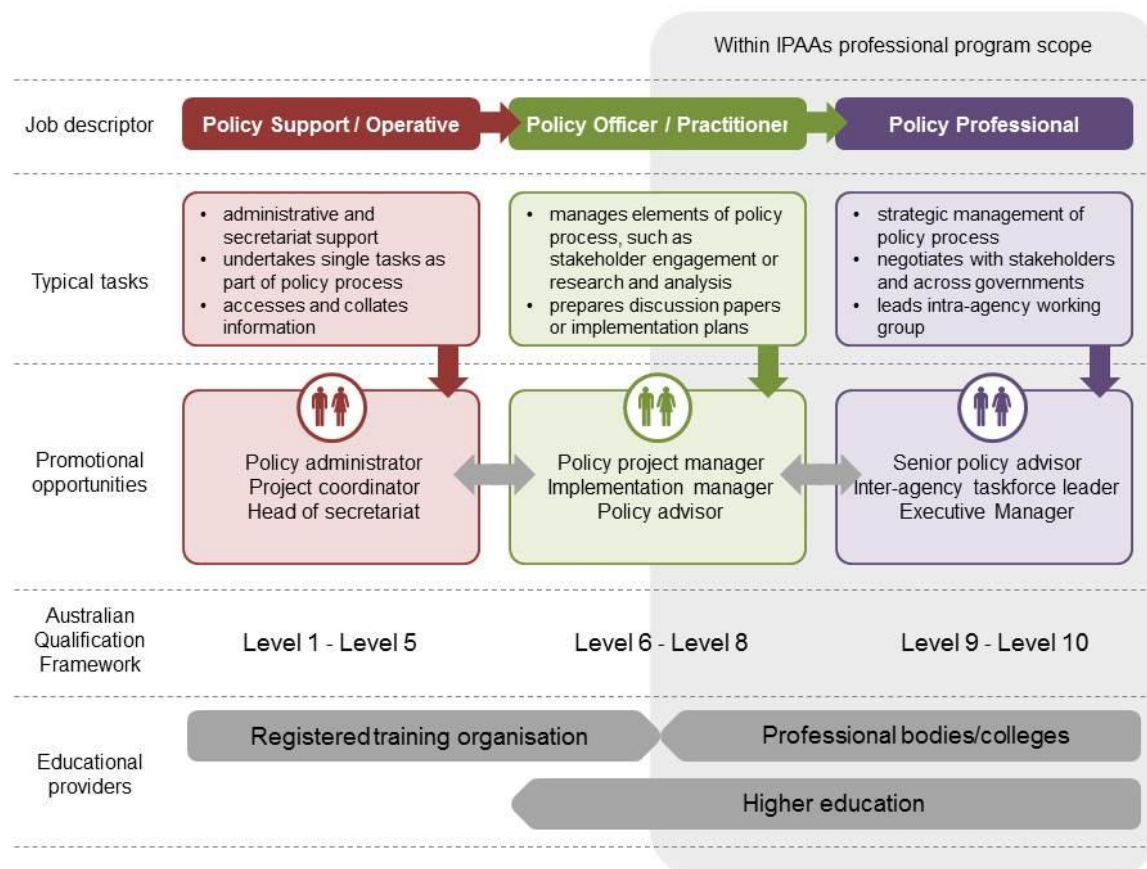
### OTHER POLICY ROLES

For this Policy Capability Standard three policy capability levels have been identified:

- policy professionals (who lead the profession)
- policy practitioners (who manage and undertake more complex policy development tasks), and
- policy support officers/ operative (who may undertake policy development tasks and/ or provide administrative support to development processes or policy implementation).

Each of these capability levels would understand or be aware of the range of policy capability domain knowledge and skill requirements which are detailed above, but at different levels of awareness and expertise. The capabilities required by professionals are indicated above. The capabilities required by the other two levels are dealt with in further detail below. Many skilled people work in the areas covered by public sector policy at both professional, practitioner and operative levels. People are able to move across these levels depending on their skills, knowledge and experience gained through work and/ or formal education. The diagram on the next page indicates how these levels interrelate and gives examples of jobs at each level.

Policy Practitioner and Policy support officers within government are expected to demonstrate and uphold the highest ethical standards of conduct and integrity as indicated above for policy professionals.



**Policy Officer (Practitioner)** – interprets, investigates, engages, researches, monitors, resolves, responds, coordinates, facilitates, develops and delivers

A policy officer is likely to have a moderate level of experience in policy development and operations, complemented by relevant vocational or university qualifications. They have a sound understanding of the policy and political context and are able to develop policy within relevant legislative and administrative frameworks. Policy is generally either their primary function or a key responsibility of their role.

A policy officer typically works within a policy team and/ or supports more complex policy development work. They may take carriage of less complex policy development work. A policy officer may draft papers and reports, ministerial and other correspondence, and discussion papers for review by more senior staff. They may take carriage for implementing particular aspects of the policy development process such as research, expert technical analysis or stakeholder engagement. A policy officer may provide

expert support to a working group or expert advisory committee, or manage an external consultancy. A policy officer is a skilled communicator and negotiator, and models a high standard of ethical behaviour.

A policy officer may supervise policy support officers as well as directly developing, managing and achieving their own agreed policy development outcomes.

**Policy Support Officer-** assists, identifies, researches, undertakes, disseminates, supports, analyses, understands and applies

A policy support officer works within a policy team and can support the policy development and implementation processes in a variety of ways depending on the processes selected and the complexity of the policy development task. They may undertake less complex policy development tasks that contribute to building the evidence base for the policy development process. They may also support stakeholder engagement processes and could provide secretariat services to and/ or provide administrative support to committees and working parties. They may support procurement processes when policy expertise is purchased. Typically a policy support officer would hold a relevant vocational or university qualification or alternatively may have substantial on the job experience in relevant roles.

## NOTES ON THE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This standard was designed by an expert design group established by IPAA; with support from the IPAA professional capabilities project team. The group included individuals with a high level of policy expertise and experience within the Australian context from academic, consulting and government perspectives. The design group undertook interviews, a survey of policy professionals, and circulated drafts of the standard for comment. The group would like to thank all those policy professionals who contributed their views and perspectives through discussions, interviews and survey responses for their assistance in the formulation of this first version of the standard. IPAA is most appreciative of the contributions of both the design group and from other individuals whom contributed to this work.

The IPAA expert policy design group recognized the wide range of pre-existing capability frameworks and has sought to complement and adapt rather than reinvent pre-existing work. In particular, the UK Civil Service Professional Policy Standards (Civil Service Competencies Framework 2012-2017 (<http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk>) have been drawn upon in the development of the first version of the standard. We have also drawn on the excellent work by Australian government jurisdictions i.e. Western Australian Policy Capability Framework, as well as the Australian Public Service Policy Work Level Standards and the Queensland Policy Capability Competency Framework.

The design group also considered the wide ranging perspectives of what constitutes professional policy work and the characteristics, actions and capabilities of a policy professional. The characteristics that make a profession and how these apply to the policy professional are reflected in the standard. These include upholding the integrity and worth of the profession, keeping on top of new approaches, giving back to the profession by developing emerging professionals through professional development, mentoring and succession management.

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