



Australian Government
Geoscience Australia

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Geoscience Australia

APPLYING GEOSCIENCE TO AUSTRALIA'S MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES

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Message from the CEO

I am pleased to present to you our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021–25.

As the nation's trusted advisor on the geography and geology of Australia, we are focused on maximising the impacts of our science for the benefit of all Australians. We do this best when the diversity of our workforce reflects the diversity of the people we serve.

Diversity drives innovation and scientific discovery in our work. Diverse teams spark new discoveries through different perspectives, expanded research focus and new findings, which lead to better science.

By embracing diversity in our people, in the way we think and in the way we do our work, and by creating an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued, we can play a key role in shaping the research and talent of the future.

We are committed to attracting the best people, drawing on the full pool of human talent. We are also committed to creating a nurturing and inclusive culture that supports people to achieve their full potential. We want to create an environment that is supportive, respectful and collaborative, and that embraces equality of opportunity based on talent alone.

We remain committed to gender equity in our organisation. Progressing the goals under this Strategy will position us to be well placed to apply for silver accreditation with the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) program by February 2025. This accreditation will be a great testament to all of the commitment and work in driving gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our organisation.

We also want to strengthen career progression and development opportunities for our employees from diverse backgrounds by removing the barriers to accessing these opportunities. We are committed to understanding the experiences of our staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to ensure that barriers to progression and retention are removed.

We have much to celebrate about what we have already achieved. This Diversity and Inclusion Strategy provides us a roadmap for the next four years to continue our journey to creating a positive organisational culture, to be the trusted source of information on Australia's geography and geology and to produce innovative and cutting-edge science for the benefit of the nation.

Dr James Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

Acknowledgement of Country

Geoscience Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia where we conduct our work. We acknowledge their continuing spiritual and cultural connection to land, sea, natural resources and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and to the elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge that our mission to be the trusted source of information on Australia's geology and geography is preceded by tens of thousands of years of knowledge gained by generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for diversity and inclusion extends to our commitment towards reconciliation. Our work covers the Australian landmass and marine jurisdictions. We are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights, interests and perspectives in land, water and natural resources are respected and recognised. We will continue to deepen their participation and awareness of our work so that we, and the broader community, can benefit from the wealth of knowledge and experiences of Australia's First Peoples.

Our commitments towards reconciliation are captured in our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Introduction

Our mission is to be the trusted source of information on Australia's geography and geology for government, industry and the community decision making

To meet our mission of being the trusted source on Australia's geography and geology, we have to make sure we have the best people. We want a truly varied workforce, where diversity powers greater collaboration, creativity, innovation and inspires new scientific discoveries and drives better science outcomes.

What do we mean by Diversity? When we talk about Diversity, we are referring to our people and what makes them unique. It is about their visible differences and their not so visible differences. It is about their physical and cognitive characteristics, social identities and professional backgrounds. This includes their age, gender identity, language, ethnicity, cultural background, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, disability, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, religion, family composition, caring responsibilities, profession, educational level, socio-economic background and geographic location.

Why is Diversity integral to our organisation? Innovation in science frequently requires novel ideas, problem solving skills and objective assessment of data without biases. Diversity drives innovation and scientific discovery, which leads to better science outcomes as each person contributes different opinions and technical strengths to the advancement of a field. In addition,

- diversity sparks new discoveries through expanded research focus and new findings
- diverse teams produce greater quality publications and more citations than non-diverse teams
- diverse teams outperform non-diverse teams and reduce in-group and out-group biases
- being part of a diverse team can enhance a researcher's global connections, profile and education exchange opportunities
- diversity within teams present opportunities to develop culture and leadership within an organisation.

Our Goal is to be an employer of choice with a workforce that is representative of Australia, continues to embrace diversity, is inclusive and supportive of all our people and fosters a positive organisational culture to enable us to continue to produce the best science.

The Purpose of this Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and culture where our people thrive. We want our people to feel included, valued and respected so they are able to fully participate at work.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy also connects our efforts over the next four years to achieving our diversity and inclusion goals articulated in our Strategy 2028, which are to become a SAGE silver accredited organisation, to advance the careers of women and gender diverse individuals, achieve equity in decision-making forums, to encourage staff to be their most creative selves, and to become an employer of choice with a workforce that continues to embrace diversity and is inclusive and supportive of all individuals.

What do we mean by Inclusion? When we talk about Inclusion, we mean embracing diversity and fostering a culture that values people's unique backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. We are inclusive when a diversity of our people feel they are:

- **Respected** for who they are and are 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 and have equal access to opportunities and resources.¹

¹ Diversity Council of Australia, <https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/getting-started-di/diversity-inclusion-explained>, accessed 24 February 2021

Our Progress So Far

Over recent years, we have put in place a range of policies and programs and implemented actions that have laid the foundations for creating a more diverse, more equitable and more inclusive workplace. We also made progress under our previous Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2020. Below are a few examples of what we have progressed so far:

Gender Equity

- On 20 February 2020, we achieved bronze accreditation with the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Program recognising our commitment to advancing the careers of women, trans and gender diverse individuals in our organisation.
- We implemented 40:40:20 gender targets for all internal boards and committees.
- We undertook our first comprehensive survey and CEO Listen and Learn sessions on everyday sexism and sexual harassment to begin to understand the experiences of our staff. Feedback received from the Survey and Listen and Learn sessions have informed the development of some of the actions related to the Gender Equity theme in this Strategy.
- The achievement of our 40:40:20 gender target across the organisation, growing the representation of women from 37.8 per cent in January 2019 to 40.5 per cent in February 2021.

Leadership

- Our CEO became an active member of the Champions of Change Coalition (formerly known as Male Champions of Change) in 2019.
- Since January 2019, the number of women in our Senior Leadership team has increased from 29.4 per cent to 50 per cent in February 2021.

Inclusive Culture

- We implemented Cultural Action Plans for each Branch to track cultural change across the organisation. Progress under these Plans is reported on quarterly.
- We made a submission to the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) on making parental leave entitlements in the APS more accessible and inclusive to all genders as part of the broader APS Gender Equality Strategy refresh.
- We updated our Flexible Working Policy and Procedure and developed a new Workplace Adjustments Procedure to support flexible working arrangements in 2020
- Since 2019, two individuals and two teams have received awards for fostering positive organisational culture in our organisation. This includes the work of our Mental Health First Aid Training team in the implementation of our Mental Health Strategy and the delivery of the SAGE program to reach bronze accreditation.
- There has been increased representation of employees who self-identify as LGBTIQ+, from 2.7 per cent in the 2019 employee census to 3.7 per cent in the 2020 employee census.²

Reconciliation

- Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (2017-2018) helped us gauge our level of inclusiveness with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in employment and contract services and to examine our land access protocols. Our Reflect RAP also helped us to decide on our vision for reconciliation which has informed our new Innovate RAP (2021-2023)
- We set up a Land, Air, Marine Access team to demonstrate our firm commitment to land access procedures. This assists us to respectfully and comprehensively engage with Traditional Owners across Australia
- Some of our staff participated in cultural immersion programs through the Jawun program and other on-Country cultural awareness inductions which helped deepen respect for the knowledge of, and challenges faced by, Australia's First Peoples
- We are rolling out a self-assessment tool assisting our staff to gauge and improve their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagements.

Employee Networks

Our Gender Equity Network at Geoscience Australia (GENGA) is an employee-driven network that engages and advocates on behalf of staff and informs the organisation on gender, equity and diversity issues. In the last few years, GENGA has:

- developed a Workplace Breastfeeding Policy to progress our application for breastfeeding accreditation with the Australian Breastfeeding Association
- delivered a series of training workshops across the organisation on imposter syndrome in 2019 and 2020
- delivered a series of workshops on LGBTIQ+ awareness, inclusivity, allyship and leadership across 2020
- implemented a Parents and Carers Buddy initiative to support employees who are preparing to take, are taking, or returning from any period of leave relating to parenting or caring responsibilities including maternity leave, supporting partner leave, or personal carer's leave. The initiative provides personal support in the form of a Buddy from a staff-led and managed network of volunteers
- enabled members of staff to attend the Dorothy Hill Symposium in 2019 to celebrate women working in the Earth sciences field and the UN Women's International Women's Day annual luncheon
- continued to lead annual events and initiatives, including through fundraising, such as Movember, Froktober and Wear it Purple Day.

We are proud of the progress we have made so far, but recognise that there is still a long way to go to create the organisation we aspire to be.

² The 2019 Employee Census was deployed in May to June 2019 and had a 73 per cent response rate, with a total of 434 responses. The 2020 Employee Census was deployed in October to November 2020 and had a 83 per cent response rate, with a total of 482 responses

Our People



*As at 1 February 2021

Our Vision for a diverse and inclusive organisation

We are committed to becoming an employer of choice with a workforce that continues to embrace diversity and is inclusive and supportive of all individuals – Geoscience Australia, Strategy 2028

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy articulates efforts over the next four years to achieve the diversity and inclusion goals in Strategy 2028 including enhancing a positive organisational culture by:

- becoming a Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) silver accredited organisation
- advancing the careers of women, trans and gender diverse individuals
- achieving equity in decision-making forums
- encouraging staff to be their most creative selves
- being an employer of choice with a workforce that continues to embrace diversity and is inclusive and supportive of all individuals.

Our Strategy also supports one of the themes in our People Strategy 2017 – 2022, “Culture”. Specifically that our organisation fosters an inclusive culture that embraces equality, equity and diversity, and is supportive, respectful and collaborative. It also aligns with our commitments under the SAGE program, our Reconciliation Action Plan and the work of the Champions of Change Coalition.

Alignment of our Strategy with the Australian Public Service (APS)

Our Strategy is also informed by whole of government diversity strategies including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024
- Disability Employment Strategy 2020-2025
- Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2025

The Strategy also supports the APS Integrated Leadership System framework on valuing individual differences and diversity.

By progressing the actions in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy we will create an organisation that is diverse, creative, innovative, collaborative, aligns to national scientific objectives and delivers better outcomes for government, industry and the community.

Our Themes

Our Strategy identifies five key themes that will be our priority areas of action for the next four years. In our Strategy 2028, we have committed to becoming a SAGE silver accredited organisation. The five themes in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will be the same themes that we will be progressing to enable us to apply for SAGE silver accreditation by February 2025. Each of the five themes in the Strategy will be progressed to enable us to apply for five SAGE cygnet awards on the dates below which will position us to be able to apply for SAGE silver accreditation by February 2025.

Our themes are:

- Inclusive Culture
- Gender Equity
- Career Development
- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
- Talent Attraction.

Inclusive Culture

We will build the inclusive capabilities in our people and implement actions to continue to foster an inclusive organisation culture.

To achieve this, we will

- build the inclusive capabilities in our people
- define the behaviours we want to see in our organisation
- recognise and reward staff who contribute to fostering an inclusive culture
- strengthen employee engagement in the ownership of our diversity and inclusion goals
- strengthen our formal and informal diversity and inclusion networks
- ensure that fostering an inclusive culture is embedded in our day to day work.

Gender Equity

We will continue our progress to achieve gender equity in the organisation with a particular focus on preventing and addressing Everyday Sexism and Sexual Harassment in our organisation.

To achieve this, we will

- develop a Sexual Harassment and Everyday Sexism Policy and Procedure
- review and update our reporting systems to include multiple internal and external reporting channels and ensure that they are fair, accessible, timely, appropriate, transparent, intersectional and confidential
- deliver tailored training to all staff, Managers, Human Resources and the Harassment and Diversity Contact Officers on identifying, addressing and responding to everyday sexism and sexual harassment in the workplace
- review how we all contribute to gender inequality and enforce stereotypical gender roles in our everyday actions, our work and through our policies
- develop policies, and champion access to policies that support gender equity in the workplace such as flexible work arrangements, family violence policy and encourage men to access parental leave.

Career Development

We will remove the barriers to career opportunities and strengthen career progression and development opportunities for our employees from diverse backgrounds.

To achieve this, we will

- identify and remove the structural, systemic and cultural barriers to career opportunities so that our people have equal access to opportunities and progression
- identify and create career development opportunities for our employees from diverse backgrounds through learning, coaching, mentoring, networking and other opportunities
- monitor data on career progression and retention rates for key diversity groups.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

We will understand the experiences of, and the barriers faced by, cultural and linguistically diverse people in our organisation to inform the development of initiatives to remove barriers to their progression and retention.

To achieve this, we will

- conduct workshops to gain understanding of the barriers faced by cultural and linguistic diverse people in our organisation
- implement initiatives that encourage the progression and promotion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees
- increase the number of culturally and linguistically diverse employees in senior leadership positions
- ensure there is increased representation of culturally and linguistically diverse people across the divisions, branches and classifications.

Talent Attraction

We will ensure our pipeline of talented people is diverse to enrich our work, our culture and our science.

To achieve this, we will

- develop new approaches for recruitment and advertising to reach more diverse candidates
- adapt our role profiles, selection criteria, interview questions and reference checking to ensure that our values and expected behaviours are central to our recruitment processes and strategies
- develop strategies to ensure equitable selection and disrupt bias at each point in the recruitment process
- explore partnerships with schools and tertiary institutions to develop career pathways to our organisation and promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers with students from diverse backgrounds
- revamp our data collection, monitoring and reporting processes to provide clear and insightful reports on workforce composition and diversity, assess progress and effectiveness of this Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, inform future workforce planning strategies, show trends and identify areas for improvement and investment.

Our Principles

The Principles underpinning our Strategy are:



The **Principles** underpinning our Strategy are:

Small everyday acts make a big changes: Everyone in our organisation is responsible for driving the goals of this Strategy. We all have a role to play in creating and fostering an inclusive workplace through our everyday actions. We must create and foster a workplace culture that enables diverse perspectives to be heard and empowers all employees to participate and contribute through our everyday actions.

Our leaders model and reward inclusive behaviours: Our leaders have a crucial role to play in creating safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces. They will model the behaviours we want to see in our organisation and reward those behaviours when they see them. Our leaders will be visible, transparent and proactive when progressing the goals of this Strategy.

Our work is developed and delivered through an intersectional lens: Our people are not made up of just one identity. They are made up of a diverse number of characteristics and social identities. Intersectionality acknowledges these characteristics and social identities - such as age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation - are interconnected, meaning they overlap and intersect to make a person uniquely who they are. The Strategy recognises that our interventions, initiatives and data should be tailored to the individual's multiple characteristics and social identities by taking an intersectional lens.

Our data informs our diversity and inclusion interventions and initiatives: We will revamp our data collection, monitoring and reporting processes and systems to inform the development, and assess the progress and effectiveness, of our diversity and inclusion interventions and initiatives. Our policies, systems and infrastructure support our diversity and inclusion outcomes: We will conduct regular audits of our policies and processes to ensure they are meeting our goals under the Strategy.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

We will develop a Measurement and Evaluation Framework that allows us make informed decisions, set concrete goals, identify and unblock barriers to improvement and increase accountability and transparency for our diversity and inclusion goals.

We will monitor our progress and evaluate the effectiveness of our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy against the outcome indicators set out in the Implementation Plan through the various means including:

- Collection and monitoring of workforce data including data collected across the employee life cycle that is, application, recruitment, progression and separation
- Listen and Learn sessions and focus groups
- Employee surveys
- APSC census survey data
- Performance scores in external diversity benchmarking for example, SAGE
- Evaluation of learning activities.

Overall progress against the goals in this Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will be reported quarterly to the People and Culture Committee who will report to the Executive Board

Our progress will also be reported in our annual report.

