



Australian Government

Department of Industry, Science,  
Energy and Resources

# Inclusion Strategy

## 2021-2023

*Beyond 2020*



# Message from the Secretary

The Department of Industry, Science, Energy, and Resources has a commitment to inclusion and diversity, with an ambition of being the best possible place to work. This reflects the importance we place on our people and on creating a workplace culture where each and every one of us is valued and respected for our contribution.

As Secretary, I am committed to building a department with an inclusive, diverse and non-judgmental culture, where everyone feels supported and able to contribute to their fullest potential. This strategy goes beyond attracting diversity into our workforce and embraces the inclusive approach. To help us truly embed a culture of inclusion and accessibility we need to ensure people at all levels are included. Ensuring that all staff feel like they belong means that we can all positively contribute to the workplace.

While many people are aware of the value of diversity and inclusion, there are still many opportunities for improvement in the department to ensure we achieve the most inclusive culture possible.

Our first steps will be to attract people from diverse backgrounds and enable the diversity of talent we already have to contribute to their maximum potential. To do this we must create an environment of positive inclusion and engagement.

As we strive to be the best possible place to work, we will listen to the many voices of our employees and contribute our varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

We will continue to work toward increasing the employment of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. We will ensure that our recruitment practices are inclusive and bias-free. We will improve retention and career opportunities, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and persons with a disability.

In order for us all to play a role in the implementation of this strategy we need to create a place where people:

- are valued for who they are, not just what they do
- feel that they can trust their workplace with their identity
- feel connected to the group
- feel safe and confident to speak up and contribute
- are inspired to do their best work
- have equal opportunity to participate, contribute and progress.

Inclusion is a priority of the Executive team. It is our expectation that we all work to create a workplace where we feel equally valued, supported and respected. This includes having equal opportunities to participate and progress implementation of the Inclusion Strategy over the next 3-years.

Most importantly, we need to recognise the enormous opportunity that inclusion offers us all. I encourage you all to focus on actions you can take to deliver the Strategy. We all have a role in improving our workplaces by truly leading, working collectively and advocating improvements to inclusion and accessibility.



**David Fredericks PSM**

Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

# Introduction

The Inclusion Strategy 2021–2023 outlines our continued commitment to ensure our department remains an inclusive place for people to work. We embrace and celebrate all diversity to achieve our vision to support economic growth and job creation for all Australians.

Since 2017, the department has established structures and activities that recognise the value of inclusion, respectful workplace conduct, and unified values. This strategy will continue this work to strengthen the department's employee value proposition and to achieve our ambition of being the best possible place to work. This will position the department as an employer of choice, and improve the attraction, development, and retention of employees from diverse groups. By doing so we aim to foster an inclusive environment that welcomes all employees so that everyone feels not only valued but also has a sense of belonging.

As a department we are future-looking to ensure we have the skills needed to apply technology purposefully and effectively in our work. Long-term trends suggest support for flexible work and work-life balance will remain vital to attracting and retaining top talent.

The impacts of COVID-19 on our department were reviewed when developing this strategy. During 2020 we transformed the way we work as a department resulting in a large percentage of our employees working out of the office for a period of time. This required our department to take a fresh look at how we foster inclusion to improve collaboration, output, culture, and the overall employee experience.

Creating a culture that supports our inclusive blended workforce is critical to ensure all employees continue to feel welcome, included and engaged as they continue to adapt to new ways of working.



The strategy will raise awareness about the importance of inclusion and diversity and continue us on our evolving journey of making sure employees are able to flourish in a working environment based on acceptance, openness and respect for others.

Over the next 3 years our department's key priorities will include a renewed focus on holistic approaches to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, gender, disability inclusion, LGBTIQ+ inclusion, cultural and linguistic diversity, flexible work arrangements and multi-generational employment strategies.

As such, the strategy considers whole-of-government diversity strategies including:

- [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024](#)
- [Disability Employment Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2025

The strategy also supports the objectives of the department's *People Strategy 2020–2022*; *Safety Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2023*; *Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2020*; *Accessibility Action Plan 2020-2025* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2021*.

## Underpinning our work

***Our department recognises the First Peoples of this nation, we recognise their ongoing connection to culture and country. We acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and lore keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.***



*We acknowledge the strategy's artwork by our employee Amy Huggins.*

**Artist's statement:** The artwork depicts seed pods and foliage from the bottlebrush plant. This is an important plant for the Wiradjuri people. The flowers attract the budyaan (birds) and the budyaan attract the gadi (snake), which is a key source of food for the Wiradjuri people.



### Purpose of the Inclusion Strategy

- ✓ Set clear expectations of leadership behaviours to promote inclusion and diversity.
- ✓ Ensure visibility of key activities carried out across the department to foster diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- ✓ Establish clear actions to be taken over the next 3 years to build on the progress to date.
- ✓ Define what success will look like, and how we will hold ourselves to account as an organisation for achieving it.

*Photos within our strategy have been provided by departmental staff. They are reflective of all employees including members of our diversity and inclusion networks.*

Image caption: Virginia Cook (Diversity Network Representative).



### External resources and partners

We take pride in partnering with a number of external independent, not-for-profit organisations. These memberships provide us with access to unique research, exciting events, comprehensive resources and unrivalled expertise across the diversity and inclusion spectrum.



AUSTRALIAN  
NETWORK  
ON DISABILITY



# Our focus areas

The aim of the strategy is to allow all employees to fully engage in the workplace and have access to opportunities by removing barriers, applying inclusive thinking to how we access and take part in labour markets, and adopt virtual engagement technologies and content.

There is greater diversity today at the department by gender, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation than 3 years ago. Particularly at the entry and manager levels. However more work is required to attract and retain this talent and offer meaningful career pathways. The strategy outlines a vision for harnessing and building on diversity and fostering inclusion.

Our departmental values are central to promoting a culture of respect, understanding and inclusion. As such, the values are built into the 5 focus areas of the strategy.



Image caption: (L-R) Holly Pedersen, Linda Lee, Belinda Carlson & Natasha Curyer (Regionally based staff).



## We are collaborative

Our goal is to drive a workplace culture that is collaborative and accountable, that values the talent and diversity of all staff.



## We are innovative

Our goal is to create an environment where new ideas can be expressed and explored for incorporation into departmental business practices.



## We are respectful

Our goal is to apply departmental values and provide an inclusive and accessible workplace, where inclusion is everyone's responsibility, and the diversity of staff is respected and valued.



## We strive for excellence

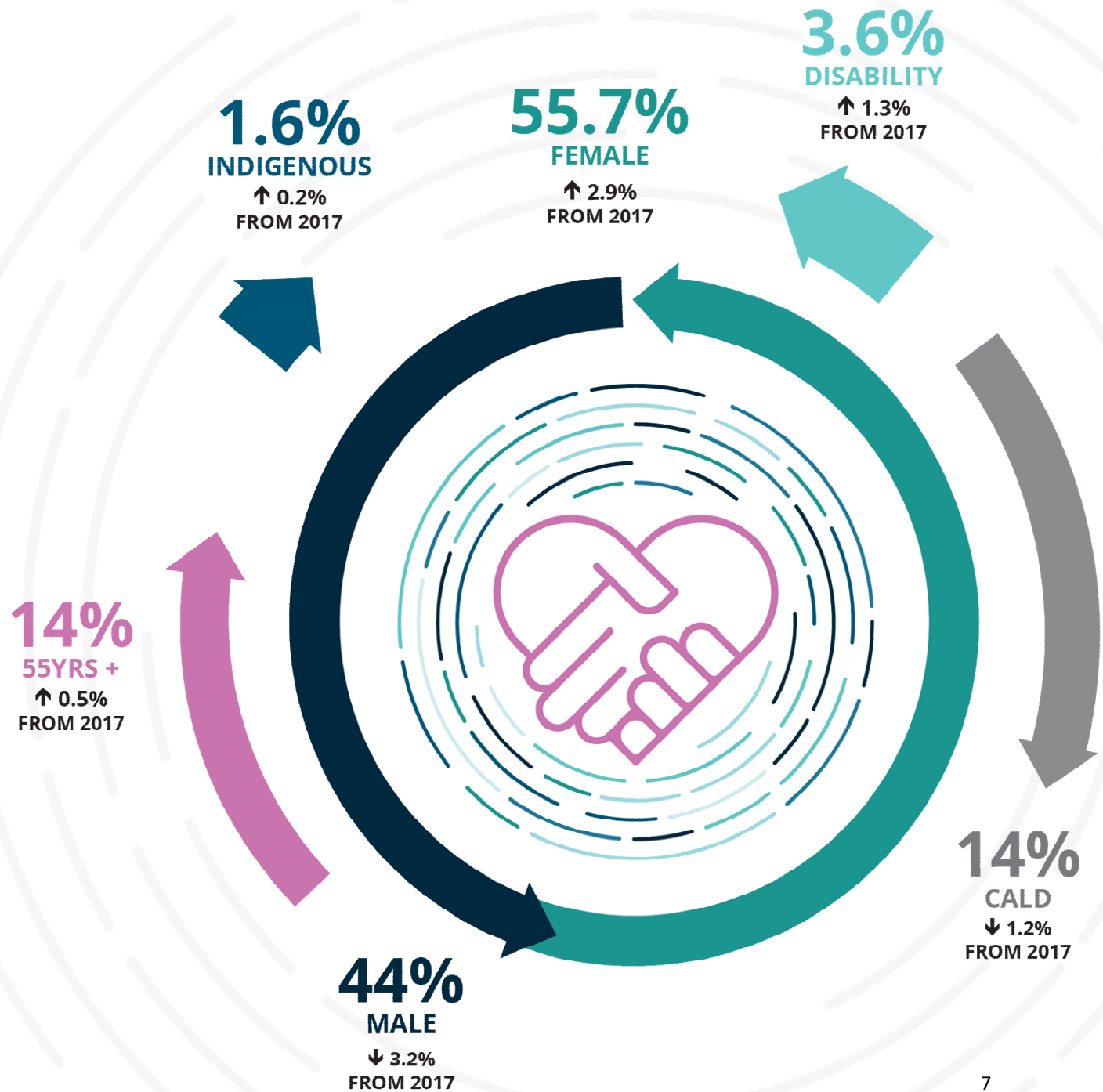
Our goal is to create a high-performance culture that harnesses the power of diversity of background, thought and experience in our teams to better support our staff and the communities the department serves.



## We are flexible

Our goal is to create diverse, productive and agile teams and provide work environments that fully support our blended flexible workforce.

## Diversity in our department today



A snapshot of our staff.  
(data as at September 2020)

# Our shared commitment

Embedding inclusion within all areas of our department requires all employees to show a personal commitment. This will create a true sense of belonging for everyone. Without leadership at all levels, inclusive behaviours are unlikely to become part of our normal workplace practices.

Our shared commitment is more than words on a page. Over the next 3 years we need to reflect critically on the choices we make, the behaviours we demonstrate, and the interactions that we have. We must hold one another to account for building an inclusive, safe, nurturing and community-minded department.

Inclusive leadership means listening to everyone and taking into account everyone's perspectives before taking action. Inclusive leadership is essential for making sure diverse thinking is respected, managed, heard and applied. Inclusive leadership will embed our non-judgemental culture and help make the department the best possible place to work.

By prioritising inclusive leadership capabilities and rewarding excellence in leadership we will ensure the time and resources invested into cultivating an inclusive culture is responsive to feedback from our employees to deliver maximum results and contribute to achieving our aim of the department being the best possible place to work.

Image caption: (top) Chun-Yin San (Diversity Network Representative).  
(bottom) Back row L–R – Amber Beavis (Diversity Network Representative), Michele Graham (Women's Network Champion), David Williamson (Deputy Secretary), Elizabeth Kelly (Deputy Secretary and Women's Network Champion) and Sean Sullivan. (Deputy Secretary). Front row L–R – Rachel Parry (Women's Network Champion), David Fredericks (Secretary) and Luise McCulloch (Deputy Secretary).



*Everyone at our department has an opportunity to make diversity and inclusion a personal priority.*



# Our progress

*We have a lot to celebrate, such as:*

## Employee diversity networks

- Establishing 6 employee-led diversity networks.
- Establishing an Inclusion Insights forum that provides an opportunity for the Executive to meet with employee network chairs quarterly.
- Appointing 17 diversity champions and 5 Reconciliation Action Plan champions, held by SES employees in the department who play a key role in driving cultural change.
- Delivering a workshop called 'Let's talk race', based on workshop facilitation materials produced by the Australian Human Rights Commission.
- Providing lunchtime language classes for Mandarin, Chinese and Spanish.
- Supporting the rich diversity of our community on days of significance including Lunar New Year, International Women's Day, Harmony Day, National Reconciliation Week, Ramadan, NAIDOC Week, Wear it Purple Day, R U OK? Day, Flexible Working Day, Diwali, and the International Day of People with Disability.

## Awards and recognition

- Achieving a bronze tiered ranking in Pride in Diversity's national Australian Workplace Equality Index in 2019 and 2020.
- Our Pride Network being finalists in the Network Award category at the APSC Diversity and Gender Equality Awards in 2018.
- Being the 2019 Agency winner of the ACT Inclusion Awards for Inclusion in Public Sector Employment at Questacon.

Image caption: (clockwise top L-R) Sam Taylor, Christopher Wood, Terri Reid, Maha Ziade, Brittany Young, and Tabitha Brown (Diversity Network Representatives).

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### **Learning and capability**

- Completing regular workshops and opportunities for staff to build their understanding regarding LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace.
- Achieving 76% employee completion of the department's Respectful Workplace Behaviours training module.
- Launching the University of Tasmania's Introduction to disability awareness e-learning program which provides participants with an understanding of the lived experience of people with disabilities in Australia, particularly in relation to discrimination.

### **Safety, health and wellbeing**

- Providing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to employees in September 2018 and being awarded gold recognition as an MHFA skilled workplace
- Providing advice to employees on how to optimise home workspaces to maintain a safe environment during COVID-19.
- Creating inclusive architectural design principles in creating quiet rooms to support neurodiversity.

Image caption: Rachel Lee (Diversity Network Representative).



### Business process improvements

- Launching our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–21.
- Launching our Accessibility Action Plan 2020–25.
- Establishing new departmental values to strengthen the department's culture.
- Developing guidelines and a framework to support gender diverse employees to affirm their gender in the workplace.
- Adopting an 'if not why not?' approach to flexible work arrangements and our commitment to providing access to flexible arrangements to everyone, where appropriate.
- Completing a 12-month Autism Engagement Program pilot.
- Commitment to the Panel Pledge, signalling a tangible commitment to improving gender diversity.

Image caption: (top) Sadaya Marathe (bottom) Ximena Elliot (Diversity Network Representatives).



***“Ultimately it is the leadership, actions and behaviours of employees at all levels that will determine how successful we are.”***



# Success measures

Ultimately it is the leadership and actions of employees at all levels that will determine how successful we are in strengthening the department's inclusive culture.

Our success to increase inclusion within the department over the next 3 years will largely be measured by the extent to which employees are respected, accepted and encouraged to fully participate in the department.

## We will achieve success if we:

- Include employee contributions to reconciliation, inclusion and accessibility within our staff performance plans and business plan undertakings.
- Hold ourselves accountable to diversity and inclusion at all levels and track our performance.
- Increase representation and retention of staff from diversity groups.
- Build to 100% staff completions of the department's inclusion training programs.
- Ensure our technology and communication channels are accessible where possible.

We will monitor our progress over the next 3 years against all our commitments. This includes reporting on the diversity of our workforce, evaluating trends and annually identifying areas for improvement. We will use data to tell us what we need to improve on and check in with our diversity networks monthly to ask how our actions are making a difference and any adjustments that may need to be made.

In addition to the APS Census and internal pulse surveys, we will also participate in diagnostic and inclusion and diversity benchmarking processes, including the:

- Diversity Council of Australia Inclusion@Work Index.
- Australian Network on Disability's Access and Inclusion Index.
- Pride in Diversity Australian Workplace Equality Index.

Image caption: Shane Haby (Diversity Network Representative).

## Inclusion Strategy 2021–2023



# Our employee networks

We are committed to providing a supportive work environment which enables our employees to achieve their full potential. The department supports a number of employee-led diversity networks. The networks also effect cultural change at the grass-roots level by offering new perspectives, thereby advocating and transforming policies and processes. They are the:





# We are collaborative

*Our goal is to drive a workplace culture that is collaborative and accountable, that values the talent and diversity of all staff.*

We are committed to creating an equitable and diverse workplace and we strongly value the skills, expertise and perspectives of all people. We understand the value of diverse views and promote inclusive leadership. We seek to listen to everyone's views and provide opportunities for diverse voices to be heard.

## **To achieve this, we will:**

- Recruit from a range of backgrounds and ages at all levels.
- Determine where recruitment barriers may exist to access diverse talent, and take steps to address these.
- Communicate and integrate the Diversity Council of Australia's inclusive leadership framework into the department's leadership training.
- Create a unified, respectful culture across our regional and central offices.



# We are innovative

*Our goal is to create an environment where new ideas can be expressed and explored for incorporation into departmental business practices.*

We promote innovation by challenging the status quo and foster an environment that inspires and rewards. We attract people from diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking. We encourage self-reflection and self-awareness to support our staff to achieve their best.

## **To achieve this, we will:**

- Provide opportunities for staff from diverse backgrounds, including individuals with unique and diverse viewpoints to work together.
- Ensure that all staff feel that their voices are heard and their views are taken into consideration.
- Trial new technologies and methodologies, particularly those that are accessible.
- Use secondments and student placements as a way to bring people into the department with different experiences, backgrounds, perspectives and ages to broaden the diversity of thought.
- Develop tools and resources to attract and retain an intergenerational workforce.



## We are respectful

*Our goal is to apply departmental values and provide an inclusive and accessible workplace, where inclusion is everyone's responsibility, and the diversity of our people is respected and valued.*

We have a welcoming culture at the department. We provide a work environment for staff to feel they are able to bring their full selves to work. We encourage open and honest conversations. We provide a workplace that fosters respect, unity, inclusion, understanding and celebration. We ensure that people feel safe to be their true self.

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- Embed diversity and inclusion awareness and capability into all areas of the department.
- Reinforce values-based behaviours to foster an inclusive environment where all staff have opportunities to learn, grow and succeed.
- Ensure where appropriate a diversity balance on panels, boards and committees.
- Promote events which celebrate and raise awareness of diversity and inclusion.



# We strive for excellence

*Our goal is to create a high-performance culture that harnesses the power of diversity of background, thought and experience in our teams. In order to better support our staff and the communities the department serves.*

We are dedicated to achieving results that make a difference and support new ways of working. Our department draws on talent from a diverse workforce. We recognise that a culture of respect and inclusivity allows employees to perform to their potential. We anticipate the capabilities we need for the future and support our people to reach their potential and develop.

## **To achieve this, we will:**

- Provide opportunities for staff from all backgrounds including individuals with unique, diverse viewpoints to succeed and fulfil their individual ambitions.
- Build the workforce skills of the future and ensure they are available within the department when required.
- Foster a knowledge organisation where the development and learning of staff remains a priority.
- Recognise individuals and teams that have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the areas of diversity and inclusion.



## We are flexible

*Our goal is to create diverse, productive and agile teams and provide work environments that fully support our blended flexible workforce.*

We normalise a culture of flexible working and encourage our staff to perform at their very best. We have a global footprint and understand our unique work locations and their respective cultures. We allow employees time to balance their personal and professional lives, while ensuring high levels of productivity.

**To achieve this, we will:**

- Continue to provide opportunities for flexible working arrangements for employees to support work-life balance and remove barriers to workforce participation.
- Provide corporate training at varying times and days of the week to support flexible and interstate/overseas employee participation.
- Provide technology modernisation and useability to improve team effectiveness and productivity.
- Promote and support flexible working arrangements and transitions to retirement for mature age employees.





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