Australian Government
Department of Finance

# Professional Contractor Services People Panel Transition guide

**Updated May 2026**

## Purpose of this guide

This guide explains how to transition to the Professional Contractor Services People Panel (People Panel Phase 3). It supports entities that need to move existing contracts to the panel and plan future procurement.

### Who must use People Panel Phase 3

The Panel is mandatory for non-corporate Commonwealth entities (NCEs). NCEs can manage Panel access for their staff through AusTender's administration site: Dynamic Sourcing for Panels (DS4P).

The Panel is optional for:

- corporate Commonwealth entities (CCEs)
- Commonwealth companies (CCs) and
- Government Business Enterprises (GBEs).

These entities must be approved by the Department of Finance to use the Panel through a Deed of Participation.

## Background

The Department of Finance has established the People Panel, a whole-of-Australian-Government mandatory coordinated procurement arrangement.

The People Panel brings together:

- recruitment and search services
- labour hire services
- professional contractor services

The panel has been implemented in three phases. Phase 3 – Professional Contractor Services is the final phase and will commence on 1 July 2026.

## Scope of People Panel Phase 3

Phase 3 covers professional contractor services.

A professional contractor is a natural person who:

- is an expert with extensive knowledge and experience in the Service Area and Service Category to which the ordered services relate and is
  - the Service Provider (if the Service provider is a sole trader) or
  - the employee if a Service Provider (or a natural person otherwise engaged directly or indirectly by a Service Provider)
- is not an employee of the engaging entity
- works under the entity's supervision. This can be at the entity's premises or other agreed location.

## Service Categories

Phase 3 services fall into four categories.

### Category 1 – Financial and audit services

- General financial services
- Audit services
- Specialised services

### Category 2 – Corporate services

- Organisation planning and development
- Human resources
- Corporate governance
- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Communications, excluding campaign advertising, government advertising services and services covered under the Government Communications Campaign Panel
- Quality management

### Category 3 – Commercial services

- Program and projects
- Contract management
- Procurement and acquisitions
- Research (excludes research for campaign advertising or government advising services)
- Data analytics and management

### Category 4 – Other services

- Authoring and writing services
- Dental, medical and allied health
- Scientific services
- Security services

# Transition to the People Panel Phase 3

As a WoAG arrangement, entities are encouraged to use People Panel Phase 3.

NCEs must use the People Panel Phase 3 head agreement for in-scope services for:

- all new contracts executed after the panel launch date
- existing contracts, which must be considered for transition as part of a value for money assessment before exercising any extension options.

## Pre-launch planning

Before the launch date, NCEs should avoid entering contracts longer than 12 months for services that will be in scope of Phase 3.

## Post-launch transition

Contracts for in-scope services that were established under another arrangement should be transitioned to the Phase 3 Head Agreement within six months of launch.

# Existing panels affected by Phase 3

The People Panel consolidates services previously provided across more than five Commonwealth panels. This will:

- reduce red tape
- support cost savings
- improve transparency of government expenditure

Entities that manage panels affected by Phase 3 will need to seek their own legal advice on how best to restructure or end those arrangements.

## Extending current arrangements and new approaches to market

Entities should seek legal advice when managing panels impacted by Phase 3. The following principles apply:

- Existing panels should be extended where possible to align with the Phase 3 launch.
- NCEs must not run a new approach to market to establish a panel for services that are in scope of Phase 3.
- NCEs should avoid long-term contracts for in-scope services.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## My standing offer expires this month, can I place a new work order before People Panel Phase 3 starts?

Yes. A work order can generally survive the end date of a deed of standing offer; however, your work order should only be long enough to provide business continuity whilst transition to People Panel Phase 3.

## My standing offer has some services that are not in-scope of People Panel Phase 3 – can I continue to use it?

Yes, but only to procure those services that are not in-scope to People Panel Phase 3.

## Do I have to terminate my existing standing offer?

Existing arrangements that offer services in-scope to People Panel Phase 3 should be transitioned at the first available opportunity. All services in-scope to People Panel Phase 3 should be fully transitioned by January 2027.

You should manage termination, reduction of services, or transition in consultation with your suppliers, after having obtained legal advice.

## Who will notify my panel suppliers of the impacts to my standing offer as the result of the launch of People Panel Phase 3?

Managers of an existing panels that will be impacted by the implementation of People Panel Phase 3 will be responsible for notifying their enrolled suppliers.

All questions regarding People Panel Phase 3, not already in this FAQ should be directed to peoplepanelcontract@finance.gov.au.

**Contact us**

Email: peoplepanelcontract@finance.gov.au

Phone: 02 6215 3399