



# Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

## 2019–22





# Introduction

## Diversity

Diversity is about accepting our individual differences and acknowledging the unique blend of knowledge, skills and perspectives each of us bring to the workplace. Diversity can include characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language and education. Diversity also includes characteristics such as professional skills, working style, location, and life experiences.

## Inclusion

An inclusive culture is one whereby everyone feels valued and respected and is able to fully contribute. It is about removing barriers to make sure everyone can fully participate in the workplace and have equal access to opportunities. Inclusion is about empowering people to contribute their skills and perspectives for the benefit of organisational performance and business outcomes.

## Bringing them together

Diversity is central to innovation. It brings forth new and better ways of doing things, helps us to harness to benefits of technology and improve the efficiency and quality of our services. Inclusion is the key to unlocking this potential. When we value workplace diversity and inclusion we see benefits such as high employee engagement, improved performance, greater innovation, retention of talent, improved employee wellbeing and lower levels of unlawful behaviour such as harassment and discrimination.

## Our Commitment

Geoscience Australia values diversity and commits to promoting and empowering an inclusive, respectful and equitable workplace.

**We will** create a disability friendly workplace that is attractive and supportive of people with disability, and ensures everyone is able to fully participate and pursue rewarding careers in Geoscience Australia.

**We will** raise awareness of and promote equity and equality; ensuring individuals take responsibility and are empowered to take action.

**We will** ensure meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whether they are our employees, stakeholders or end users of our products and information.

**We will** increase sensitivity and respect for people from cultural and/or linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds.

**We will** actively promote an inclusive workplace where employees feel safe and empowered to identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ), if they choose.

**We will** foster a workplace that embraces and values the contribution of employees from all ages and stages of life and career.



**We will** be inclusive without being exclusive.

## Our Approach

Over the life of this strategy, we aim to build on our Inclusive Culture Program, which emerged to increase awareness and understanding of how cultural norms and unconscious bias create inequity and potentially disadvantage our key diversity groups. These groups consist of Disability, Gender, Indigenous Australians, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ), Age/Intergenerational workforce, and the wider GA community. Originally, to support the Inclusive Culture Program and build our workplace diversity, we released a number of strategies targeting specific diversity groups including:

- *Disability Action Plan 2016–2019*
- *Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2018*
- *Indigenous Employment Strategy 2016–2019*
- *Gender Strategy 2015–18*

While positive in principle, we have found that our various disparate strategies and action plans have often over-committed our resources and time. This means that we have not been able to get the traction we need to start seeing substantial change because of unrealistic commitments to deliver against all of these separate strategies. Instead, there is opportunity to refine our approach to ensure we undertake targeted and realistic actions in our ongoing effort to build a diverse and inclusive culture. This will be achieved by using our overarching commitment: “*Geoscience Australia values diversity and commits to promoting and empowering an inclusive, respectful and equitable workplace*” to guide annual action plans with specific, measurable and achievable deliverables.

## A challenge for all employees — managing unconscious bias

Many of the challenges faced by diversity groups are related to bias, whether conscious or unconscious. Society has come a long way in the last 30 years in recognising that discrimination exists and the value of giving everyone ‘a fair go’. While we may think attitudes have changed, discrimination still occurs and often it is unintentional, in the form of unconscious bias.

Research [referenced to by the Australian Public Service Commission \(APSC\)](#) states that unconscious or hidden bias is defined as ‘a normal human prejudice’ about people or groups of people. It happens automatically and is triggered by our making quick assessments of people and situations based on our own background, culture and personal experiences. Often people refer to ‘first impressions’ and intuitions about others, which are ways of expressing unconscious bias. Unconscious bias is considered to be outside our control; however we can take steps to mitigate its effects.

The most common types of bias are:

- **in-group/outgroup:** the tendency to give preferential treatment to others perceived as members of one’s own group (may also be known as affinity bias – warming to others perceived to be like ourselves).



- **confirmation bias:** the tendency to seek out and remember information that supports initial impressions.
- **halo effect:** the tendency to think everything about a person is good (or bad) because you like (or dislike) that person (McCormack, 2015).
- **stereotyping:** the tendency to expect that because someone belongs to a group they have certain characteristics.
- **status-quo:** the tendency to like things to stay the same without too much disruption.
- **group attribution:** the tendency to attribute one individual's characteristics as reflecting the characteristics of the group.
- **group think:** when people try to fit in by mimicking or holding back thoughts and opinions, causing organisations to lose out on creativity and innovation<sup>1</sup>.

You are all asked to consider unconscious bias in your day-to-day interactions and decision making, and to also think about how you can help make your workplace more inclusive, respectful, equitable and diverse.

## Governance

The Advisory Board, through the People and Culture Committee, will oversee delivery of the annual action plans. To measure the success of these plans, Human Resources (HR) will provide quarterly updates on the progress of actions outlined in the plans to the Advisory Board. Outcomes will then be summarised and communicated to all employees via the intranet. The reporting will include which actions have been undertaken, measures of success (i.e. via HR metrics, staff survey and/or Census results) as well as what actions are outstanding or need re-assessing. The following outlines the various boards, networks and committees that will support this strategy.

### Advisory Board

The Geoscience Australia Advisory Board's role is to advise the accountable authority (CEO) on strategic, policy and risk matters. The Advisory Board will endorse and support the commitment and actions in this strategy.

### People and Culture Committee

The People and Culture committee (the Committee) supports the Executive to achieve the Geoscience Australia vision. The Committee is a forum, complementing direct staff engagement and the Workplace Relations Committee (WRC), to surface HR issues and opportunities, including those related to diversity, culture and inclusion. Recommendations from these groups are considered by the Committee, then passed to Advisory Board for endorsement.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/unconscious-bias>



## Diversity, Cultural and Inclusion Champions Group

The Diversity, Cultural and Inclusion Champions Group (the Group) is a network of change champions supporting workplace diversity, culture and inclusion. The group will contribute to, monitor and promote initiatives related to this strategy.

### Supporting Committees

#### *Gender Equity Network GA (GENGA)*

GENGA is an employee driven network that engages with staff and informs the group on gender equity issues and supports LGBTIQ inclusion. GENGA is a key contributor to our gender equity and LGBTIQ actions.

#### *Science in Australia and Gender Equity (SAGE)*

Geoscience Australia is a member of the SAGE program which is supported by the Academy of Science. This two year project, which commenced in July 2017, is looking at our current gender equity status and developing and committing to an action list that will help us improve our inclusive culture. This action list will inform our gender equity actions under this strategy.

#### *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group*

This working group implements and reports on the Reconciliation Action Plan aimed at strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people as well as building cultural awareness across the organisation. The group is a vital contributor to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders actions in this strategy.

### Our commitment to action

We have committed to a range of actions designed to build upon our inclusive workplace culture, retain our diverse workforce and support our people to have long and productive working careers. To address this, this strategy specifically addresses actions in relation to the following five diversity priorities areas:



Over the life of this strategy, yearly action plans will be developed to support the initiatives to be undertaken by the appropriate groups to realise our strategy and goals for diversity and inclusion. These action plans will harness the actions governed through the relevant supporting committees.

Complimenting this strategy, **Attachment A** outlines the key diversity events that will be acknowledged across our different diversity groups. These events will be coordinated through the appropriate committee and networks.



## DISABILITY



***We will create a disability friendly workplace that is attractive and supportive of people with disability, and ensures everyone is able to fully participate and pursue rewarding careers in our organisation.***

We recognise that the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our people are our strongest asset. We aim to ensure people with disability are able to participate fully in our workplace and pursue rewarding careers at Geoscience Australia.

In 2016 the *Disability Action Plan 2016–19* was developed with actions aimed at:

- increasing the representation of employees with disability.
- investing in developing the capability of employees with disability and supporting them to achieve their career aspirations.
- working with our community to strive for best practice and develop mutually beneficial partnerships.

### **Our leaders and managers will:**

- Encourage and enable flexible working arrangements.
- Provide assistive technology to support reasonable adjustment.
- Utilise the *RecruitAbility* program when recruiting.
- Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Engage in 'mental health first aid' training to create better awareness of how to support employees with disability.

### **What all employees can do:**

- Self-assess your own unconscious bias.
- Engage in the Building Disability Awareness and Building Disability Confidence eLearning packages available through [Pulse](#).
- Engage with disability awareness events.



## GENDER EQUITY



***We will raise awareness of and promote gender equity and equality; ensuring individuals take responsibility and are empowered to take action.***

Gender equity and equality will not be realised until both women and men are seen as capable and credible leaders; until both women and men can work flexibly without risking their career progression; and until outdated assumptions of 'women's work' and 'men's work' are identified and eradicated. We will promote flexible work for all parents, by supporting men and women to share family responsibilities.

Building gender-balanced teams at every level of the organisation improves engagement, retention and performance. Gender balance at leadership, executive and board levels is particularly important, because it improves the quality of strategic decision making.

### **Our leaders and managers will:**

- Check their own unconscious bias when considering how they assess merit.
- Encourage fathers as well as mothers to consider flexible working.
- Continue to ensure gender diverse recruitment practices.
- Encourage both full time and part time employees to engage in development opportunities.
- Actively engage with and promote the SAGE program.

### **What all employees can do:**

- Assess your own unconscious bias when considering what qualities make a good leader.
- Support fathers (as well as mothers) to consider flexible working.
- Actively engage with the SAGE program.



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS'



***We will ensure meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whether they are our employees, stakeholders or end users of our products and information.***

In 2017, our CEO James Johnson launched Geoscience Australia's inaugural *Reconciliation Action Plan 2017–18*, (RAP). A critical component of the plan is ensuring that everyone across our organisation has a basic level of awareness and understanding of what 'reconciliation' means, and why it is important.

We will build cultural awareness and capability, enable greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and encourage better recognition of the value that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives bring to the work we do. Awareness and understanding is critical to our organisation, which has worked in collaboration with Aboriginal communities for many years. Our project teams work closely with the appropriate land groups and councils to ensure compliance with cultural heritage legislation in the course of installing, maintaining and collecting equipment and data across Australia.

An example of our engagement with Indigenous Australians is the upgrade to the Alice Springs antenna, commissioned in November 2016, which features *Caterpillar Tracks*, an artwork of Roseanne Kemarre Ellis on its reflector surface, recognising the role of the Arrernte people as custodians of the land where this antenna is located. Continuing to identify and undertake these types of initiatives will help to have a broader impact on reconciliation.

### **Our leaders and managers will:**

- Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.
- Engage in cultural awareness training to increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and appropriate protocols such as how to seek access indigenous land.
- Use Supply Nation for procurement when possible and practical.
- Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by engaging in and encouraging attendance at events such as Reconciliation and NAIDOC week.
- Support the implementation of the *Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–19*.
- Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

### **What all employees can do:**

- Assess your own unconscious bias.
- Attend cultural awareness training and share learnings with your colleagues.
- Engage in events such as Reconciliation and NAIDOC week.
- Actively seek to increase your knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.





## MULTICULTURAL



### ***We will increase sensitivity and respect for people from cultural and/or linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds.***

Cultural awareness and understanding helps promote a more inclusive workplace. Although our organisation has a relatively good representation of culturally and linguistically diverse employees, we aim to remove any real or perceived barriers to engagement and participation that may exist.

Official celebrations of significant cultural events has proved to be an effective way of raising awareness, while also allowing CaLD employees to feel proud and empowered to share their heritage with their colleagues.

As the nature of our work evolves, we are increasing our engagement with international stakeholders, our employees' cultural awareness in a business setting is a vital asset to our workforce.

### **Our leaders and managers will:**

- Support culturally and linguistically diverse employees by supporting CaLD diversity days and encouraging employees to share their stories.
- Engage with cultural awareness training.
- Support employee attendance at and engagement with CaLD diversity days and training.
- Encourage culturally and linguistically diverse employees to access development opportunities to build their career and flexible work arrangements to connect with their families and communities.

### **What all employees can do:**

- Check your own unconscious bias when you meet someone new.
- Attend CaLD diversity events to learn more about your colleagues.
- Participate in cultural awareness training.



## LGBTIQ+



***We will actively promote an inclusive workplace where employees feel safe and proud empowered to identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+), if they choose.***

The business case for diversity and inclusion has one overarching theme; people perform better when they can bring their 'whole selves' to work. The LGBTIQ+ community makes up 11% of the general population; however, 45% of the LGBTIQ+ workforce in Australia hides their identity at work.<sup>2</sup>

Our metrics indicate there are a very low number of employees who choose to identify as LGBTIQ+. This indicates that LGBTIQ+ employees don't feel comfortable identifying as LGBTIQ+ because they fear potential discrimination.

While you may know someone who identifies as a part of the LGBTIQ+ community, research shows that not all LGBTIQ+ people feel comfortable or safe identifying as LGBTIQ+ at work (if they choose to). Evidence shows that people continue to experience discrimination, harassment and stigma based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, and feel excluded and invisible in their workplaces. We are committed to making our workplace an inclusive one, where everyone can feel comfortable being themselves at work.

### **Our leaders and managers will:**

- Engage in positive and inclusive discussions in the workplace, that help LGBTIQ+ employees feel safe being themselves at work.
- Call out inappropriate behaviours and poor language.
- Be visible allies and champion LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace.
- Support gender diversity and gender transition.

### **What all employees can do:**

- Check your own unconscious bias and language and call out inappropriate language.
- Engage in positive and inclusive discussions in the workplace to help LGBTIQ+ employees feel safe to be themselves at work.
- Be an ally by actively championing LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Pride in Diversity 2016, Australian Workplace Equality Index 2016, <[http://www.pridein-diversity.com.au/content/uploads/2015/08/AWEI\\_Report\\_2016\\_LoRes1.pdf](http://www.pridein-diversity.com.au/content/uploads/2015/08/AWEI_Report_2016_LoRes1.pdf)>, accessed 25 July 2018.



## AGE



### ***We will foster a workplace that embraces and values the contribution of employees at all ages and stages of life and career.***

While employing and retaining older employees is typically the ‘age’ challenge for many organisations, we recognise that age diversity is valuable for our organisation and that attracting and retaining young and middle-age employees is also valuable.

Our metrics indicate both long tenure and high turnover in many areas, suggesting that we are not retaining enough early and mid-career employees. The risk is that we have an experienced and knowledgeable cohort that is approaching retirement, and without active succession plans our agency stands to lose much of this knowledge. We want to empower the next generation through active mentoring programs, and trial reverse mentoring where younger staff can have the opportunity to pass on their knowledge and technical skills so everyone can benefit from an intergenerational workforce.

#### **Our leaders and managers will:**

- Support employees of all ages by providing flexible work options to employees to assist with life stage:
  - Part time hours.
  - Job sharing.
  - Home based work.
  - Purchase additional annual leave or leave without pay.
- Establish reverse mentoring to encourage knowledge and skills transfer between all age cohorts.

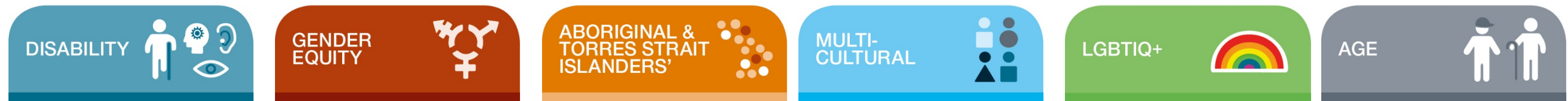
#### **What all employees can do:**

- Check your own unconscious bias; are you making assumptions based on a person’s age?
- Try to be inclusive with all team members, different ages can give different perspectives — value everyone’s contribution



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN July 2019–July 2020

Attachment A



**We will** create a disability friendly workplace that is attractive and supportive to people with disability, to ensure everyone is able to fully participate and pursue rewarding careers in Geoscience Australia.

**We will** raise awareness of and promote gender equity and equality; ensuring individuals take responsibility and are empowered to take action.

**We will** ensure meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whether they are our employees, stakeholders or end users of our products and information.

**We will** improve sensitivity and respect for people from cultural and/or linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds.

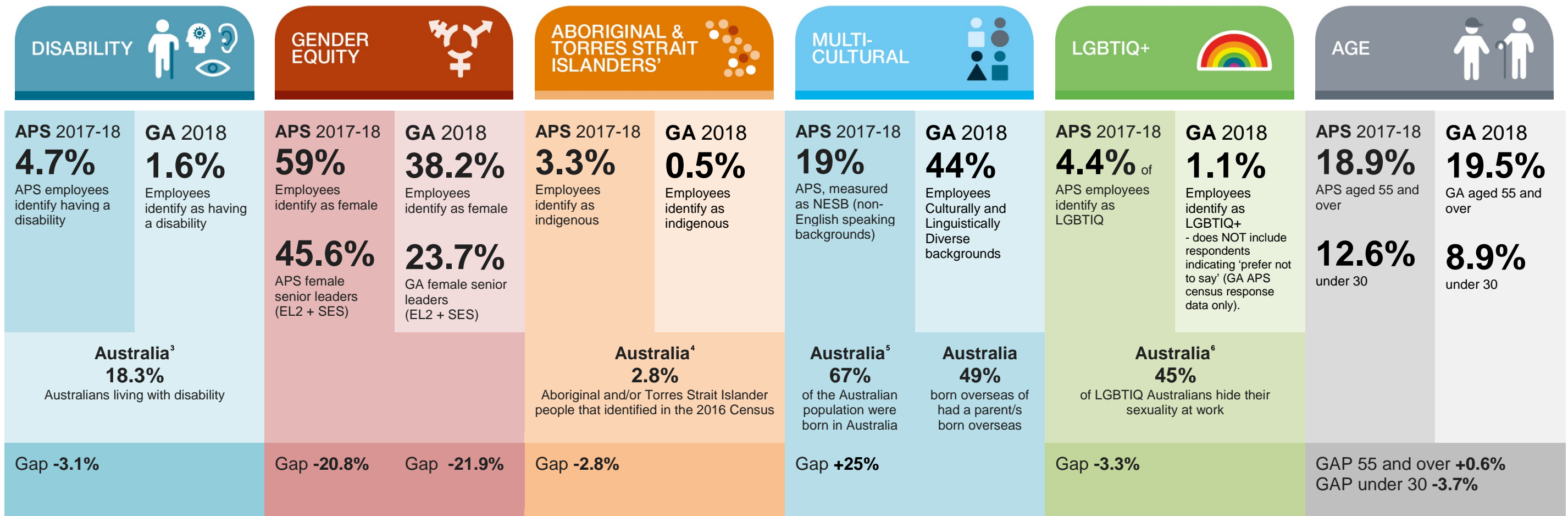
**We will** actively promote an inclusive workplace where employees feel safe and empowered to identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ), if they choose.

**We will** foster a workplace that embraces and values the contribution of employees at all ages and stages of life and career.

<p><b>ACTION 1 AWARENESS</b> E-Learning module focussing on disability awareness and confidence. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>	<p><b>ACTION 1 AWARENESS</b> E-Learning module focussing on unconscious bias and gender roles. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>	<p><b>ACTION 1 AWARENESS</b> E-Learning module focussing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>	<p><b>ACTION 1 AWARENESS</b> E-Learning module focussing on cultural awareness. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>	<p><b>ACTION 1 AWARENESS</b> Support employees to stand up as allies for the LGBTIQ+ community by providing voluntary Ally training. SUPPORTED BY SAGE</p>	<p><b>ACTION 1 AWARENESS</b> E-Learning module focussing on the benefits of an intergenerational workforce. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>
<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>35% of staff</b> completed the training</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>35% of staff</b> completed the training</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>35% of staff</b> completed the training</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>35% of staff</b> completed the training</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>35% of staff</b> completed the training</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>35% of staff</b> completed the training</p>
<p><b>ACTION 2 ENGAGEMENT</b> Explore opportunities to partner with Disability Employment Service Providers to reach more job seekers with disability. SUPPORTED BY DCICG</p>	<p><b>ACTION 2 ENGAGEMENT</b> Implement SAGE actions that relate to employee engagement. SUPPORTED BY SAGE</p>	<p><b>ACTION 2 ENGAGEMENT</b> Report and communicate actions from RAP 2017-2018 Launch new RAP 2018-19 SUPPORTED BY RAP WORKING GROUP</p>	<p><b>ACTION 2 ENGAGEMENT</b> Develop a CaLD employee network to help in creating better awareness of and engagement with our CALD workforce SUPPORTED BY DCICG</p>	<p><b>ACTION 2 ENGAGEMENT</b> Provide a range of "I support diversity" display cards and coloured lanyards for employees on request. SUPPORTED BY GENGA</p>	<p><b>ACTION 2 ENGAGEMENT</b> Implement a mentoring program to encourage transfer of knowledge and experience between age cohorts. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>
<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> Disability is embedded into all recruitment processes.</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> SAGE action items are delivered.</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> Information and resources are easily accessible for individuals and managers.</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> Employees arrange and attend celebrations that are meaningful to them.</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS:</b> Actively promote a culture of open and respectful discussion around sexual orientation and gender diversity</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> <b>20% of staff</b> participation in mentoring</p>
<p><b>ACTION 3 REPRESENTATION</b> Apply the disability employment affirmative measure to vacancies where appropriate. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>	<p><b>ACTION 3 REPRESENTATION</b> Ensure GA meets or exceeds Australian guidelines with respect to workplace gender identification. SUPPORTED BY SAGE and HR</p>	<p><b>ACTION 3 REPRESENTATION</b> Review recruitment practices to maximise identification of Indigenous employment opportunities. SUPPORTED BY RAP WORKING GROUP</p>	<p><b>ACTION 3 REPRESENTATION</b> Encourage employees to update Equal Employment Opportunity details. SUPPORTED BY PCC</p>	<p><b>ACTION 3 REPRESENTATION</b> Ensure GA meets or exceeds Australian guidelines with respect to workplace gender identification. SUPPORTED BY SAGE AND HR</p>	<p><b>ACTION 3 REPRESENTATION</b> Improve understanding of retention factors for older and younger workers through an employee survey. SUPPORTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES</p>
<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>4.7%</b> Employees identify as having a disability</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>40:40:20</b> Gender target across the organisation</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> <b>TARGET</b> <b>3.3%</b> Employees identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> Increased representation of employees who associate with CALD background, across divisions.</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> Improved identification of employees from an LGBTIQ+ backgrounds.</p>	<p><b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b> Improved understanding of factors that will help to retain our older and younger workers, and development of an action plan.</p>



## 12 MONTH MEASURE: How our workforce diversity compares to the rest of the Australian Public Service



<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2015*  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/>

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics; 2016 Census Quick Stats  
<https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au>

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics; 2016 Census

<sup>6</sup> Pride in Diversity 2016, Australian Workplace Equality Index 2016, <[http://www.pid-awei.com.au/content/uploads/2015/08/AWEI\\_Report\\_2016\\_LoRes1.pdf](http://www.pid-awei.com.au/content/uploads/2015/08/AWEI_Report_2016_LoRes1.pdf)>, accessed 25 July 2018.

## Key Diversity Events

Date	Event	Target group
13 February	National Apology Day	Indigenous
8 March	International Women's Day	Gender
21 March	Harmony Day	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
17 May	International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia	LGBTIQ+
21 May	World Day for Cultural Diversity	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
26 May	National Sorry Day	Indigenous
27 May	National Reconciliation Week (to 3 June)	Indigenous
2 July	National NAIDOC Week	Indigenous
25 August	Wear it Purple Day	LGBTIQA+
1 September	R U OK Day	Mental Health
15 October	National Carers Week	Disability
19 November	Movember	Gender
25 November	White Ribbon Day	Gender
3 December	International Day of People With Disability	Disability