

Inclusion and diversity strategy 2024–2028

Date authorised: 8/07/2024

Review date: 1/07/2028

The Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission (the PC) is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed most simply, is to help governments make better policies, in the long term interest of the Australian community.

The PC's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Further information on the Commission can be obtained from the PC's website (www.pc.gov.au).

© Commonwealth of Australia 2025



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and content supplied by third parties, this copyright work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the PC (but not in any way that suggests the PC endorses you or your use) and abide by the other licence terms. The licence can be viewed at: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0.

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed at: www.pmc.gov.au/government/commonwealth-coat-arms.

An appropriate reference for this publication is: Productivity Commission 2025, *Inclusion and diversity strategy 2024–28*, Canberra

Publication enquiries:

Phone 03 9653 2244 | Email publications@pc.gov.au



Acknowledgement of Country

The Productivity Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.



Chair's message

It is with great enthusiasm that I introduce the Productivity Commission's *Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024*–2028.

The strategy calls on all of us to embrace diversity, champion inclusion and cultivate equity. It is a commitment to building a workplace where everyone finds a sense of belonging regardless of their background, circumstances or identity.

We know that diversity improves team satisfaction and can support innovation and creativity. It also enriches our work and improves our capacity to deliver policy advice from a community-wide perspective.

We commit ourselves to ensuring that all voices and perspectives are heard and everyone is empowered to help shape our future.

I invite everyone at the PC to embrace this strategy.

Danielle Wood

Allood.

Chair, Productivitiy Commision

Our vision for inclusion and diversity

A positive and safe workplace for all, grounded in respect, where inclusion and diversity is valued and actively fostered. One where all employees have an equitable opportunity to participate, contribute and grow.

PC VALUES

INCLUSIVE

COLLABORATIVE

INFLUENTIAL

RESPECTFUL

SUPPORTIVE



Our people are our strength. We recognise and celebrate our differences.We celebrate diversity. We support each other.



We are one PC.
We work together to solve problems. We actively listen to everyone we work with.



We drive change. We lead by example and set high standards for performance and behaviour.



We are kind and we are courteous. We listen to others and respect differences in beliefs and opinions.



We are willing to help others.
We celebrate our colleagues' achievements and recognise people who exemplify our values.

Developing our strategy

Our strategy is informed by the views of employees gained during extensive consultation, as well the PC's strategic directions, relevant APSwide strategies, policy, guidance, and legislation.



Where are we now?

In 2023, 72% of staff who completed the APS Census said the PC supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture.

In line with our 2019–22 strategy, the PC has implemented a range of initiatives to build a culture of respect and inclusion, including:

- Increasing use of inclusive and contemporary employment entitlements such as flexible hybrid working arrangements, part-time and job sharing arrangements, and enhancing entitlements to cultural leave, parental leave, and support for employee's affected by domestic and family violence. Many of these are reflected in the provisions of the PC's new Enterprise Agreement 2024–2027.
- Creating an annual inclusion and diversity calendar to recognise and celebrate dates of national significance, including International Women's Day, IDAHOBIT, NAIDOC week, National Reconciliation Week, and International Day of People with Disability.
- Supporting staff-led employee networks to be formed such as the PRIDE Network and Mob Yarns, in addition to the CALD Network. These networks build connections and provide greater visibility for diverse groups.
- Attending Garma Australia's largest Indigenous gathering and participating in the Jawun secondment program. These opportunities build our cultural capability and support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to maintain cultural connection.
- Holding organisational memberships with the Australian Disability Network and Diversity Council of Australia, so all employees can access their resources.
- Using affirmative measures in recruitment to increase representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability.

However, we still have much more work to do to realise our vision for inclusion and diversity.

To build on our efforts to date, this strategy considers factors that have come to the forefront in recent years like recognising intersectionality and embracing new ways of working.

We will continue to work together to build a positive and safe workplace and an enduring culture of respect. We must continue to identify and address barriers to participation and contribution at all levels, and create a work environment where everyone feels valued and has a sense of belonging.

This will ensure the PC better reflects the wider community it serves, strengthening the relevance and impact of our work.





Realising our vision

Our focus towards 2028 is to embed inclusive ways of working and cultivate diversity across the PC.

Our leadership will underpin our efforts – ensuring our work aligns with our purpose, creating and sustaining positive working relationships, and building diverse and inclusive teams to enhance the quality of our work.

A positive culture is characterised by shared understanding, commitment, and a consistent demonstration of respectful and inclusive behaviour by employees at every level. In a positive culture, respect, appreciation, cooperation, collaboration, openness, and curiosity are the norm.

We have identified five key outcomes that will structure our long-term vision for diversity and inclusion. We have also set out high-level actions that will support us to achieve those outcomes, and described what success would look like to help us measure our progress.

A supporting operational plan will detail how we deliver on this strategy and ensure our efforts are coordinated and prioritised. The operational plan will be codesigned by inclusion and diversity champions and members of staff networks and affected work areas.

Key outcomes

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Purposeful leadership	Inclusive ways of working		A knowledgeable, aware and committed workforce	A diverse workforce

The case for inclusion

The Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) undertakes a national study every two years tracking the state of inclusion in Australian workplaces. The DCA has this to say about the business case for inclusion:

Creating real inclusion at work is much more than a 'feel good' exercise – it creates a better work environment that boosts employee wellbeing. Employees who form part of inclusive teams experience several benefits, especially in contrast to employees in non-inclusive teams. A similar trend also happens for inclusive managers and inclusive organisations – the more inclusive our managers and organisation, the more satisfied, secure, and successful we are.¹

The PC continues to develop the skills to listen, empathise, and include the perspectives of people who have felt excluded and marginalised – ensuring our work is influential and creates positive change throughout the community.

Our employees, during consultation, told us why they think inclusion and diversity is important in the workplace. They told us an inclusive and diverse culture contributes to a shared sense of connection, cohesion and belonging. When we feel comfortable bringing our whole selves to work and are supported to reach our full potential, this leads to greater creativity, improved productivity, and better employee morale and wellbeing. These benefits help us to achieve our goals, in turn leading to better outcomes for the Australian community.



Definitions

Employee consultation and information from external sources has informed the following definitions.



In the workplace occurs when a diversity of people are welcomed, valued, respected and connected – enabling everyone to feel comfortable to share their unique perspectives, skills and experiences, and fully contribute to organisational success.2



Diversity

Refers to differences, and the personal, professional and social characteristics that make us unique and shape views and perspectives, including but not limited to, our cultural backgrounds, socio-economic factors, life experiences, gender and gender identity, age, disability, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, relationship/family status and caring responsibilities.2



>>> Equity

Means achieving fairness and equal access to opportunities by making adjustments to remove barriers to ensure everyone can fully participate – irrespective of their background or identity. Understanding equity means recognising that we don't all start on an even playing field, due to preexisting barriers and unconscious bias.2



Intersectionality

Refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Aspects of a person's identity include wide ranging social characteristics and can interact to create inequality and result in exclusion when combined with attitudes, systems and structures in society.2,3



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Are the first peoples of Australia. There is great diversity within these two broadly described groups, comprising of hundreds of groups of people who have their own distinct set of languages, histories and cultural traditions.4,5



Inclusive language

Is language that is respectful and promotes the acceptance and value of all people. It is language which is free from words, phrases or tones that demean, insult, exclude, stereotype, infantilise or trivialise people based on their membership of a certain group or because of a particular attribute.6

Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM)

Is a term to refer to people who are not white or who are outside the dominant Australian culture, who may face marginalisation due to their cultural background, race or religion. This includes people who are Black, Brown, Asian, or any other non-white group.^{7,8}

>>> LGBTQIA+

Is an acronym to refer to the community of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or ace, or other diverse genders or sexual identities. The '+' sign recognises that language about gender and sexuality is dynamic and is not intended to be exclusionary. 'Pride' and 'Rainbow' community also refer to diverse sexuality and gender identity.⁹

>> Neurodiversity

Is an umbrella term to describe the diversity in brain functioning associated with a range of developmental conditions and experiences. The concept of neurodiversity is often associated with placing value on the strengths and benefits associated with diversity in brain functioning. The term 'neurodiverse' if often used to describe a group of individuals who represent the spectrum of neurodiversity which includes neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals.^{10,11}

Disability

Can refer to a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that a person may have, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.¹²

>>> Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

Is a broad concept with no single definition. CALD can refer to people who identify as having a cultural background other than or in addition to Anglo-Australian culture and heritage, for example in their cultural or ethnic identity, language, country of birth, parent's country of birth, heritage or ancestry, religion, nation of origin, race, or colour.¹³

Key outcomes and actions

1. Purposeful leadership

Outcomes

Committed, skilled and knowledgeable leaders at all levels. Leaders who:

- Confidently and consistently model inclusive and respectful behaviours and hold themselves and others accountable.
- · Empower others and act as change agents.
- Understand the correlation between a truly diverse and inclusive workplace and levels of wellbeing, performance, productivity, and innovation.
- Incorporate diversity and inclusion considerations into their planning and decision making and create a work environment where diversity of perspective and thinking is encouraged and applied to all the work we do.
- Recognise outstanding leadership in diversity and inclusion.

Actions

- Design and deliver a high-quality learning, awareness, and skills development program for leaders, to be conducted over time.
- Provide high quality information and resources to assist and support leaders to model inclusive and respectful behaviour and build and support high performing diverse teams.
- Review existing position descriptions to ensure respectful and inclusive leadership behaviours and practice is clearly stated as requirement for leadership roles at all levels.

2. Inclusive ways of working

Outcomes

- · Our workplace policies and processes are inclusive and equitable.
- Diversity, inclusion and equity considerations are incorporated throughout the entire employee life cycle.
- Inclusive language is used in all internal and external communication.
- Employees can participate in decisions about how work is done.
- Reward and recognition programs are equitable and inclusive.
- Career pathways and opportunities for growth are provided for all employees through challenging work and professional development.

Actions

- Through the lens of diversity, inclusion and equity, review and consider enhancements to our existing workplace policies and processes – including recruitment procedures and career pathways.
- Provide regular high-quality learning opportunities and resources for employees that support them to use inclusive language in all their communication.
- Review governance arrangements for staff consultative committees, working groups and staff-led employee networks to ensure clarity, transparency and optimal involvement and participation from all staff across – including funding and resourcing arrangements to support programs and events.

3. A safe, healthy and accessible workplace

Outcomes

We maintain a focus on supporting and promoting employee wellbeing and our workplace is:

- accessible
- · physically, psychologically and culturally safe
- free from racism, harassment and discrimination and bias of any kind.

Actions

- Undertake a review to identify any physical barriers to equity and inclusion in our workplaces – including office access and facilities.
- Through a diversity, inclusion and equity lens, review and consider opportunities for
- enhancements to work health and safety and wellbeing programs and support.
- Explore opportunities to increase employees' awareness of responsibilities in relation to workplace behaviour and conduct.

4. A knowledgeable, aware and committed workforce

Outcomes

Employees at all levels:

- Know and understand the importance and value of inclusion and diversity.
- Show commitment to building their awareness of self and others and are open to change.
- Seek ways to foster and support diversity and inclusion in their work.
- Actively contribute to a positive and inclusive workplace culture, and outline relevant opportunities in their performance agreements.

Actions

- Design and deliver regular high-quality learning and development opportunities for all employees to enhance their awareness of inclusion, diversity and equity principles and how to put these into practice in the workplace.
- Provide high-quality information and resources to support all employees to model inclusive and respectful behaviour and work effectively and positively in diverse teams.
- Review existing position descriptions to ensure respectful and inclusive behaviours and practices are clearly stated as a requirement for all roles at all levels.

- Review existing performance and development policies to ensure that:
 - Performance agreements at all levels (including SES and Commissioners) articulate clear expectations on inclusive behaviours and active contributions to a positive and inclusive workplace culture.
 - Appraisals include feedback on performance against these expectations.

5. A diverse workforce

Outcomes

- Diversity in skills, backgrounds and experience is evident at the team, work group and organisational level – not just at role/classification level.
- We make effective use of affirmative employment measures and professional development opportunities to address inequities and support development.
- Decision makers apply the principles of meritbased decision making. They are aware of and manage their personal biases. Employment related decisions are free from bias and discrimination, are fair and equitable and based on sufficient evidence.
- We know and understand, at a detailed level, the diversity of our workforce.
- Our decision makers seek out and value our diversity data and reporting and use it to drive further action.

Actions

- Identify opportunities and mechanisms for ongoing enhancements to our diversity data collection, analysis, and capability including by:
 - Reviewing the equity and diversity categories in Aurion to ensure alignment with APS wide representational targets; explore opportunities to align with the APS employee census questionnaire; and use best-practice, inclusive language.
 - Reviewing the communication mechanisms and advice provided to employees about the purpose and protection of diversity data to build staff confidence in self-disclosure, and provide all employees (new and existing) with a positive and welcoming experience.
- Consider ways to encourage all employees to periodically review their diversity details currently held on Aurion to improve the quality and richness of our diversity data.
- Provide training, support and resources for decision makers in the principles and practice of merit-based decision making, including in relation to the application of the merit principle in recruitment.

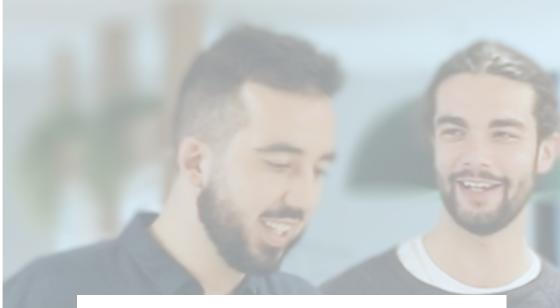


What would success look like?



Increased confidence and awareness demonstrated by all staff (as individuals and leaders) to:

- identify inappropriate workplace behaviours
- report incidents, raise concerns and seek support from available avenues
- effectively use the policies, processes and supports in place to address inappropriate behaviours
- model the APS and PC values to build and support a positive, safe and productive workplace culture



- A long-term improvement over the life of the strategy in participation rates (all APS levels, and Commissioners) across the activities and support mechanisms that promote employee wellbeing and inclusion, including:
 - the employee assistance program
 - reasonable workplace adjustments
 - agency-wide wellbeing initiatives (e.g. flu-vaccination program, health checks)
 - inclusion and diversity memberships
 - inclusion and diversity activities and events
 - relevant learning and development opportunities.



Our current workforce

Based on APS employees as at 31 December 2023



197



Female









6

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees



3

Employees with a disability



64

Employees with Caring Responsibilities



44 Average Age

130

employees < the age of 45



67

employees > the age of 45



42

Employees who speak a language other than English (LOTE)

The PC recognises that while these are standard ways of categorising diversity groups, they do not fully capture the richness of the diverse cultural backgrounds of people who work in the APS, and that there are alternative terms which are preferred by some groups.

APS employees (APS, EL and SES)

As at 31 December 2023, representation was self-reported in our HRMIS (Aurion) as:

- 66% of employees < the age of 45
- 34% of employees > the age of 45
- 21% of employees with a primary language other than English
- 19% of employees born outside of Australia
- 3% of employees who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 2% of employees reported having an ongoing disability
- 57% female APS employees and 43% male APS employees

Of the 95% of employees who responded to our 2024 APS Employee Census:

- 4% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 11% identified as neurodivergent and 13% said maybe
- 13% identified as **belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community**
- 28% identified as culturally and linguistically diverse
- 10% said they had an ongoing disability
- 21% said they were born outside of Australia
- 37% said they had carer responsibilities

For more information about current employment participation rates, you can view the latest <u>PC Annual Report</u>, <u>State of the Service Report</u> and <u>APS Employment Database</u>.

Our employment representation targets

The PC is committed to achieving and exceeding the targets set out in the following APSC strategies:

Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Workforce Strategy
2020–2024

APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25

APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
Employment Strategy and Action Plan

- 5% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation at the APS 4 to EL 2 classification levels by the end of 2024.
- 3% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation in the Senior Executive Service (SES) by the end of 2024.

• 7% representation of employees with disability by the end of 2025.

 24% for CALD representation in the SES at the end of the strategy.

How are we tracking?

As at 31 December 2023, representation was self-reported in Aurion as:

- 2.5% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation at the APS 4 to EL 2 classification levels.
- 0% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation at the SES levels.
- 1.5% representation of employees who identified as having an ongoing disability.

Our 2023 APS Employee Census results indicated higher levels of representation in the PC with:

- 5% overall Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation.
- 9% representation of employees who identified as having an ongoing disability.

Making it work

The success of this strategy, and the supporting operation plan, relies on the support and contribution of everyone in the PC.

We all contribute by:

- Always treating each other with respect, courtesy, and kindness.
- · Engaging in constructive, respectful, discussions and debate.
- Genuinely factoring in other people's views and the diversity of views and experience in the community when contributing to research, reporting and inquiries.
- Being aware of personal biases or potential for bias to influence us.
- Being curious and open to learning more about diversity and inclusion, including by accessing information resources and training, and participating in inclusion and diversity and cultural events and activities.
- Learning more about the skills, strengths and working styles of our colleagues.
- Discussing with our manager ways we can contribute to a respectful and inclusive workplace and team and including these in our performance agreement.
- Considering opportunities to join committees, workgroups, and employee networks, including as an ally.
- Respectfully challenging and/or reporting behaviour which may constitute harassment, discrimination or racism.

Leaders at all levels contribute by:

- · Leading by example.
- Pursuing learning opportunities to enhance inclusive leadership capabilities.
- Fostering and building diverse, high-performing teams where all members are valued, connected and able to contribute their best.
- · Enabling diverse opinions and perspectives to be heard.
- Ensuring diverse perspectives are applied to all that we do, including research, reporting and inquiries.
- Promoting and encouraging participation in activities and initiatives designed to support a respectful and inclusive workplace culture.
- Recognising employees who demonstrate respectful and inclusive behaviours.
- Having courage to challenge entrenched attitudes, behaviours and biases.

Senior leaders contribute by:

- Championing the strategy.
- Setting clear standards and expectations and holding themselves and other leaders to account.
- · Consistently modelling inclusive behaviours and practices.
- · Ensuring a diversity of perspectives are considered in decision making.

Governance for supporting inclusion and diversity

Our Management Committee

Our Management Committee oversee and set the strategic direction and priorities for the PC, including our commitment to inclusion and diversity. They assess the enterprise risks and allocate resourcing to implement the strategy, and monitor and oversee the performance of the strategy.

Our SES Champions

Our SES Champions provide visible leadership, sponsorship and commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity. They play an important role in supporting people who identify with diversity groups and sponsoring inclusion and diversity initiatives across the PC. They actively engage with Human Resources, Strategic Communications and Engagement, Committees, staff-led networks and senior leaders to recognise, support and celebrate inclusion and diversity.

Our Workplace Improvement and Culture Committee (WICC)

Following the launch of the strategy, the PC will establish the WICC to guide the PC's collective efforts to deliver a program of continuous improvement in our workplace. This includes work to foster a safe and inclusive workplace through engagement and collaboration and overseeing the implementation of this strategy.

Reporting to Management Committee, the WICC will work with other committees, working groups, employee networks, leaders, teams and individuals to progress initiatives in line with the strategy, and other improvement programs that promote a positive workplace culture. This includes initiatives in APS employee census action plans.

Our committees and employee networks

The PC acknowledges our other committees and employee networks that also contribute to continuous improvement and a safe and positive workplace culture, including by fostering equity, inclusion and diversity and supporting employee wellbeing.

Our employee networks, which are usually staff-led and initiated, provide peer support and connection for employees who identify with specific diversity groups, and foster allyship and a sense of belonging. The PC supports and encourages staff-led networks and initiatives, recognising their significant contributions.

The PC also encourages employees to connect with other available networks and communities of practice across the APS.



Monitoring progress and measuring success

The Management Committee will monitor the overall progress and success of the strategy, with support from the WICC.

The WICC will co-design and maintain a supporting operational plan to outline the roadmap of inclusion and diversity activities informed by this strategy. The operational plan will be used to support collaboration and engagement on activities, identify priorities, timeframes and measures for success.

The WICC will track the progress of the operational plan, and gather insights from staff, to inform their progress updates to the Management Committee. The WICC will provide these updates quarterly as part of the PC's workplace culture reporting framework.

In collaboration with SES Champions and the HR team, the WICC will conduct a formal evaluation against success measure indicators, and provide advice to Management Committee if further action or adjustments to the operational plan is recommended to fulfil the vision of the strategy.

Information and evidence sources available to help monitor, evaluate and report on progress of the strategy include:

- feedback from staff, work groups, committees and employee networks on equity, inclusion and diversity initiatives
- · workforce analytics including employment representation data
- · training participation rates and post-training feedback
- · affirmative measures recruitment outcomes
- · reasonable adjustments data
- · quarterly workplace culture reporting framework updates
- · annual results from:
 - · APS employee census
 - Workplace culture survey and other internal surveys
 - Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) public sector gender scorecard.

References

- ¹ The Case for Inclusion@Work Diversity Council Australia (dca.org.au)
- What is Diversity, Inclusion & Intersectionality? | Diversity Council Australia (dca.org.au).
- ³ Understanding intersectionality | vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au)
- ⁴ Indigenous Australians: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people | AIATSIS corporate website (aiatsis.gov.au)
- ⁵ Profile of First Nations people | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)
- 6 Culturally and linguistically diverse | Respect@Work (respectatwork.gov.au)
- ⁷ Chapter 4: Gender and Culturally and Racially Marginalised Employees | Gender Equality Commission (genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au)
- ⁸ CARM women in leadership Diversity Council Australia (dca.org.au)
- ⁹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | Australian Human Rights Commission (humanrights.gov.au)
- ¹⁰ Supporting children with neurodiversity | Australian Institute of Family Studies (aifs.gov.au)
- ¹¹ Neurodivergent, neurodiversity and neurotypical: a guide to the terms | The Brain Charity (thebraincharity.org.uk)
- ¹² LGBTIQ Overview | Diversity Council Australia (dca.org.au)
- ¹³ <u>Using Inclusive Language—UQ Guide I University of Queensland (staff.uq.edu.au)</u>

