

# ELENA KOWALSKI

Branch Head | Australian Public Service (SES Band 1)

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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Senior executive with 19 years in the public sector, including 3.5 years as an SES Band 1 Branch Head. Leads large multidisciplinary teams to deliver policy, program and service outcomes, advising Ministers and Deputy Secretaries on complex, high-risk issues. Recognised for strategic judgement, inclusive leadership, sound financial stewardship and building trusted relationships across government, industry and the community. Australian citizen, NV1 clearance held.

|                  |                           |                          |                            |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 180<br>STAFF LED | \$62M<br>ANNUAL<br>BUDGET | 6<br>SECTIONS /<br>TEAMS | 40+<br>KEY<br>STAKEHOLDERS |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|

## CAREER HISTORY

**Branch Head, Program Delivery (SES Band 1)**    Mar 2023 – Present  
*Department of Social Services, Canberra ACT*

- Lead a 180-person branch delivering a \$410M portfolio of national grants and service programs.
- Set branch strategy and priorities aligned with Government commitments, delivering 96% of milestones on time.
- Manage a \$62M departmental budget, achieving a 2% underspend and \$3.1M in reinvested savings.
- Brief the Minister, Secretary and Parliamentary committees, including Senate Estimates, on policy and delivery risks.
- Drive a culture and capability uplift, lifting staff engagement from 68% to 81% in three years.

**Assistant Secretary (EL2 / SES Band 1 acting)**    Jul 2018 – Feb 2023  
*Department of Health, Canberra ACT*

- Led a 70-person division delivering health workforce policy and a \$180M program.
- Designed and implemented a national reform, now adopted by 6 states and territories.

**Director, Strategy and Governance (EL2)**    Jan 2013 – Jun 2018  
*Department of Finance, Canberra ACT*

- Managed governance, risk and performance reporting for a 900-staff division.
- Led the whole-of-government implementation of a financial framework.

**Earlier career:** Policy and program roles at APS 4–EL1 in Treasury and the Department of Health, 2007–2012.

## QUALIFICATIONS

**Master of Public Administration; Bachelor of Arts (Politics)**  
Australian National University, ACT – 2010 / 2006

## KEY CAPABILITIES

- Strategic leadership and vision
- Ministerial and parliamentary advice
- Large-scale program delivery
- Financial and risk management
- Change and culture leadership
- Stakeholder and intergovernmental relations
- Workforce and capability building
- Governance and accountability
- Diversity and inclusion

## SYSTEMS & TOOLS

TechnologyOne    SAP    Power BI

SharePoint    Content Manager

Microsoft Teams

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Delivered a \$410M portfolio with 96% of milestones on time.
- Raised engagement scores from 68% to 81%.
- Secretary’s Award for Leadership, 2024.

## BOARDS & DEVELOPMENT

- Member, Department Executive Board
- Chair, Grants Governance Committee
- Australian Institute of Company Directors Course
- APS Executive Leadership Program
- Executive Coaching Program

## WORK RIGHTS & AVAILABILITY

**Australian Citizen**  
NV1 clearance held

**Availability**  
3 months notice; Canberra based, national travel

## REFEREES

Available on request.