Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Training
and Workforce Development**

Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy

2021 – 2025

Mid-Strategy Review
November 2023

Contents

The Department of Training and Workforce Development acknowledges Aboriginal people as the first sovereign Nations of Western Australia. We acknowledge their ancestral ties to the land and spiritual connection to Country. We acknowledge Elders both past and present, and value the contribution of Aboriginal people within our organisation. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and we embrace its invitation to walk alongside Aboriginal people, united in a movement for a better future for all Australians.

This document is available in alternative formats by request.

Please contact us via website@dtwd.wa.gov.au.

Message from the Director General

We know diversity makes us stronger.

As a leader of workforce development for the State, the Department of Training and Workforce Development is committed to ensuring that our workforce reflects the diversity of the community we serve. We know that a workplace with a diversity of experiences and perspectives, where everyone is valued and respected, will help us deliver the best outcomes for the Western Australian community and ultimately enrich the work environment for everyone.

Diversity and inclusion support our Department's vision of transforming lives and communities and enabling a thriving economy, and are embedded in our values. Bringing our values to life within our daily actions and interactions will nurture a shared responsibility to create a safe and inclusive workplace.

I am proud of our Department's achievements since the implementation of our Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy in 2021, but we still have work to do. This mid-strategy review reinforces our commitment to increasing the representation of people from diverse backgrounds at all levels, and ensuring our staff experience a sense of belonging and inclusion at work.

Achieving our goals of workforce diversification and inclusion requires a collective and sustained effort, a different way of doing things, and stronger accountability. I am committed to championing diversity and inclusion by fostering a safe and inclusive workplace culture and influencing others to proactively engage in practices to recruit, develop and retain diverse talent.

I encourage all staff to actively work towards the workforce diversity targets outlined in this Strategy and contribute to building an inclusive workplace where the qualities, contributions and perspectives of every individual are valued. Together we can achieve positive change and create a workplace where everyone can thrive.

Karen Ho
Director General

Workforce diversification and inclusion at the Department

We developed our *Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy* (the Strategy) in 2021 in response to the Public Sector Commission's Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020-2025. This mid-strategy review provides an opportunity to evaluate our progress towards improving employment outcomes for diverse groups, celebrate our achievements, and update our strategy to reflect current priorities and contemporary practices.

This strategy does not operate in isolation. It aligns with other key strategies, plans and policies that promote diversity and inclusion across the Department. These include our:

- Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Reconciliation Action Plan;
- Multicultural Plan;
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan;
- Aboriginal Employment Strategy; and
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Defining diversity and inclusion

Diversity[1] refers to the mix of people in an organisation – that is, all the differences between people in how they identify in relation to:

Social Identity – for example Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, gender, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural background, etc.	**Professional identity** – for example profession, education, organisational level, work location, etc.

These aspects come together in a unique way for each individual and shape the way they view and perceive the world and workplace.

Inclusion[2] in a workplace occurs when a diversity of people feel that they are:

Respected for who they are and able to be themselves	**Connected** to their colleagues and feel they belong	**Contributing** their perspectives and talents to the workplace	**Progressing** in their career at work

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[1] Diversity Council Australia, Diversity Definition, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2017.
[2] Diversity Council Australia, Inclusion Model, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2017.

Diversity and inclusion reflected in our values

Our core values reflect these aspects of diversity and inclusion. When we bring our values to life within our daily actions and interactions, we will collectively nurture a shared responsibility to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.

We find solutions, deliver and do things well.	We have integrity and courage.
We respect, trust and care for each other.	We know diversity makes us stronger.

Why diversity and inclusion is important to us

Evidence shows that a diverse and inclusive workplace delivers a range of positive organisational, team and individual outcomes[3].

Significantly increases employee wellbeing and satisfaction	Increases employee innovation and creativity	Increases team performance and effectiveness	Reduces employee turnover	Leads to better decision-making

Diversity of experiences and backgrounds brings a diversity of thought and perspectives, and ultimately enriches the work environment for everyone.

A diverse workforce enabled by inclusive practices will support the realisation of our vision and purpose through the achievement of our strategic priorities outlined in our _Strategic Plan 2023—2028_, for which a key enabler is 'We will create value by caring about our people and developing our individual and collective capacity.'

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[3] Diversity Council Australia, Business case for D&I, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia.

Key achievements

Since the commencement of the Strategy in November 2021, we have made significant progress towards achieving our workforce diversity targets. The following is a snapshot of our workforce diversity data on commencement of the Strategy in 2021, as well as current workforce data as at 23 November 2023 and our targets for the next two years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people		CaLD		People with disability		Women in SES		Youth	
2021	3.4%	2021	19.6%	2021	2.2%	2021	50.0%	2021	5.4%
2023	3.1%	2023	21.0%	2023	4.0%	2023	57.1%	2023	5.9%
2025 Target	*3.7%*	*2025 Target*	*15.5%*	*2025 Target*	*5.0%*	*2025 Target*	*50.0%*	*2025 Target*	*5.8%*
Progressing		Achieved		Progressing		Achieved		Achieved	

We have also improved employment outcomes for diverse groups through the implementation of key actions and initiatives.

- Developed a job applicant feedback survey to gain insights into the experiences of diverse applicants
- Implemented actions in the Safe Spaces guide for staff who are experiencing family and domestic violence
- Implemented a *Flexible Work Policy* and a *Working From Home Practice Direction*, enabling workplace flexibility for staff
- Established a partnership with the JobAccess National Disability Recruitment Coordinator program to improve access and inclusion for people with disability
- Developed a workforce diversification and inclusion intranet resource hub to build awareness of diverse groups and provide resources and supports for diverse staff
- Joined the Australian Network on Disability and Diversity Council of Australia to leverage a national community of practice and advance the inclusion of diverse employees
- Built a diverse network of Mental Health Contact Officers, including an Aboriginal Mental Health Contact Officer, to support employees experiencing mental health concerns

- Increased Aboriginal cultural visibility in the workplace by updating meeting room names to Noongar language, and developing a cultural protocols document to assist staff to deliver an Acknowledgment of Country
- Established a young professionals network to support young employees to thrive in their careers with the Department
- Incorporated an LGBTIQA+ inclusive language guide as a resource as part of the Department's Writing Style Guide
- Continued to build cultural safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through cultural immersion opportunities provided as part of the Department's Aboriginal Employee Yarning Circle
- Continued to promote and celebrate cultural and diversity awareness days and weeks through communications, events and learning opportunities
- Continued to increase awareness and knowledge amongst staff of LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices through awareness workshops

Our workforce profile

35.8%* Male	**64.2%*** Female	**0.7%*** * Identified as a person of diverse gender identities	**6.3%*** * Identified as a person with a diverse sexual orientation
17.2%^ Gender pay gap for median annual salaries	**88^** Equity index for women	**3.1%*** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	**44^** Equity index for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
19%* * Identify as culturally or linguistically diverse (CaLD)	**70^** Equity index for people from CaLD backgrounds	**36.6%*** * Born overseas	**22.7%*** * Fluent in a language other than English
5.9%* 24 years and under	**4%*** Have shared their disability status with the Department	**13.1%*** * Identify as having a disability and/or long term health condition	**37^** Equity index for people with disability

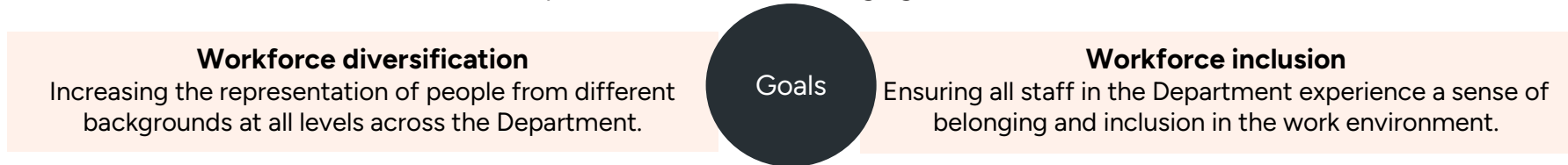** Data from the DTWD payroll system, as at 23 November 2023*
** Data from the 2023 Public Sector Census
^ Data from the Quarterly Entity Profile June 2023

Note: An equity index of 100 is considered optimal; an index less than 100 suggests the group is disproportionately represented in lower salary levels

Our diversity and inclusion goals

Through the implementation of this Strategy, we are working towards building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve and a work environment where staff experience a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Workforce diversification
Increasing the representation of people from different backgrounds at all levels across the Department.

Goals

Workforce inclusion
Ensuring all staff in the Department experience a sense of belonging and inclusion in the work environment.

Diversity and inclusion pillars

To advance our diversity and inclusion goals, we are focusing initiatives and activities within four pillars.

Building knowledge	Inclusive recruitment	Development practices	Organisational culture
Learning opportunities are provided to build awareness and knowledge of diverse groups and enhance workforce competency in inclusive practices.	Inclusive recruitment practices and programs are embedded to support the active engagement of diverse jobseekers at all levels.	Development practices enable diverse staff to broaden their knowledge, skills and experience, and work to develop their careers.	Action is taken to foster an inclusive organisational culture where all people feel safe, experience a sense of belonging, and are treated fairly and respectfully.

Workforce diversification and inclusion action plan

Supporting the Strategy is our *Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Action Plan*, which includes tailored initiatives under the four diversity and inclusion pillars aimed at increasing workforce representation and inclusion for six identified diversity groups.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD)

People with disability

Women

Youth (24 years and under)

People of diverse sexualities and genders (PDSG)

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Workforce diversity targets

We are committed to increasing the representation of people from diverse backgrounds in line with the Public Sector Commission's aspirational targets.

While we have made significant progress towards achieving our diversity representation targets over the past two years, analysis of our workforce d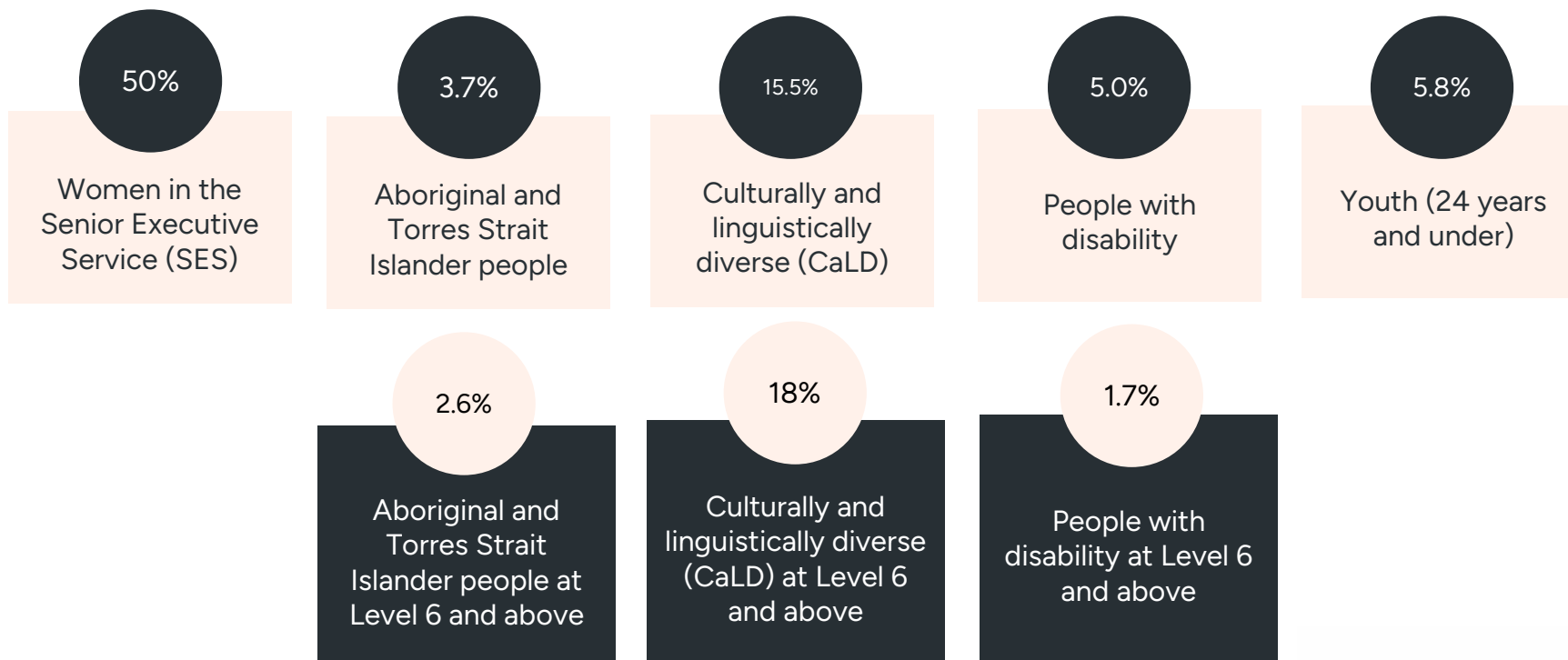ata indicates the representation of diverse groups is not evenly distributed across all levels of the workforce, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and people from CaLD backgrounds.

To drive changes across the Department and increase the representation of these diverse groups in mid-to-high level salary groupings, we have set representation targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and people from CaLD backgrounds at Level 6 and above.

Initiatives within our *Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Action Plan* will enable us to reach these representation targets.

50%	3.7%	15.5%	5.0%	5.8%
Women in the Senior Executive Service (SES)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD)	People with disability	Youth (24 years and under)

2.6%	18%	1.7%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at Level 6 and above	Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) at Level 6 and above	People with disability at Level 6 and above

1 Building knowledge

Learning opportunities are provided to build awareness and knowledge of diverse groups and enhance workforce competency in inclusive practices.

Building workforce competency

It is crucial that all employees play an active role in creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive work environment. Education and awareness create the foundations for an inclusive culture. We will provide opportunities for staff to increase their understanding of diversity and inclusion concepts, including an understanding of discrimination, unconscious bias, and respectful behaviour in the workplace.

We will provide opportunities for staff to increase their cultural competency and develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights; disability access and inclusion; gender equality issues; and LGBTIQA+ inclusive practices.

Supporting managers and contact officers

We recognise that inclusive leaders create a psychologically safe working environment and improve performance, productivity, and innovation. We will build confidence and competency of managers to manage and work with a diverse team and to understand their role in creating an inclusive environment.

Acknowledging the important role our employee contact officers play in creating a supportive and inclusive work environment, we will provide opportunities for contact officers to build their competency in diversity conscious practices.

Sharing and celebrating diversity

Lived experience perspectives play a vital role in building awareness and understanding of diverse groups. We will continue to highlight the voices and achievements of people from diverse groups through our internal and external communications.

We will also share updates and achievements relating to diversity and inclusion targets and initiatives with Department staff and the broader community through communications and our annual report.

2 Inclusive recruitment

Inclusive recruitment practices and programs are embedded to support the active engagement of diverse jobseekers at all levels.

Recruiting diverse talent

Proactive and targeted recruitment strategies are required to shift the dial on the representation of diverse groups across all levels of the Department. We will use the measures to achieve equality outlined in relevant legislation and public sector instructions to prioritise the appointment of people from diverse groups, including guaranteed progression to interview for shortlisted applicants from under-represented groups.

To attract diverse jobseekers to the Department, we will continue to promote employment opportunities through our social media channels, specialist employment service providers and networks. We will also work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to review and update our *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*, outlining targeted initiatives to make the Department an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Recognising our current employment gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and youth, we will continue to focus on engaging these groups through our graduate programs, traineeships, internships, and work experience placements.

Supporting managers to recruit for diversity

Managers play a pivotal role in the recruitment of new staff. We will support our managers to recruit diverse talent and build their confidence and competence through the provision of inclusive recruitment resources and toolkits.

Identifying and addressing barriers

To ensure we have best practice accessible and inclusive recruitment practices that allow us to attract and recruit people from diverse backgrounds, we will work with relevant diversity organisations to review our recruitment processes and use data and feedback to identify and address barriers to the recruitment and progression of people from diverse groups.

3 Development practices

Development practices enable diverse staff to broaden their knowledge, skills and experience, and work to develop their careers.

Supporting professional and career development

In addition to increasing the representation of people from diverse groups in employment, we are committed to ensuring diverse staff are increasingly represented in mid-to-high level salary groupings. We will support diverse employees to participate in a range of development programs and initiatives to enable personal growth and career progression, including the *Public Sector Graduate Development Program,* external leadership development programs, and internal development opportunities.

We will implement the Public Sector Leadership Expectations framework and align professional development opportunities to the framework, supporting diverse employees to develop the expected behaviours and mindsets to become positive and impactful leaders in the public sector.

Improving parental leave transition processes

Evidence shows that time away from work to care for children can impact on women's development opportunities and career progression. We understand the importance of making sure employees feel supported in their journey to and from parental leave. We will review our current parental leave transition processes and implement improvements that foster inclusion and connection, create awareness of employment and development opportunities, and ensure a successful transition back to work.

Supporting employee networks

We will provide staff with opportunities to connect, share, develop and learn through dedicated employee networks, including our Young Professionals Program (YPP) and Aboriginal Employee Yarning Circle. We will explore opportunities to create additional employee networks for diverse groups to support learning and development.

4 Organisational culture

Action is taken to foster an inclusive organisational culture where all people feel safe, experience a sense of belonging, and are treated fairly and respectfully.

Creating a safe and inclusive workplace

An inclusive culture where people feel respected and connected delivers positive organisational, team and individual outcomes. We will foster a safe and inclusive work environment by reinforcing zero tolerance to discrimination and harassment, providing a clear complaints pathway for staff to raise issues, and providing diverse and inclusive employee support services.

We will utilise the *Workplace Equality and Respect Standards* and information available from the *Australian Workplace Equality Index* to review our workplace policies and practices and identify actions and initiatives to build respect, equality, and inclusion.

We will explore and adopt new initiatives to create a safe environment for staff to share their diversity status at various stages of employment.

Highlighting visibility & voice

Visible leadership and deliberate actions are required to foster a culture of diversity and inclusion. We will reinforce our commitment to diversity and inclusion through the Executive Champions for Diversity and Inclusion initiative, and continue to acknowledge, promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion dates of significance.

We recognise the importance of giving employees a voice and listening to their experiences. We will establish and engage with employee networks to ensure our practices and initiatives are informed by lived experience. We will capture employee perceptions of workplace inclusiveness and use this feedback to inform our future initiatives.

Enabling workplace flexibility

We understand that flexibility will improve employee wellbeing and assist us to attract diverse talent. We will enable workplace flexibility for staff and support managers to have the capability and confidence to manage varied working arrangements. We will support staff to observe cultural traditions and participate in culturally relevant customs and events.

Supporting workplace adjustments

We will develop a clear policy and procedure for workplace adjustments and ensure budget processes consider funding for disability-specific equipment and modifications to enable people with disability to perform their duties and have equal opportunity in employment.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The success of this Strategy depends on individuals, teams, and leadership working together to achieve the workforce diversity targets and building an inclusive workplace where the qualities, contributions and perspectives of every individual are valued.

The Department will continue to monitor workforce diversity data, equity index data and gender pay gap information and will compare the Department's performance to sector-wide results. Data will be reported to Corporate Executive on a six-monthly basis.

Information on activities undertaken to improve diversity and inclusion, including staff views of workplace inclusiveness, will be included in the Department's annual report.

The diversity and inclusion landscape is continually changing and we must remain flexible in our approach to workforce diversification and inclusion. We will regularly monitor and evaluate the action plan to ensure initiatives and activities continue to be effective in achieving our goals and targets. Where required, the action plan will be updated to reflect a change in priorities, best practice initiatives, voice captured from our employees and directives from the broader sector.

Progress against the action plan will be reported to Corporate Executive on an annual basis.