



Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-25



The Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, water, culture and community.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to deliver the Commission's inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-25. While this is our first publication on this important topic, it is not our starting point. The Commission has been working on creating a diverse and inclusive workplace since we commenced operation in January 2019.

Australia's population, and the subset of older people accessing aged care, is characterised by great diversity. It is incumbent on us as a Commonwealth agency to build and maintain a workforce that both understands and reflects that diversity. Delivering this strategy enables us to better deliver on our important role of protecting and enhancing the safety, health, wellbeing, and quality of life of older Australians through our complaints resolution work and effective regulation of aged care providers.

My executive colleagues and I are committed to leading our Commission on a diversity and inclusion journey that will enable us to say with increasing confidence and based on evidence, that:

- All staff are engaged and contribute to embracing the opportunities presented by having a diverse and inclusive workplace
- Our workplace is an environment where everyone thrives and can do their best work
- We are a learning and continuously improving organisation where we understand and appreciate diversity and can better represent the aged care community we serve.

I encourage all staff to take the time to understand this strategy and carefully consider your role in helping to realise the vision of a diverse and inclusive workplace. I look forward to joining with you all to achieve the outcomes in this strategy, and celebrating successes and further improvements in our initiatives to increase diversity and inclusion across the Commission.



Our Diversity and Inclusion Purpose

As the national regulator of aged care services, we have an important role in protecting and enhancing the safety, health, wellbeing, and quality of life of aged care consumers, and building trust and confidence in the provision of aged care, including among consumers from diverse backgrounds. To deliver our purpose and be a world-class regulator that understands and prioritises the needs of all older Australians, we need a highly capable and diverse workforce that is reflective and understands the diverse community we serve.

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) guides diversity and inclusion across the Australian Public Service (APS). The APSC focusses efforts on the following specified diversity groups:

- First Nations: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Culturally and linguistic diverse (CALD): People from a Non-English speaking background (NESB) and/or born outside Australia.
- Gender: Equality for all gender identities, with some efforts specifically focussed on women
- Neurodiversity: People who's brains and minds may work differently (such as those with Autism, Attention Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, etc.)
- Disability: People with a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.
- LGBTIQA+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Questioning and/or Asexual

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy includes initiatives targeted towards the groups specified by the APSC, but also includes more overarching initiatives to drive better outcomes for all members of our diverse workforce.



At the Commission, we recognise that our differences make us stronger. We are committed to creating an inclusive work environment – through ongoing respect, acceptance, and collaboration – where staff feel valued, supported, and engaged, and have equal opportunity to succeed.



Our Diversity and Inclusion Vision

At the Commission, we value the thoughts, contributions, and views of people from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences and maintain an inclusive and respectful culture. We foster the wellbeing and high performance of our staff while providing a workplace where staff feel they belong and can meaningfully contribute by being themselves.

“To be fit for purpose for the coming decades, the APS must ensure a diverse and inclusive environment that accepts individual’s differences, embraces their strengths, and provides opportunities for all employees to achieve their potential.”

Source: Independent Review of the Australian Public Service, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019.



Workforce Overview

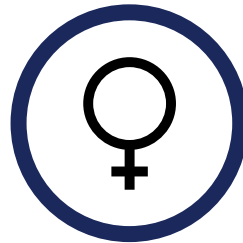
Australian Public Service Workforce

The APSC primarily measures workforce composition for some of their specified diversity groups via the Australian Public Service Employment Database, which includes information reported by staff to their employer. The APSC also measures diversity in the annual APS Employee Census, where participation is optional and staff responses are anonymous.

Source: Australian Public Service Employment Database, June 2023



170,332
APS
Employee
Headcount



60.4%
Women



15.8%
Non-English-
Speaking
Background
(NESB)



3.5%
First Nations



5.1%
With a
Disability



Australian Public Service Workforce Targets

The Australian Public Service Commission has set workforce representation targets for First Nations peoples and people with a disability:

- The Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24 sets the stretch target of 5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at APS4 to EL2 classification levels by the end of 2024 (with an SES targets of 3% representation).
- The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25 commits to an employment target for people with disability in the APS of 7% by the end of 2025.

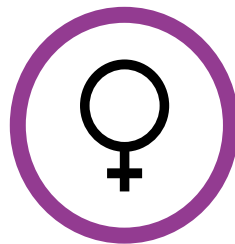
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Workforce Composition

Similar to the APSC, the Commission’s data that is on the Australian Public Service Employment Database does not yet cover all relevant diversity groups. However, the Commission will work to improve the range and quality of data over time.

Source: Australian Public Service Employment Database, June 2023



1,161
APS
Employee
Headcount



72.2%
Women



14.1%
Non-English-
Speaking
Background
(NESB)



1.7%
First Nations

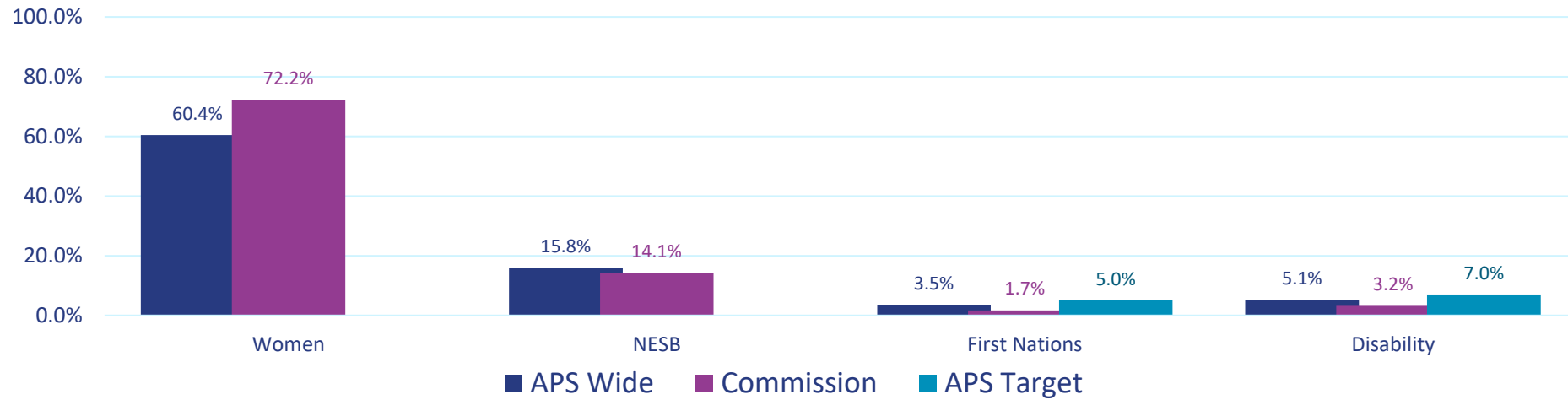


3.2%
With a
Disability



Comparison of APS and Commission Workforce Composition

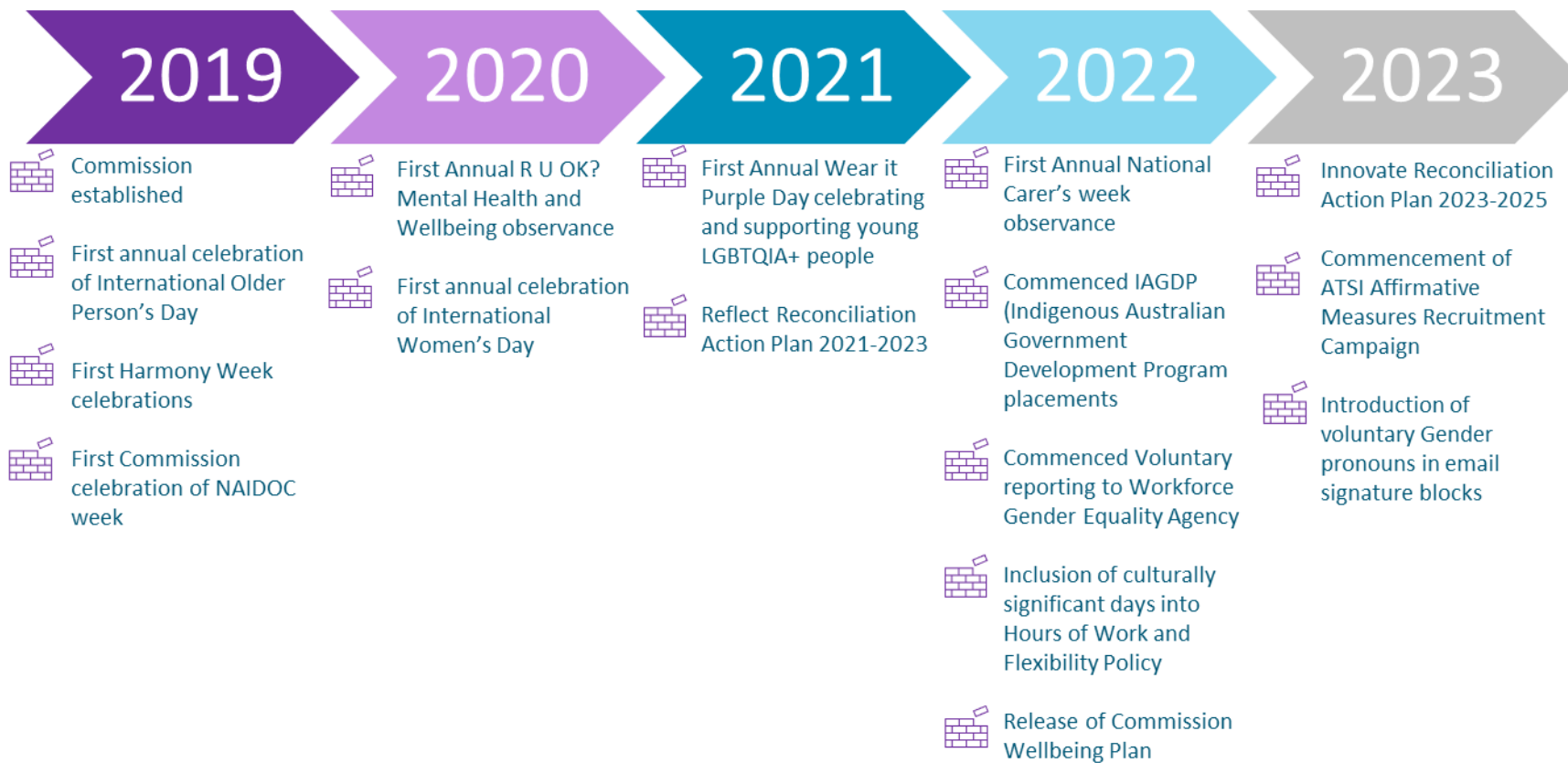
The Commission is committed to increasing our diversity and supporting the APS to achieve workforce representation targets.





Our Diversity and Inclusion Journey

The Commission is on a journey to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace, and has implemented a number of related initiatives since January 2019.





“Striving towards a more diverse and inclusive APS is about understanding and valuing the experiences of APS employees. We must recognise and acknowledge the discrepancies that exist in the APS for employees who identify with different diversity groups, and set actions in place to address these issues.”

Source: Australian Public Service Commission, *Our Differences Make Us Stronger*, 2022.



Our Diversity and Inclusion Future

The Commission is committed to involving staff in ongoing work to progress diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This strategy was developed with the Diversity and Inclusion working group, Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, Indigenous Staff Network, employee representatives and the Staff Participation Forum. We are also committed to working in alignment with the Australian Public Service direction.

The Commission has identified three pillars that underpin the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, with Key Initiatives identified under each to enable us to realise our Diversity and Inclusion Vision. The Commission will engage with our staff, the APS and key stakeholders to progressively evaluate, revise and expand our initiatives.

Three pillars of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy



Culture



Capability



**Attraction
and
Retention**



Culture

Our Culture Commitment

We are committed to promoting an organisational culture that:

- embraces diversity and inclusion
- enables all staff to belong and contribute at work in full alignment with their identity
- is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Key Initiatives

1. Diversity and Inclusion networks

The Commission will form Diversity and Inclusion networks to provide a safe, respectful and supportive place for staff who identify with a diversity group. Networks will also provide recommendations to relevant governance committees on delivery of key initiatives, and will promote partnerships within the Commission, the APS, the community and the aged care sector. These groups are in addition to our existing Indigenous Staff Network.

Deliverables:

- 1.1 Develop processes and communications for the establishment of networks
- 1.2 Develop standard terms of reference for networks
- 1.3 Call for staff nominations and SES sponsors to join networks for specified diversity groups, for example:



- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- Neurodiversity
- Disability
- LGBTIQ+
- Gender

1.4 Explore interest and capacity for other staff networks (such as carers, veterans, older workers).

2. External partnerships

Through the Diversity Networks, the Commission will form partnerships with advocacy and specialist groups to receive specialist advice to continuously improve our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Deliverables:

- 2.1 Form partnership with the Diversity Council Australia
- 2.2 Form partnership with the Australian Network on Disability
- 2.3 Form partnership with Pride in Diversity
- 2.4 Continue partnership with Reconciliation Australia
- 2.5 Develop register of diversity and inclusion experts, advocates, and speakers
- 2.6 Identify and pursue other partnership opportunities that represent our diversity.

3. Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) implementation

The Innovate RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Deliverables:

- 3.1 Relationships – Building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians
- 3.2 Respect – Acknowledge and respect the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history
- 3.3 Opportunities – Actively work towards reconciliation through employment and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

4. Public holiday flexibility

To increase cultural awareness and support inclusion, staff will be supported to substitute a public holiday for a day which they are more personally connected to or otherwise holds cultural significance.

Deliverables:

- 4.1 Amend Enterprise Agreement and leave policy to incorporate provisions to alternate public holidays according to cultural needs
- 4.2 Actively promote public holiday flexibility
- 4.3 Provide delegate guidance.

5. Gender pronouns

The Commission recognises that inclusive language is an important way of acknowledging and respecting the diversity of our people and their identities. Sharing gender pronouns is a way to increase the inclusivity of our work environment and show respect.

Deliverables:

- 5.1 All staff able to add gender pronouns to signature block
- 5.2 Investigate use of gender pronouns in the Human Resource Information System
- 5.3 Promote use of gender pronouns.



6. Diversity and inclusion events and activities

The Commission will promote and facilitate diversity and inclusion events and activities reflective of the wide-ranging diversity groups. Broad participation will allow staff to take pride in their diversity and promote a culture of celebration and understanding.

Deliverables:

- 6.1 Increase participation in diversity and inclusion events
- 6.2 Introduce Yarning Circle events
- 6.3 Promote understanding of cultural protocols and days of significance
- 6.4 Provide mechanism for staff to initiate additional events and activities.
- 6.5 Continue celebration of:
 - International Women’s Day
 - Harmony Week
 - National Sorry Day
 - Reconciliation Week
 - NAIDOC Week
 - Wear it Purple Day
 - International Day of People with a Disability
 - International Day for Older Persons.



Capability

Our Capability Commitment

We are committed to enhancing the capability of our staff by increasing understanding of diversity and providing the skills to engage with internal and external stakeholders in an inclusive manner. We want to be a learning organisation that appreciates new perspectives and knowledge.

Key Initiatives

7. Cultural Capability Framework

The Commission will develop a Cultural Capability Framework to establish systems, processes, structure and a workplace culture responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This framework will also increase staff skills and knowledge to undertake regulatory activity in a culturally appropriate manner.

Deliverables:

- 7.1 Develop and promote the Commission Cultural Capability Framework
- 7.2 Integrate the Cultural Capability Framework with the Staff Capability Framework as a core capability for all staff.



8. Diversity and Inclusion learning curriculum

The development of a Diversity and Inclusion learning curriculum is critical to create an informed and respectful workplace culture. A curriculum approach will be taken to identify needs and develop multi-modal (direct delivery, online, webinar and case studies) learning options. Learning will be delivered either as part of Commission corporate training (total of six hours online learning) or available for use as required.

Deliverables:

- 8.1 Develop modernised general Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination learning
- 8.2 Develop modernised learning about specified diversity groups
- 8.3 Implement diversity and inclusion learning, including enrolments, participation requirements and completion reporting.

9. Information accessibility

The Commission will uplift the suitability of information products provided to internal and external audiences to better meet the needs of users with neurodiversity, disability and/or from CALD backgrounds.

Deliverables:

- 9.1 Share lessons across relevant Commission teams about how to better meet the needs of users with neurodiversity, disability and/or from CALD backgrounds.
- 9.2 Incorporate information accessibility checks within processes for new product development.

10. Performance and Development Agreements

Commission staff are encouraged to drive their own diversity and inclusion learning by identifying cultural awareness learning goals in their individual performance and development plan.

Deliverables:



- 10.1 Include cultural learning in Performance Development Plan template
- 10.2 Promote cultural learning options within Performance Development Plan context.



Attraction and Retention

Our Attraction and Retention Commitment

We are committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, where we seek to create opportunities and eliminate barriers for diverse groups. We want to have diverse representation across all classification levels, locations and business areas.

Key Initiatives

11. Affirmative Measures

The Affirmative Measures process aims to improve representation of people from diverse backgrounds in the APS workforce.

Deliverables:

- 11.1 Develop Affirmative Measures policy and supporting procedures
- 11.2 Recruit Affirmative Measures staff into roles across Commission
- 11.3 See an increase in employees self-identifying with the diversity groups during the new starter and orientation processes.

12. Anti-discrimination principles embedded

The Commission will undertake a review and update as required the relevant employment policies to ensure they sufficiently capture anti-discrimination principles and practices.

Deliverables:

- 12.1 Update policies, following approval of the new Enterprise Agreement, to reflect anti-discrimination principles



12.2 Review Respectful Workplace Policy for reflection of anti-discrimination principles.

13. Recruitment and Mobility barrier reduction

The Commission will review recruitment and mobility practices to reduce barriers to workforce participation, address unconscious bias, and enhance inclusiveness for job applicants from diverse backgrounds.

Deliverables:

- 13.1 Review and update the Recruitment Selection and Mobility Policy
- 13.2 Increase diversity in selection panel composition
- 13.3 Create guidelines for recruitment advertisements to appeal to diverse groups.

14. Site accessibility

Providing practical and dignified access to government buildings supports workplace inclusion for people with disabilities. Better physical access to workplace environments ensures that everyone can work and move with ease in the workplace.

Deliverables:

- 14.1 All Commission buildings will be assessed to ensure there is dignified access for all employees and visitors
- 14.2 Incorporate assessment findings into property planning where possible.

15. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development

The Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024 has set a target of 3% First Nations representation at all classification levels. To achieve this, a focus must be placed on building the talent pipeline for our First Nations staff. This means engaging staff at a range of APS levels in the Commission and providing guidance and development to enable promotion into more senior roles.

Deliverables:



- 15.1 Develop a strategy specific to the recruitment, retention and professional development of First Nations staff, including definition of career pathways and specific development opportunities (such as mentoring with senior leaders, APSC programs, etc.).

“When Diversity is missing, important ideas are missed. Issues arise in implementing policies and delivering products and services because those creating them are working from a single perspective. Diverse and inclusive leaders, teams and workforces are better positioned to create new ideas that improve outcomes for our community”

Source: Australian Public Service Commission, *Our Differences Make Us Stronger*, 2022.



Our Roles and Responsibilities

People & Culture

The People & Culture team will work within the Commission's governance structures to oversee the delivery of this strategy. As new governance structures evolve, People & Culture will work with Governance & Risk to ensure diversity and inclusion accountabilities are appropriately and clearly articulated.

Managers

Managers are local champions of diversity and inclusion and must model inclusive behaviours. They are responsible for embedding diversity and inclusion culture in their teams, supporting diversity and inclusion capability development initiatives and to embrace diversity and inclusion attraction and retention opportunities. Where relevant, they should support staff to contribute to delivery of the initiatives in this strategy.

All Staff

All staff in the Commission are expected to contribute to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. This involves embracing and demonstrating the behaviours of ongoing respect, acceptance and collaboration that will contribute to an environment where all staff feel valued, supported and engaged, and have access to the same opportunities to succeed.



Evaluation

This Strategy will be evaluated annually according to the specific goals and targets of each of the initiatives and deliverables. Overall, three success measures will be used:

1. 100% of initiatives are delivered
2. There is an increase in workforce participation by people from underrepresented diversity groups
3. Information flow between staff networks and governance committees is working effectively
4. Improvement in the percentages of favourable responses in APS Census data in the following areas, particularly for respondents from identified diversity groups:
 - Workplace conditions
 - Inclusion
 - Wellbeing policies and support
 - Wellbeing
 - Retention
 - Unacceptable behaviour

Consultation

In addition to broad consultation with individual interested staff, this strategy has been reviewed and endorsed by the following groups:

Executive Leadership Group

Date: 10 January 2024

Staff Participation Forum

Date: 17 November 2023



Indigenous Staff Network

Date: 1 November 2023

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Date: 1 November 2023

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

Date: 1 November 2023

Legislation

This strategy is supported by the following action legislation:

Public Service Act 1999 and Regulations

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

Fair Work Act 2009

Age Discrimination Act 2004

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

Carer Recognition Act 2010

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988

Privacy Act 1988



This strategy complements and supports APS-Wide strategies including:

Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24

Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25

Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021-26

Australian Public Service Workforce Strategy 2025

Australian Public Service Employment Principles

Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct

Review

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-25 will be in place for the period of 1 February 2024 to 31 December 2025, with a new strategy to be implemented following the expiration.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is to review progress quarterly and update the Strategy where required.