



Inclusion Strategy 2019 to 2021



Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Department of Agriculture's *Inclusion Strategy 2019 to 2021*.

This strategy outlines our commitment to action and strategic objectives to achieve an inclusive culture.

An inclusive workplace culture increases performance and improves business outcomes by fostering innovation, creativity and problem-solving. We need a culture where difference is valued and respected, and where we work together and leverage the benefit of our diversity. We are all responsible for building a diverse and inclusive workplace.

We are fortunate to have 5 employee networks of passionate employees committed to supporting each other and creating change:

- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees' Network
- › Disability and Carers' Network
- › Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) Pride Network
- › Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network
- › Gender Equality Network.

This strategy has been drafted in consultation with the networks and serves as a roadmap to guide actions over the next 2 years. I applaud the effort of employees in these networks and invite all staff to join us in supporting this strategy.



I am pleased to reconfirm our commitment to partnerships with the Australian Network on Disability and Pride in Diversity, valued partners supporting our journey to inclusion.

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Daryl Quinlivan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daryl Quinlivan
Secretary
Department of Agriculture

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Introduction

Our role

The Department of Agriculture develops and implements policies and programs to ensure Australia's agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries remain competitive, profitable and sustainable, and supports the sustainable and productive management and use of rivers and water resources.

To effectively deliver on our objectives, our workforce needs to be representative of the community we serve.

The requirement to foster diversity is fundamental to being a public servant and is enshrined in the APS Values, APS Code of Conduct and the *Public Service Act 1999*. Employment Principle 10A of the *Public Service Act 1999* states 'The APS is a career-based service that recognises the diversity of the Australian community and fosters diversity in the workplace'.

Purpose

This strategy outlines how we will foster inclusion in the workplace. It demonstrates our strong commitment to embedding inclusion in all we do, to ensure every employee has the opportunity to contribute and bring their authentic self to work.

A diverse and inclusive culture creates an environment where employees feel respected, connected and can contribute to the organisation's success. Inclusive organisations:

- › attract and retain the best talent
- › innovate and adapt to changing environments
- › build capability and achieve better decision-making through diversity of thought and ideas.

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity refers to the mix of people in our organisation and the unique perspectives they bring. This includes how they identify in relation to age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability, gender, Indigenous background, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background. Profession, education, work experiences and organisational roles also contribute to diversity. Many aspects of a person's identity overlap; diversity is not about fitting into one category.

Inclusion occurs when a diverse group of people feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives to improve the organisation. Inclusion aims to remove barriers so everyone can participate in the workplace. Inclusion is:

- › value and respect
- › belonging and connection
- › participation and contribution
- › influence
- › opportunity.

Our inclusion vision

Vision

To foster a workplace where employees feel included, valued, and that they can contribute and participate fully at work. We embrace the variety of experiences, skills and perspectives that people bring to the workplace and harness these to achieve our objectives.

Guiding themes

To deliver this strategy, we will focus on 3 guiding themes:

- › **Opportunities**—Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.
- › **Culture**—Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.
- › **Leadership**—Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Responsibility

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Staff are expected to foster an inclusive culture in their work areas. SES officers are expected to promote this strategy within their divisions and branches. Individuals are expected to embrace the variety of experiences, skills and perspectives that people bring to the department.



Legislative responsibilities

As an Australian Public Service (APS) Agency, every employee is bound by the *Public Service Act 1999*, APS Code of Conduct, APS Values and APS Employment Principles. There is a range of legislation that governs our approach to diversity and outlines our legislative responsibilities:

- › The *Public Service Act 1999* and the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016* define the scope and application of the APS Values, APS Code of Conduct and the requirement to establish diversity programs.
- › The *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* outlines the rights of people alleging discrimination and provides an avenue for redress for those people.
- › The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.
- › The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* relates to discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding or family responsibilities or involving sexual harassment.
- › The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability.
- › The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age.
- › The *Fair Work Act 2009* provides a safety net of minimum terms and conditions of employment.
- › The *Carer Recognition Act 2010* aims to increase recognition and awareness of the role carers play in providing daily care and support to people with disability, medical conditions, mental illness or who are frail aged.
- › The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* provides for a balanced and nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.
- › The *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* aims to promote and improve gender equality in employment in the workplace.



Inclusion framework

The inclusion framework is a roadmap for driving workplace inclusion (Figure 1). It shows this strategy fits with the *Corporate Plan 2019–20* and *People Strategy 2019 to 2021*, and will be delivered in partnership with inclusion champions, ambassadors and networks.

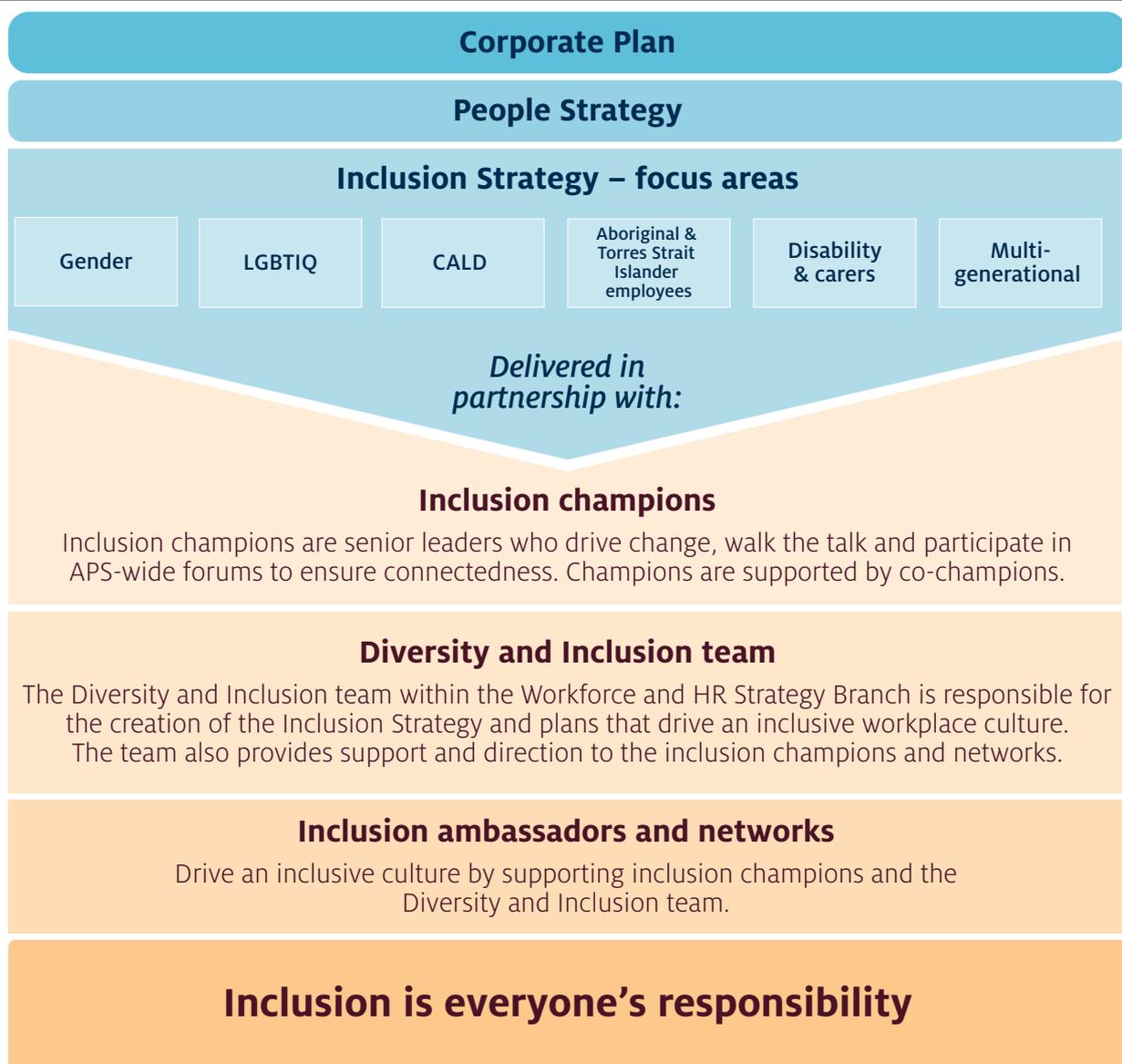
Individual action plans for key diversity groups are in Table 1 to Table 6.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion can also be found in the Reconciliation Action Plan and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

The APS also has strategies that guide our work on inclusion:

- › [As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016–19](#)
- › [Balancing the Future: The APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19](#)
- › [Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy](#).

FIGURE 1 Inclusion framework



Inclusion networks

We have 5 inclusion networks that aim to increase awareness, foster an inclusive culture, implement inclusion initiatives and work collaboratively with the Diversity and Inclusion team.

Each network meets quarterly. Networks partner with the Diversity and Inclusion team to ensure alignment, leverage cross-network collaboration and opportunities, and achieve our inclusion objectives.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees' Network

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees' Network (ATSIEN) enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to come together to build relationships, discuss matters of interest, share experiences, and provide support to colleagues.

Disability and Carers' Network

The Disability and Carers' Network objectives are to meet, network, and discuss issues relevant to employees with disability and caring responsibilities.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Network was established to give staff from CALD backgrounds and those interested in CALD matters an opportunity to build relationships, share experiences and discuss issues in the workplace.

LGBTIQ Pride Network

The LGBTIQ Pride Network aims to increase awareness and to create a workplace that openly values and supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) employees by building relationships, sharing experiences, educating people and discussing relevant issues.

Gender Equity Network

The Gender Equity Network aims to provide an opportunity for all employees to discuss and advance gender equality matters.

Our partners

We have established relationships with external organisations to assist in achieving our inclusion objectives. These organisations provide support and guidance on policies, procedures and best practice, major events and employment opportunities.

Australian Network on Disability

We are a gold member of the Australian Network on Disability (AND), a national membership-based organisation that supports organisations to advance the inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of business. We undertake activities in partnership with AND, including participation in the AND Access and Inclusion Index, reviews of building accessibility and training solutions to build disability confidence.

Pride in Diversity

We are a member of Pride in Diversity, a national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTIQ workplace inclusion. Through this partnership we participate in the Australian Workplace Equality Index and have access to training and development opportunities and materials and advice on policies and programs for LGBTIQ employees.

Monitoring success

Actions will be monitored by the Corporate Strategy and Governance Division. Progress reports will be prepared every 6 months for the People, Safety and Culture Committee and the inclusion champions.

Indicators of success include:

- › increase in employees self-identifying in Aurion against each of the diversity groups
- › improvement in the APS Census results for all diversity groups
- › increased participation, higher engagement and greater visibility of the inclusion networks
- › increased instances of leaders displaying inclusion in their day-to-day duties
- › reduction in the number of employees from all diversity groups who report experiencing discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Diversity and inclusion action plans

Inclusion Action Plan

This action plan provides actions to benefit employees across all diversity groups and the wider department (Table 1).

TABLE 1 Inclusion Action Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Opportunities —Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.	Ensure recruitment is accessible and inclusive and remove barriers to recruiting diverse talent.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Develop and deliver an inclusion mentoring program.	October 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Implement best-practice approaches to address unconscious bias in the selection process.	June 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
Culture —Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.	Develop and implement education resources to embed an inclusive culture in the department, including an inclusion video and face-to-face and e-learning diversity modules.	December 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Continue to increase the visibility and capability of inclusion networks and ambassadors to enable contribution to inclusive work practices. Facilitate cross collaboration between networks.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Celebrate and promote inclusion events aligned with days of significance, including Wear it Purple, NAIDOC, Harmony Day and International Day of People with Disability.	Annually	Workforce and HR Strategy, inclusion networks

TABLE 1 Inclusion Action Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Leadership —Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.	Support our SES inclusion champions and create co-champion roles to ensure inclusion is championed by our leaders.	As required	Workforce and HR Strategy, SES officers, inclusion champions
	Regularly report diversity data to the SES to ensure our leaders have full visibility of their workforce.	Monthly	Workforce and HR Strategy, SES officers
	Create opportunities for employees to share their lived experiences with SES to develop deeper understanding of inclusion experiences.	December 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy, SES officers
	Create an inclusive culture commitment statement to be signed and displayed by SES officers.	June 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy, SES officers
	Deliver training for managers to improve their capability to lead inclusively; for example, unconscious bias and LGBTIQ awareness training.	December 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Active participation by the Executive in relevant cross-agency forums; for example, Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council, disability and Indigenous champions networks.	Ongoing	Inclusion champions, supported by Workforce and HR Strategy

Disability and Carers' Action Plan

This plan outlines actions to:

- › attract, recruit, retain and promote people with disability by ensuring opportunities are inclusive and accessible. We will also increase the opportunities for career development for current employees
- › create a culture that is inclusive of people with disability and those with caring responsibilities
- › ensure our leaders demonstrate disability confidence driving an inclusive culture for employees with disability
- › improve accessibility for all employees (Table 2).

TABLE 2 Disability and Carers' Action Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Opportunities —Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.	Apply RecruitAbility to all externally advertised vacancies.	June 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Undertake the Australian Network on Disability (AND) process for becoming a Disability Confident Recruiter.	December 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Increase the understanding and use of disability affirmative measures in recruitment.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Participate in employment programs to increase opportunities for people with disability; for example, Stepping Into and GradAccess.	Annually	Workforce and HR Strategy
Culture —Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.	Reduce the stigma of mental health by educating employees and managers.	December 2020	HR People
	Implement communication activities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise disability awareness • promote accessibility and inclusion • foster a culture of trust • encourage employees to disclose their disability status. 	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy, Communications
	Improve physical and ICT accessibility across sites.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy, ICT, HR People
	Retain our gold AND membership and participate in the AND Access and Inclusion Index. Continue to improve our results through implementation of recommendations.	Annually	Workforce and HR Strategy, ICT, HR People
Leadership —Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.	Use communication and training to improve manager confidence with disability and understanding of the needs of carers.	December 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy, Communications

LGBTIQ Action Plan

This action plan details how we will:

- › create a culture where all employees feel safe and included, irrespective of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status
- › ensure our employees are free to be their authentic self, without the need to guard their conversations due to fear of bias, labels or discrimination (Table 3).

TABLE 3 LGBTIQ Action Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Opportunities —Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.	Review and modify our policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive of people who identify as LGBTIQ and reflect the department as an employer of choice.	June 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Develop and implement gender affirmation guidelines to support employees transitioning in the workplace.	November 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy, People Help
	Deliver and participate in events and communication activities to raise LGBTIQ awareness and promote inclusion.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy, Communications, Pride Network
Culture —Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.	Support employees to participate in significant events.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy, Pride Network
	Participate in the Australian Workplace Equality Index and improve our results by implementing recommendations against all categories and publishing the results.	Annually	Workforce and HR Strategy, Pride Network
	Improve capability of managers and human resources staff to support LGBTIQ employees.	December 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
Leadership —Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.			

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan

This plan provides actions against our guiding themes for employees from a CALD background (Table 4).

TABLE 4 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Opportunities —Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.	Review our policies and practices to address unconscious bias in the workplace, including in selection processes.	June 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Use evidence-based methodology to identify gaps where training could increase opportunities for employees from a CALD background.	June 2021	Workforce and HR Strategy
Culture —Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.	Normalise culturally sensitive practices; for example, maintain and promote locations of reflection rooms for personal reflection, meditation and prayer.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Increase the visibility of CALD people in communications activities.	Ongoing	Communications
Leadership —Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.	Encourage opportunities for CALD voices to be heard at departmental forums such as branch and section meetings.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy, CALD Network
	Explore membership of relevant peak bodies; for example, National Anti-Racism Partnership and the Diversity Council of Australia	Annually	Workforce and HR Strategy, CALD Network

Gender Equity Action Plan

This action plan shows how we will:

- › commit to a gender-inclusive and equitable workplace, and remove practices that hinder this goal
- › create a culture that encourages and enables all employees to thrive, regardless of gender (Table 5).

TABLE 5 Gender Equity Action Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Opportunities —Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.	Use an evidence-based approach to understand business areas affected by gender imbalance.	December 2019	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Explore and develop employment programs to increase opportunities for women in leadership roles and specialist functional areas affected by gender imbalance.	January 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Develop resources to address unconscious bias in policy development.	June 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Review and enhance policies to support a family friendly workplace.	December 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy, HR People
Culture —Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.	Build a culture where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexible work is valued for all genders • managers and employees have the confidence to discuss and consider flexible working arrangements. 	June 2021	Workforce and HR Strategy, HR People, SES officers
Leadership —Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.	Review guidance material available for employees experiencing family and domestic violence. Develop the capability of managers and HR to support affected employees.	December 2020	HR People
	Showcase role models, leadership and success stories, particularly in business areas where gender imbalance exists.	June 2021	Workforce and HR Strategy, Gender Equity Network, SES officers

Multi-generational Workforce Plan

This plan provides actions to:

- › harness expertise in the workforce by providing employees of all ages with opportunities to contribute to our objectives
- › recognise the corporate knowledge of mature-age employees and the important role they play in passing this knowledge on through succession planning
- › understand the needs and differences of a multi-generational workforce and remove assumptions about what employees of different generations want or need (Table 6).

TABLE 6 Multi-generational Workforce Plan

Guiding theme	Action	Time frame	Responsibility
Opportunities —Attract and recruit diverse employees and ensure all employees are provided opportunities to build capability and contribute to our objectives.	Explore and develop employment programs to increase opportunities in specialist functions that risk skilled labour shortages in the future.	January 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy, HR People
	Explore effective tools to support employees' transition to retirement.	June 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy, HR People
Culture —Foster an inclusive culture where our employees feel they can bring their authentic self to work.	Implement communication activities that are age-inclusive and challenge age discrimination and negative stereotypes.	Ongoing	Workforce and HR Strategy, Communications
Leadership —Our leaders drive business outcomes by being open-minded, flexible, encouraging innovation and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leaders address unacceptable behaviour to ensure the workplace is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.	Create cross-generational mentoring opportunities to establish relationships with mature-age employees and graduates or employees in the foundational years of their careers.	January 2020	Workforce and HR Strategy
	Analyse workforce data to identify trends in mature-age employment and identify risk areas for skilled labour shortages.	Annually	Workforce and HR Strategy



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