Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety

Inclusion Strategy 2025–26

Vision:

A safe and inclusive workplace that fosters a culture of respect, celebrating diverse perspectives, and recognising them as essential to our collective growth and innovation.

Purpose:

To develop and support an empowered workforce which reflects the diversity that exists in the Queensland community we serve.

What success will look like:

An inclusive workforce culture that embraces difference and provides everyone with the resources to contribute their unique skills and ideas, and perform to the best of their ability. A place that people are proud to work and want to stay because they feel they belong.

An environment where all employees feel safe, valued, supported and respected within the workplace. They feel empowered to speak up with questions, share their concerns and ideas, and advocate for their own needs and those of others.

A workforce whose diversity more closely aligns with the diversity of the communities we serve. The complexity of identities and their intersectional nature are recognised and respected when considering the needs of our colleagues and clients.

How we'll get there

Lead: Build leadership capabilities to develop and model inclusive, authentic and compassionate leadership.

Advance: Learn together and raise awareness of ways to advance the department's ability to foster an inclusive work environment, from recruitment to retirement.

Value: Support our staff through collaborative design, implementation and review of strategic solutions which value and leverage the advantages diversity provides.

Our department

The Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (the department) aims to end domestic, family and sexual violence and improve women's safety, and to ensure Queensland's families, women, children, young people, seniors, carers, and people with disability are safe, and are empowered to thrive socially and economically in their communities and cultures.

Adhering to the Queensland Government commitment to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, the department has a strong focus on employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with lived experience of disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The department is committed to supporting our diverse workforce to bring their whole self to work, supporting people across the spectrum of cultural backgrounds (including race, religion and country of origin), languages, sexualities and genders, disability, age, neurotypes and lived experience.

The department's Inclusion and Diversity Champion is a member of the Board of Management and chairs the Inclusion and Diversity Reference Group. The Reference Group aims to represent most diversity groups and areas of the department, and helps to implement the Equity and Diversity Plan which is reviewed annually to help us achieve our vision.

Where we are now

Drawing on the Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI), Workforce Diversity Census (the Census) and Working for Queensland (WfQ) employee opinion survey data, the department undertakes an annual Equity and Diversity Audit which looks at progress against diversity targets and identifies advances and areas for improvement. The findings from this audit are then used to inform the annual review of the Equity and Diversity Plan, seen in the following pages.

It's worth noting that the WfQ responses suggest a much higher proportion of our target demographics than appears in MOHRI data. The department has identified the need to work towards increasing reporting rates through the Census, which will indicate an increase in people feeling safe to disclose.

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Table: Progress against diversity targets 2023–26

Focus area	Target 2023–26	March 2025	WfQ 2024	Sector
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees	9%	4.55%	7%	2.66%
Employees with disability	12%	4.92%	13%	3.54%
Employees who speak a language other than English at home (CALD2)	12%	6.09%	15%	8.24%
Percentage of women in leadership positions (SO and above)	50%	77.4%	—	53.79%

Data sources: MOHRI March 2025, Working for Queensland September 2024, *State of the Sector Report* March 2024

About the inclusion targets:

Department diversity targets were set by the Board of Management in 2023, taking into account the Public Sector Commission targets and staff demographics. The stretch target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff demonstrates the department's commitment to a workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

These targets will be reviewed in 2026.

How we will measure success

Improvement in Working for Queensland survey results, tracked annually on:

- Fair and equitable treatment
- Respect and psychological safety
- Cultural safety
- Employee engagement
- Leadership
- Social support
- Flexible work.

Increased results in the following measures:

- proportion of staff from diverse backgrounds employed in decision making roles (AO8 equivalent and above)
- number of job applicants from diversity target groups — tracked quarterly
- retention rate of staff in diversity target groups — tracked quarterly
- percentage of women in leadership aligns with total proportion of women — tracked annually
- progress towards departmental diversity targets — tracked quarterly.

Working together

Staff at all levels have a role to play in fostering a safe and respectful workplace. We share responsibility for inclusive behaviour across the department and can all lead by example. Staff can get involved in building this culture through simple acts and behaviours:

- Act in a respectful and professional manner and learn how to be an active ally to colleagues.
- Call out or report behaviours that may be disrespectful or discriminatory to help shape a safe and supportive culture.
- Embrace diversity of thought through collaboration and co-creation. Be aware of how your own experiences have shaped the way you think — seek out diverse voices, create connections, and be open to giving and receiving feedback.
- Take an active part in inclusion activities and seek out new knowledge to help improve cultural capability and understanding of the lives of the diverse people we work with and serve.
- Consider whether disclosing your individual needs would allow workplace adjustments to help you reach your full potential.
- Consider contributing to the confidential Equity and Diversity census through Aurion Employee Self Service (ESS) to help the department's reporting and planning processes.

Links to other plans and strategies

This plan is aligned to whole of government strategies and plans, and links to the following department plans, which shape the way we work towards a more inclusive workplace and diverse workforce.

- *Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety Strategic Plan*
- *Strategic Workforce Plan 2023–2026*
- *Yangaa Dahgu — Mekem Gen: Reframing the Relationship Roadmap*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2024–2028*
- *Disability Service Plan 2023–2026*

Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety

Equity and Inclusion Plan 2025–26

This plan draws on the findings of the annual Equity and Diversity Audit (the audit) to identify areas for improvement. The audit takes into account staff diversity survey responses, Workforce Diversity Census (the Census) data, exit survey data and Working for Queensland survey responses, as well as outlining the achievements of the previous Equity and Diversity Plan. The plan supports the *Public Sector Act 2022*, which provides a modern, employee-focused legislative framework to ensure Queensland's public sector is fair, responsive, inclusive and a leader in public administration.

This plan provides the foundations for future work. These actions will be reviewed and refreshed annually to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the changing needs of the department.

Goal	Actions	Outcomes	Led by
Lead — Build leadership capabilities to develop and model inclusive, authentic and compassionate leadership.			
L1 Share responsibility for inclusive behaviour across the department, and lead by example. The principles of inclusion should underpin all that we do and set the tone for our work.	• Embed inclusion into the departmental culture, ensuring that the diverse needs of our workforce and clients are considered in planning processes. • Develop and promote a resource to help embed inclusion, equity and cultural safety considerations into workforce and strategic planning. • Engage with equity and diversity industry partners and peak bodies, and participate in available index and/or accreditation programs to ensure our workplace practices, policies and programs are appropriate and contemporary. • Support the executive Inclusion and Diversity Champion to lead the equity and diversity agenda and promote the importance of fostering inclusive workplaces. • Support the development and progress of localised inclusion activities and encourage collaboration through the facilitation of a Regional Inclusion Champion network. • Incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability activities into performance plans. • Support managers to use performance conversations as an opportunity to ensure staff feel empowered, enabled and encouraged to pursue their career goals. Build discussions about workplace adjustments and flexible working options into these conversations.	• All key strategies and Workforce Plans contain inclusion, equity and cultural safety considerations • Performance conversations incorporate inclusion	• Whole department • People and Culture
L2 Leadership demographics more closely align with demographics of the department.	• Improve the Census response rate through continued communication about the data privacy and purpose of collection, to better understand the demographics of the department. • Identify potential barriers for progression of some diversity groups to decision making roles, including intersectionality considerations. • Prominently promote available workplace flexibility, including in senior roles, through job advertisements and careers web pages.	• Increase in the Census response rate • Better representation of our diversity in senior leadership	• People and Culture
Advance — Learn together and raise awareness of ways to advance the department's ability to foster an inclusive work environment, from recruitment to retirement.			
A1 Provide equitable and accessible training and development opportunities to help all staff thrive.	• Provide staff induction and onboarding that is comprehensive and accessible to all. • Ensure our leadership and career progression programs are inclusive, accessible and tailored to support our diverse workforce. • Review and enhance the accessibility of learning and development resources to help employees achieve their career goals. • Identify and promote programs for skills development and career advancement across staff diversity groups. • Scope the viability of embedding an accessible communication specialist in the department to improve the accessibility of documents, messaging and training both internally and externally. • Promote learning opportunities for managers and staff on various aspects of diversity, disability and access needs, and the concept of intersectionality.	• Training and developmental opportunities can be accessed by all staff	• People and Culture • Whole department

Goal	Actions	Outcomes	Led by
	• Identify and improve systems and processes that create barriers to inclusion. • Communicate the grievance resolution process to strengthen staff understanding of and confidence in the addressing workplace concerns.		
A2 Recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity that exists in the Queensland community we serve.	• Embed inclusive recruitment practices, allowing all candidates equal opportunities to showcase their relevant skills and lived experience. • During recruitment, provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their ability to contribute to a healthy, inclusive workplace culture. • Investigate the application and appointment ratios across classification levels to identify ways to improve diversity in identified areas, i.e., attracting younger people to Residential Care Officer roles and people with disability to Child Safety Officer roles. • Implement tools to identify and address access needs of applicants during recruitment to streamline the onboarding process and provide a smooth entrance for new appointments. • Explore available traineeship programs for students from diverse backgrounds to help scope alternative career entry pathways.	• Improvement in inclusive recruitment and hiring practices	• People and Culture
Value — Support our staff through collaborative design of strategic solutions which value and leverage the advantages diversity provides.			
V1 Embrace and celebrate diversity and leverage the advantages it provides.	• Maintain and promote a diversity and inclusion calendar of events; actively provide opportunities to increase visibility, understanding and appreciation of diversity in all its forms, and encourage and empower staff to celebrate difference. • Harness the expertise, experience and interest of the Inclusion and Diversity Reference Group and other Employee Resource Groups to advise on, support and drive inclusion initiatives. • Create communication, consultation and support channels and networks with staff and stakeholders from relevant diversity groups. • Celebrate and promote inclusion and diversity through the Staff Excellence Awards and actively increase focus on positive initiatives across the department.	• Increased nominations for the Diversity and Inclusion category of the Staff Excellence Awards — July 2025	• People and Culture
V2 Ensure all staff feel included and supported to do their best work.	• Improve understanding of and access to workplace adjustments by promoting the *Workplace Adjustment Policy* and associated tools. • Promote access to flexible working arrangements for all employees in roles where flexibility is possible to accommodate the diverse needs and responsibilities of employees. • Explore Employee Assistance Service (EAS) providers who can appropriately support our diverse employees. • Reinvigorate the department's use of the Racism. It Stops With Me campaign materials, and support the growth of the culturally and linguistically diverse employee resource group. • Develop a resource for older workers considering a transition to retirement, including knowledge transfer strategies. • Promote and embed the Cultural Safety Policy and supporting resources to increase cultural safety for Torres Strait Islander employees. • Develop an action plan to achieve Bronze status in the Australian Workforce Equality Index. • Implement the relevant workforce actions in the department's: • *Disability Services Plan* • *Multicultural Action Plan* • *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy*	• Adjustments promoted • Intranet resources reviewed and updated.	• People and Culture • Whole department