



Fair Work
OMBUDSMAN

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2024–27



Acknowledgment of Country and Traditional Custodians

The FWO acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters, skies, and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and Elders, past and present.

We also respectfully acknowledge FWO's First Nations employees, customers, partners, stakeholders, and visitors.



Fair Work Ombudsman Foreword

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman's (OFWO) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 (the Strategy). This Strategy reflects our unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and diverse workplace where every individual can thrive.

At the OFWO, we believe that diversity and inclusion are not just aspirational goals but essential components of our agency's identity. Embracing a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences enriches our work environments and enhances our ability to serve the Australian community effectively. A diverse and inclusive workplace fosters innovation, drives better decision-making, and ultimately leads to more equitable outcomes for all Australians.

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 sets forth a comprehensive plan to build on our existing achievements and address areas where further progress is needed. It outlines key priorities and actionable steps to ensure that diversity and inclusion are embedded in every aspect of our operations. This Strategy is not merely a document but a call to action for each one of us to contribute to a culture that values and respects diversity in all its forms.

Our key priorities within this Strategy will guide our efforts over the next 3 years, and we are committed to regular monitoring and reporting processes. Our success depends on the collective efforts of all our employees, and I encourage everyone to embrace this Strategy with the passion and dedication it deserves.

As we embark on this journey, I am confident that the OFWO will continue to set a high standard for diversity and inclusion. Together, we can create a workplace where everyone feels empowered to bring their whole selves to work and are recognised for who they are, not who our assumptions and stereotypes tell us they are. Our workplace will be one where differences are celebrated, and where every voice is heard and valued.

Anna Booth
Fair Work Ombudsman

Strategy Objective

The objective of our Strategy is to cultivate an engaged workforce that mirrors the rich diversity of the community we serve. We are deeply committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse work environment where every individual is treated with respect and dignity, and where all employees are empowered to realise their full potential. This Strategy serves as an overarching, comprehensive framework for our workplace diversity and inclusion agenda, integrating other relevant strategies and resources.

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) acknowledges the invaluable and diverse contributions made by all employees. However, we recognise that certain diversity groups have historically faced disadvantage and underrepresentation in the workplace. Consequently, our Strategy is inclusive of all employees and places a specific emphasis on six key portfolios:



Through this Strategy, we aim to address and rectify historical imbalances, ensuring equitable opportunities for all. By prioritising these six portfolios, we are dedicated to creating a workplace that not only respects but also celebrates diversity in all its forms. This commitment is fundamental to our vision of building a truly inclusive and dynamic workforce, reflective of the communities we proudly serve.

Our Vision

Our vision aims to create a thriving, inclusive and equitable workplace that truly embraces and reflects the rich diversity of the community we serve, where every individual has the opportunity to succeed and contribute to the workplace. Our Strategy supports the agency to:



Create Sustainable and Flexible Careers

We are dedicated to developing career pathways that are not only sustainable, but also adaptable, ensuring they are free from barriers and accessible to all.



Increase Representation of Underrepresented Groups

We strive to enhance the representation of underrepresented groups within our workforce, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable workplace.



Foster a Culture of Diversity and Inclusiveness

We are committed to continuously building a workplace that values, supports, and actively promotes diversity and inclusiveness.



Develop and Implement Diversity and Inclusion Programs

We will continue to create and roll out targeted programs and initiatives designed to advance our diversity and inclusion objectives, ensuring these principles are embedded in every aspect of our agency's practices.



Equip Leaders to Drive Inclusivity

We will further develop our leaders with the tools and knowledge necessary to exemplify and drive diverse and inclusive practices across the agency.

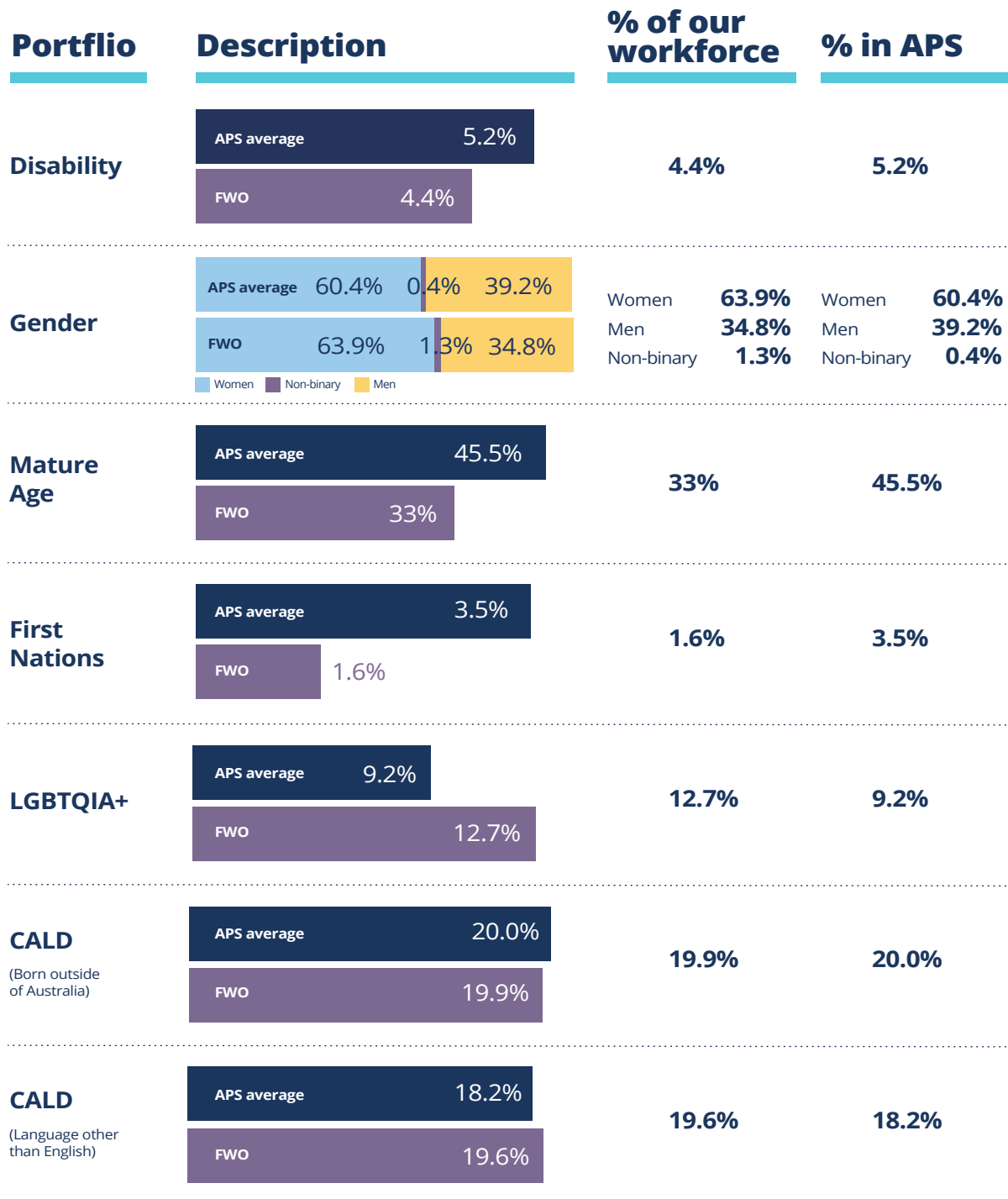


Align Internal Systems with Diversity

We will continuously strive to understand and accommodate the diverse needs of our community and stakeholders, ensuring that our internal systems, processes, and practices reflect this diversity.

Our Diverse Workforce

As of 30 September 2024, 40.6% of our workforce identified as part of one or more of the listed diversity groups. This does not include staff who identify as LGBTQIA+, as this data is only collected anonymously in the Australian Public Service (APS) Employee Census and cannot be attributed back to individual employees. Our profile is shown in the following diagram.



All FWO data excluding LGBTQIA+ as of 30 September 2024.
 All APS data excluding LGBTQIA+ and Mature Age as of 31 December 2023.
 LGBTQIA+ data is from 2024 APS Employee Census.
 APS Mature Age data is as of 30 June 2024 from State of the Service Report 2023-24.

Strategic Alignment

This Strategy is underpinned by the Public Service Act 1999 requirement to foster workplace diversity, as set out in the Employment Principles, and supported by the APS Values and Code of Conduct. It aligns with the FWO's Purpose, Statement of Intent and related diversity strategies and plans which are currently in place or are to be developed under this Strategy.



■ Developed resources ■ To be developed under this Strategy

Our Journey

Our agency is committed to creating an environment that values and integrates a diverse range of perspectives, knowledge, and experiences to maximise the effectiveness of our service delivery. Since 2018, we have achieved significant milestones, including:

✔ **Establishment of a Dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Team:** We have established a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Team within our People and Internal Communications Branch, to drive our strategic agendas in diversity and inclusion.

✔ **Recognition as an Inclusive Employer:** We participated in the Diversity Council Australia's Inclusion@Work index and achieved Inclusive Employer status for 2021 – 2022.

✔ **Best Practice Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Re-accreditation:** We have maintained accreditation as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace since 2011 and have been recognised as a Best Practice accredited workplace since 2020, demonstrating our commitment to supporting working parents.

✔ **Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion Memberships:** We have capitalised on FWO's Diversity and Inclusion memberships by enhancing our learning and development opportunities, sharing events and resources, and incorporating best practice guidance into our operations.

✔ **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy:** We developed and implemented actions from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy, including tailored resources to support affirmative measure provisions and cultural capabilities.

✔ **Reconciliation Action Plan:** We have just launched our new RAP for 2024-2026.

✔ **Dedicated Intranet Pages and Learning Pathways:** We have developed and published dedicated intranet pages and learning pathways for our diversity and inclusion portfolios, providing accessible resources for all employees.

✔ **APS Jawun Program:** We continue to participate in the APS Jawun Program, fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

✔ **Australian Disability Network Programs:** We continue to participate in the Australian Disability Network's Stepping into Program and are currently piloting their Positive Action towards Career Engagement (PACE) Program, demonstrating our commitment to supporting employees with disability and uplifting disability confidence across our leadership teams.

✔ **APS Career Pathways Indigenous Entry Level Programs:** We actively participate in the APS Career Pathways Indigenous Entry Level Programs, promoting career opportunities for First Nations Australians.

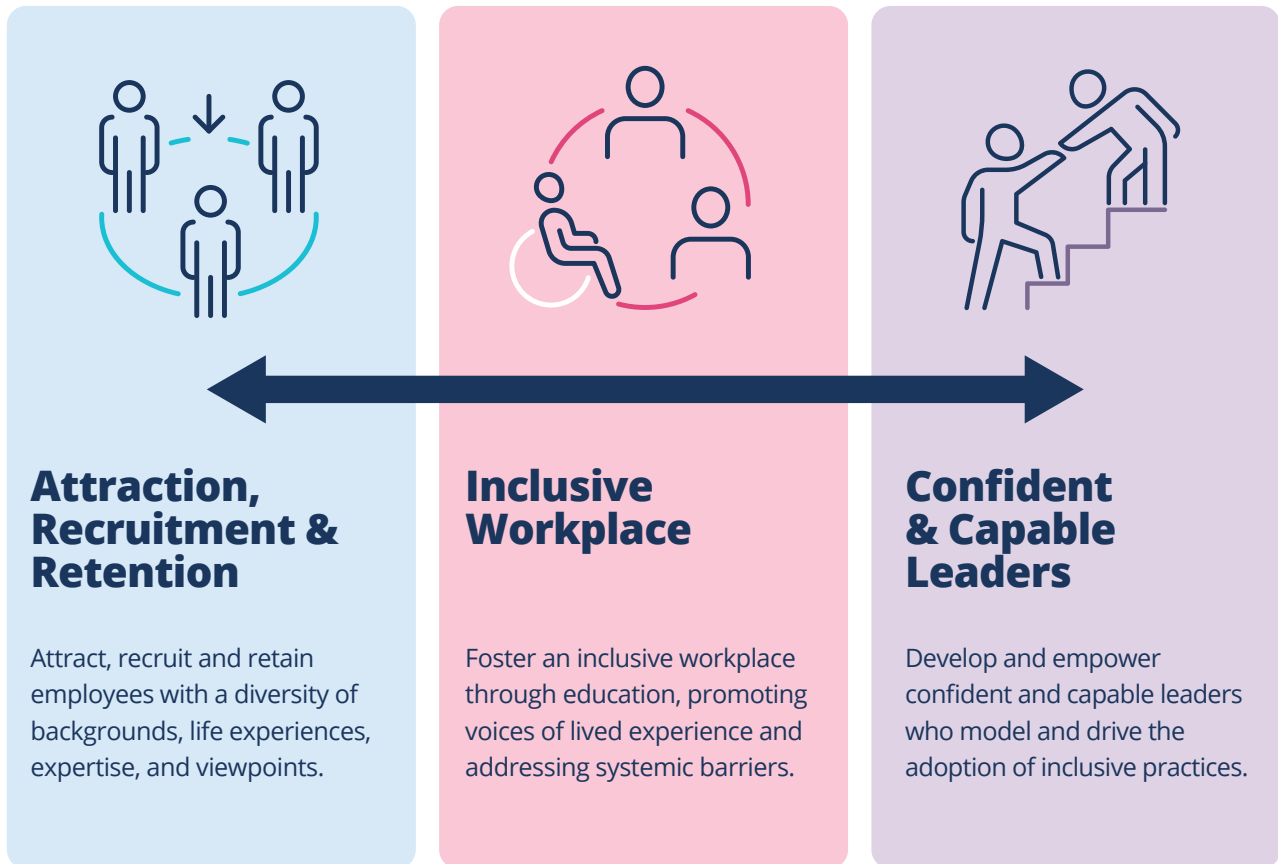
✔ **Multicultural Access and Equality Plan:** We have implemented actions from our Multicultural Access and Equality Plan, ensuring our services are accessible and equitable for all cultural groups.

✔ **Gender Equality Action Plan:** We have implemented actions from our Gender Equality Action Plan and are currently developing our next Gender Equality Action Plan 2024-2027, continuing our commitment to gender equality in the workplace.

Through these achievements, we continue to build a dynamic and inclusive workplace that truly reflects the diversity of the community we serve.

Our Focus Areas

The following focus areas have been identified to ensure we continue to grow an inclusive and diverse workplace:



Our focus areas will be strengthened and supported through strategies, statements of intent, guides, toolkits, and action plans. These will focus on tailored initiatives which recognise the unique and varied needs of our diverse talent. We will also continue to celebrate days of significance to promote inclusive understanding and acceptance.

Our Portfolio Key Goals

Across all portfolios

Equip Our People: Provide our employees with the awareness, practical skills, and confidence necessary to effectively serve our diverse community. Through comprehensive training programs and resources, we ensure that our staff are well-prepared to understand and address the unique needs of every individual they interact with.

Model Inclusive Behaviour: Demonstrate inclusive behaviours in all customer facing services. By setting an example of inclusivity in our interactions with the public, we create a welcoming and respectful environment that reflects our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Empower Leaders: Enable our leaders to champion and promote the implementation of inclusive practices across all operational activities of the agency. By fostering a leadership culture that prioritises inclusivity, we ensure that our commitment to diversity is integrated into every aspect of our operations, driving systemic change and continuous improvement.

Resource Networks: Introduce active roles within diversity networks for members to fill, with defined responsibilities and a time allocated to fulfil the role.

First Nations People

Develop a Cultural Competency Framework: Develop and publish a comprehensive Cultural Competency Framework to guide the agency in planning and implementing specific measures that make our workplace more culturally inclusive. This framework will provide the tools and resources necessary to enhance cultural awareness, safety, sensitivity, and competence among all employees.

Increase First Nations Representation: Implement targeted strategies to increase the attraction and recruitment of First Nations peoples to the agency, including the increased use of affirmative measures-Indigenous recruitments. This initiative aims to improve the diversity of our workforce by actively seeking and engaging with First Nations communities, showcasing our commitment to inclusivity and cultural respect.

People with Disability

Develop a Disability Employment Strategy: Plan and implement specific measures that will increase the attraction and recruitment of people with disability, address systemic barriers, make the workplace more inclusive for people with disability, and develop and empower our leaders to model and drive disability confidence and inclusion.

Increase representation of people with disability: Implement affirmative measures in our recruitment processes specifically aimed at attracting and recruiting people with disability, including the increased use of affirmative measures-disability recruitment. This includes outreach to disability communities, partnerships with relevant organisations, and promoting our commitment to inclusivity.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

CALD Executive Champion, Leadership Opportunity: Provide an opportunity for a senior leader to serve as a CALD Executive Champion, modelling and leading active allyship and inclusion for CALD employees. This includes ensuring the voices of CALD employees are heard and valued, advocating for their perspectives in decision-making processes, and navigating challenges.

Introduce a CALD Employee Network: Establish a supportive network for employees from CALD backgrounds to connect, share experiences, and celebrate their diverse cultural identities. This includes creating a platform to discuss and raise concerns related to racism or systemic barriers, ensuring these issues are acknowledged and addressed and actively celebrating and promoting cultural diversity within the agency, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.

Respond to the APS CALD Employment Strategy and Action Plan: Develop an agency CALD Employment Strategy that includes priority actions from the APS CALD Strategy and Action Plan.

Mature Age Workers

Develop a Statement of Intent: Clearly articulate the current actions and future initiatives the agency has in place and intends to take to support the needs of mature age employees and facilitate their active and essential contribution to our workplace culture and outcomes.

Learning and Development: Expand and enhance the learning, resources, and support available to all staff with a particular focus on the needs of mature age employees to ensure they feel valued and integral to our workplace culture and outcomes. Encourage the active and essential contribution of mature age employees, recognising their experience as valuable assets of the agency.

Empower Leaders: Develop and empower leaders by promoting realities and debunking myths about mature age workers, provide relevant resources and information for our mature age workers, and actively celebrate their contribution to our workplace highlighting their value and impact on the workplace.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+)

Develop a Statement of Intent: Clearly outline the actions and initiatives the agency has in place and intends to take in future, foster inclusion of LGBTQIA+ employees in the workplace, address barriers to being out in the workplace, promote visibility, and celebrate diversity.

Complete a Foundation Level submission for the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI): Benchmark the agency's efforts towards LGBTQIA+ inclusion against the entry-level criteria of the AWEI and assist in identifying future opportunities to develop and foster a more inclusive workplace for LGBTQIA+ employees.

Gender Equality

Develop a new Gender Equality Action Plan: Continue the work of driving and maintaining the recruitment and retention of all genders at all levels with a focus on historically underrepresented gender identities and outline how the agency will continue to address and overcome systemic barriers to employment, development, and advancement opportunities.

Expand on learning, resources, and support available to staff: Develop and empower leaders and employees at all levels with the awareness of continuing systemic barriers and biases related to gender, and practical ways to make our workplace gender inclusive.

Employee Networks and Working Groups

Our agency has a range of employee networks and working groups led by Executive Champions, who play a key role in driving and promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives. These include:

<p>First Nations Employee Network</p>	<p>FWObility Disability Interest Group</p>	<p>PROUD! LGBTQIA+ Employee Network</p>	<p>FWOGen Gender Equality Employee Network</p>	<p>RAP WG Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group</p>
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Each cohort operates under a Terms of Reference, or a similar guiding document, that outlines their specific objectives and deliverables. These documents establish clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities for all Executive Champions and members, fostering effective communication, collaboration, and accountability. They ensure that projects, tasks, and meetings are consistently aligned with the agency's overarching goals and visions, providing all stakeholders with a shared understanding of the purpose and desired outcomes.

Additionally, these documents play a crucial role in mitigating risks and preventing misunderstandings by clearly defining processes and expectations. They provide a structured framework for evaluating progress and outcomes, ensuring that every initiative is methodically assessed and aligned with our strategic objectives. This approach enhances our agency's efficiency and ensures that every member is fully aware of their contributions towards achieving our collective goals.

Key Contributors

All employees are responsible for promoting and contributing to our diversity and inclusion agenda by supporting this Strategy and associated action plans. The following employees play an integral role in delivering on our focus areas.

Senior Executive Service (SES)

The SES are key partners in promoting and supporting this Strategy. The SES support this Strategy by recognising its importance in guiding decisions about the agency's workforce, and by making inclusivity part of their decision-making. The SES actively encourage the development of an open and collaborative culture that demonstrates our commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce. They do this by supporting the actions and deliverables identified in the Strategy and through a diversity and inclusion pledge in their annual performance agreements.

Corporate Board

The Corporate Board plays a critical role in promoting and supporting the Strategy, including the commitments, activities, and initiatives that stem from it. The Corporate Board will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Strategy.

Employee Networks and Working Groups

The Employee Networks and Working Groups play a key role in promoting awareness, consulting on Strategy initiatives, and assisting in the implementation of commitments that are aligned with their respective portfolios.

People and Internal Communications Branch

People and Internal Communications Branch has overall responsibility for coordinating the development and implementation of this Strategy, and its associated strategies.

Reporting on Progress

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will operate until November 2027 and will be reviewed annually. This review process will ensure that the Strategy's goals and initiatives remain aligned with the current employment environment and the agency's Corporate Plan. The Strategy encompasses portfolio-specific initiatives and resources, each with tailored reporting and evaluation mechanisms to track progress effectively.

Annual Review and Alignment

An annual review will be conducted by the People and Internal Communications Branch, to assess and realign the Strategy's objectives with the current employment landscape and the Corporate Plan. This review will involve:

- ▶ Evaluating the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives
- ▶ Identifying new opportunities and challenges
- ▶ Adjusting goals and tactics to stay relevant and impactful.

Reporting Structure

The outcomes of the Strategy will be communicated through a structured reporting system:

1. **Corporate Board Reporting:** The People and Internal Communications Branch will present an annual report on the Strategy's outcomes. This report will cover all key portfolios and include:
 - a. Progress towards goals
 - b. Metric and key performance indicators
 - c. Success stories or case studies
 - d. Identified areas for improvement.
2. **Staff Reporting:** Outcomes and progress will be communicated to staff via their Executive Director. This will ensure transparency and keep staff informed about the Strategy's impact and developments.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

To ensure the continuous success and refinement of the Strategy, the People and Internal Communications Branch will:

- ▶ provide an annual update to the Agency Consultative Forum and all Employee Networks, following the annual update to Corporate Board
- ▶ seek feedback from staff and other stakeholders to identify areas for improvement
- ▶ implement necessary adjustments based on this feedback to ensure the Strategy remains dynamic and effective.

Portfolio-Specific Strategies

Each portfolio under the Strategy will have its own:

- ▶ **Reporting Measures:** Tailored metrics and key performance indicators to evaluate the success of specific initiatives.
- ▶ **Evaluation Protocols:** An annual review of progress against objectives.

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is a living document designed to evolve with the agency's needs and the broader employment environment. Through rigorous annual reviews, structured reporting, and continuous feedback, the Strategy aims to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace that aligns with the agency's diversity and inclusion goals and Corporate Plan.

Attachment A

Definitions

First Nations Peoples

A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted by the community in which they live or originate. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are two distinct cultures, who are the original inhabitants of the Australian continent and nearby islands.

Affirmative Measures

Two specific provisions that allow a particular job in the APS to be open only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or people with disability. These measures are designed to address the under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with disability in the APS.

APS

Australian Public Service. An Executive arm of the Commonwealth (Federal) Government that exercises authority on behalf of the Government (Parliament), providing the support the Government needs to undertake its roles and responsibilities on behalf of the Australian people.

CALD

The term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) is used to describe individuals and communities of Australia's cultural groups who are not from an English-speaking, Anglo-Celtic background.

Disability

A limitation, restriction, or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 6 months and which restricts everyday activities. This includes conditions that are physical, intellectual, psychosocial, sensory, neurological, or other long-term conditions or ailments resulting in restriction.

Diversity

Diversity includes our individual differences, perspectives, knowledge, and skills that we bring to our workplace. Diversity can include gender, gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation, intersex status, language, ethnicity, cultural background, religious beliefs, and family responsibilities, as well as differences between individuals in life, work experience, thinking, working style, and personality.

Gender Equality

Gender equality is where access to rights or opportunities are unaffected by gender.

Inclusion

Inclusion is where we create a culture that welcomes and embraces diversity. An inclusive workplace is one where employees feel comfortable to be themselves. Inclusion is reflected in the organisation's culture, practices, and relationships to support all employees to contribute to their full potential. Employees who feel included are likely to be more engaged and productive at work and have an improved sense of wellbeing.

LGBTQIA+

LGBTQIA+ is an inclusive term that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other people of diverse genders and sexual orientation. While each letter stands for a specific group of people, the term encompasses the entire spectrum of the LGBTQIA+ communities.

Mature Age Workers

Employed people aged 45+ years, however, Australian Bureau of Statistics research has shown that employment barriers are relatively greater for workers aged over 55.

RAP

Reconciliation Action Plan. An action plan that publicly formalises an organisation's commitment and contribution to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians.

SES

Senior Executive Service - the senior leadership group of our agency.

For more information, please contact the FWO Diversity and Inclusion Team at diversity@fwo.gov.au