



Australian Government

Department of Communications and the Arts

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016–2019

Secretary's statement

The Department of Communications and the Arts promotes an innovative, competitive, communications sector, encourages excellence in the arts, and supports cultural heritage and public access to arts and culture.

To be the best we can be, we will have an inclusive and professional workplace that values, respects and supports diversity and inclusion.



This will guarantee that our advice to Government is consistently the best–informed, insightful, and reflective of the diversity within the Australian community.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016–19 plays an important part in achieving this. The objectives of our strategy for the next three years are:

- 1. Promote, value and support diversity amongst employees;**
- 2. Leverage the diversity of our workforce to enhance the quality of policy advice and services;**
- 3. Demonstrate how digital technologies and communications services can enhance diversity and inclusion across the Australian Public Service.**

These reflect the views and priorities of our staff who have informed the development of this strategy.

The recently released, *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy* and the *As One–APS Disability Employment Strategy* will also inform our action plans and activities. We will review our progress each year, adapting strategies and supporting actions as required.

I am pleased to have taken on the role of Disability Champion for the Department and to be involved in the APS Disability Champions Network. I am also a member of the Secretaries Board Equality and Diversity Committee that has been established to accelerate the implementation of the APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016-19.

Each of us need to be focused on improving access, diversity and inclusion within the Department to ensure that everyone of us can achieve our full potential and we have a rich workforce that reflects the community that we live in and serve.

Heather Smith, Secretary

23 June 2016

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Our Vision

To be an inclusive employer, we acknowledge the different characteristics each person has, and appreciate and value these as qualities that can enhance productivity and capability. We will:

- 1 Promote, value and support diversity amongst employees**
- 2 Leverage the diversity of our workforce to enhance the quality of policy advice, programs and services**
- 3 Demonstrate how digital technologies and communications services can enhance diversity and inclusion across the Australian Public Service.**

Our Focus

We will focus on improving access, diversity and inclusion within the Department to ensure that each employee can achieve their full potential and we have a rich workforce that reflects the community that we live in and serve. Inclusive leadership, a respectful culture and flexible work and digital technologies will help us to attract, recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce.

This strategy will focus on the following diversity groups:

- > **People with disability**
- > **A gender-balanced workforce**
- > **Indigenous Australians**
- > **People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)**
- > **Carers**
- > **An intergenerational workforce**
- > **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex persons (LGBTI)**

Our Guiding Culture and Values

We are guided by the [Australian Public Service \(APS\) Values](#) and these values underpin this strategy. They are demonstrated in our workplace behaviours and [service standards](#). We take personal responsibility for our actions, we value courteous and collegiate workplace behaviours, we speak up constructively if our high standards are not met. We contribute to our full potential, are supported to develop new skills, and encouraged to continually look for opportunities to innovate and improve processes. We value and recognise excellence.

Our Call to Action

As individuals, we will respect diversity, encourage inclusion and challenge our own biases and exclusive behaviours, and those of others. In our teams, we will consistently ensure that our policies, programs and processes are inclusive and incorporate diverse perspectives.

Our Success

We are committed to action and have set success measures for the actions outlined in the vision and each action plan. Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee will review our progress each year, adapting strategies and supporting actions as required.

Promote, value and support diversity amongst employees

The community and economy will benefit from boosting opportunities to increase workforce participation and unlock the potential of people with disability, women, parents, young people and supporting older people who want to work¹, increasing indigenous employment² and engagement with the LGBTI and CALD communities.

We are committed to ensuring that we attract, recruit, retain and develop the best talent and that our workforce reflects the diversity of the Australian community that we serve.

Strategy 1.1 Attract

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
1.1.1	Promote our commitment to diversity and inclusion within the Department and to external stakeholders (including other APS agencies, recruitment agencies, universities and the Australian public) through our website, intranet, external newsletters and good news stories in the media.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
1.1.2	Highlight the achievements of staff (through internal and external communication channels) that identify with one or more of the target diversity groups, including people in management positions, to promote our commitment to, and achievements in, diversity and inclusion.	
1.1.3	Encourage staff to promote employment opportunities to suitable people within their networks.	

¹ 2015 Intergenerational Report

² Closing the gap report 2016

Strategy 1.2 Recruit

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
1.2.1	Ensure inclusive recruitment practices are in line with the actions outlined in our diversity action plans.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
1.2.2	Ensure selection panels include diverse representatives where possible with preference of a gender balance.	
1.2.3	Ensure all selection panel members have completed diversity and inclusion and bias training prior to the commencement of the recruitment process.	
1.2.4	Actively participate in programs such as <i>Stepping Into</i> and the <i>Dandelion</i> program,	

Strategy 1.3 Develop

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
1.3.1	Increase knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusion across the Department, including educational and practical information on diversity group. Conduct Bias Awareness training for all staff in August and September 2016 and build an online module for new starters.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Annual departmental diversity census, which encourages staff to identify with their diversity group and share inclusion experiences in the Department. Include sub target related to strategy 1.3 in the census.
1.3.2	Establish targeted career management, skilling, coaching and mentoring to ensure a higher number of target diversity groups are represented in supervisory, management and senior executive roles.	
1.3.3	Organise activities such as networking events to support staff accessing flexible work arrangements to develop their professional networks, leadership skills and professional capabilities.	

Strategy 1.4 Retain

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
1.4.1	Adopt an “if not, why not” approach to requests for flexible working arrangements.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Annual departmental diversity census, which encourages staff to identify with their diversity group and share inclusion experiences in the Department. Include sub target related to strategy 1.4 in the census.
1.4.2	Celebrate cultural diversity in the Department by being actively involved in community cultural events and networks (including face-to-face and online events). Develop a calendar of significant dates and celebrations.	
1.4.3	Recognise and proactively profile and promote the achievements of the seven target diversity groups.	
1.4.4	Maintain connections with staff taking a career break, extended parental leave, study leave break or other extended leave through a newsletter (a quarterly newsletter designed to update staff on our activities in the Department).	
1.4.5	Ask staff about their experience of support for diversity in regular focus groups and exit interviews and give feedback to SES through HR reports.	
1.4.6	Ensure that Outcomes and Capability Development Agreements (OCDA) for all staff include a statement about demonstrating commitment to diversity.	

Leverage our diverse workforce to enhance the quality of policy advice and services

Diverse teams are more creative and productive than teams of people who are essentially similar. Further, providing a 'lived experience' lens by different members of the community enriches the quality of our work and policy advice. We will leverage our diverse workforce to enhance the quality of policy advice and services through leadership and culture.

Strategy 2.1 Leadership

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
2.1.1	Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee led by an SES with representation from all divisions/groups.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Annual departmental diversity census, which encourages staff to identify with their diversity group and share inclusion experiences in the Department. Include sub target related to strategy 2.1 in the census.
2.1.2	Include representation of the target diversity groups on decision making boards and bodies where possible e.g. Workplace Consultative Committee.	
2.1.3	Appoint SES 'Champions' for disability, gender equality, Indigenous and multi-cultural access and equity to be visible role models and advocates for employees.	
2.1.4	Ensure an accessible work environment including facilities and processes.	

Strategy 2.2 Culture

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
2.2.1	Provide employees from target diversity groups an opportunity to work in areas where they can expect to develop their skills.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Annual departmental diversity census, which encourages staff to identify with their diversity group and share inclusion experiences in the Department. Include sub target related to strategy 2.2 in the census.
2.2.2	Encourage staff to contribute to whole of Government reconciliation plans and actions.	
2.2.3	Support staff to record diversity information in Employee Self Service and ensure they have access to relevant information and entitlements.	
2.2.4	Research options to establish a merit based secondment program as a pathway for people with disability from across the APS to work with the Department on a short-term project basis for vacant positions.	

Demonstrate how digital technologies and communications services can enhance diversity and inclusion across the Australian Public Service.

We aim to provide best in class flexible work arrangements supported by access to leading edge technology which allows us to have the flexibility and agility to seamlessly interact with anyone, anywhere, at any time. Through these initiatives, we will demonstrate how digital technologies and communications services can enhance diversity and inclusion.

Strategy 3.1: Flexible work

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
3.1.1	Promote and encourage flexible working arrangements across the Department and provide more intensive training for managers, staff members and teams.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Annual departmental diversity census, which encourages staff to identify with their diversity group and share inclusion experiences in the Department. Include sub target related to strategy 3.1 in the census.
3.1.2	Establish an online forum for managers of staff who work flexibly to share management practices and strategies to ensure team cohesion, collaboration and communication.	
3.1.3	SES staff to lead by example with at least two SES staff having regular formal flexible working arrangements as part of their role.	
3.1.4	Conduct targeted flexible working trials in one or two branches per division for three months.	
3.1.5	Promote good news stories about the use of flexible working in APS promotional material.	

Strategy 3.2: Digital technologies

No.	Action	How will we know we were successful?
3.2.1	Advocate through the Disability Employment Working Group and Disability Champions Group for the creation of an online site for people with disability in the APS with information on teleworking (including positive stories on how it is used in the Department) and a forum for people to post questions or issues, promotion of online and free education and up-skilling opportunities.	For discussion by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Potential census as above.
3.2.2	Establish an informal mentoring program for people who use assistive technologies to give advice and support to other users and ensure ongoing accessibility and usability testing.	
3.2.3	Promote our employee value proposition, including our adoption of the best technology possible so we are equipped to provide high quality policy advice.	
3.2.4	Ensure that all Departmental policy documents are in plain English and fully accessible.	

Supporting Action Plans

Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan

Gender Equality Action Plan

Indigenous Employment Action Plan

Generational Action Plan

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan

Carers Action Plan

LGBTI Action Plan

Supporting Documents

[Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Equality Strategy 2016-19](#)

[As One—APS Disability Employment Strategy](#)

[Australia’s Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting diversity. Improving responsiveness](#)

[Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy](#)

[Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies](#)

[Unlocking potential – APS workforce management contestability review](#)

[2015 Intergenerational Report](#)

[Closing the gap report 2016](#)

Relevant Legislation

[Australian Public Service Act 1999](#)

[Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013](#)

[Carer Recognition Act 2010](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[National Disability Agreement](#)

[National Disability Insurance Scheme](#)

[National Disability Strategy 2010–2020](#)
