

EPA Inclusion & Diversity Strategy 2019–2021



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A message from the Acting Chair and CEO



At the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) our commitment to inclusion and diversity is integral to the way we work. We understand that creating a diverse and inclusive workplace, reflective of our communities, is essential to understanding the needs of the people we serve. I am also committed to ensuring that all our staff feel safe and supported in their work.

I'm pleased to present the EPA's inaugural Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2019–21 which sets out our vision and strategic priorities in this area. It builds on the priorities set out in the EPA

Strategic Plan 2017–21, particularly our goal of being an exemplar and innovative organisation.

The EPA's Inclusion & Diversity Committee has been the driving force behind the development of this strategy. The committee is genuinely dedicated to improving inclusion across the EPA, to ensure our organisation reflects the diversity of the wider community. Since forming in April 2017, the committee has organised a series of major events aimed at promoting greater awareness of inclusion and diversity, and how this benefits the community and the EPA.

Our vision for 2021 is to become an employer of choice, attracting and retaining the most talented people from a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and abilities. We recognise that to be the best, we need the best people working together to create an open, transparent culture that is accessible, inclusive and truly diverse.

I am fully committed to making our inclusion and diversity vision a reality and I invite you to join me in this. No matter where you work or what you do, you play a vital role in creating a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and included. So please read on and find out what you can do to make the EPA a more diverse and inclusive place to work.

Mark Gifford PSM
Acting Chair and CEO, NSW EPA

A message from the EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee Co-Chairs

The launch of this strategy is an exciting step for the EPA and something we as a committee are very proud to have developed and collaborated on. We hope the strategy will guide our colleagues on their roles and responsibilities to help an inclusive and diverse workplace to thrive.

The committee will use the strategy as a platform to collaborate with and learn from other inclusion and diversity networks and organisations. We will continue to build our team into the accepted voice for issues of inclusion and diversity at the EPA.

Being part of this committee allows us to help guide the EPA's continued progress to a more inclusive workplace. We can raise awareness of issues, support our colleagues by coordinating relevant events and encourage the improvement of inclusion and diversity practices across all our offices.

As a subcommittee of the EPA Executive we actively support the leadership of our organisation in making improvements and addressing any inequities and exclusionary practices. We represent the EPA in appropriate forums and are proud of the work we have completed. We are particularly proud of our role as a staff-led committee, giving us the chance to represent our colleagues across all areas of diversity. Building this movement from the ground up in the EPA continues to be a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

During the timeframe of this strategy we commit to:

- consulting with our colleagues and advocating on their behalf
- sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm through inclusion and diversity events
- role modelling inclusive behaviours
- championing inclusion efforts
- ensuring our work covers all aspects of diversity where appropriate
- advocating for changes to any exclusionary policies or practices.

We look forward to the EPA building on the opportunities a diverse and inclusive workforce brings to an organisation; allowing for increased productivity, innovation and employee engagement. We are also excited to continue to support other agencies in their journey to building an inclusive and diverse workplace, as they look to our unique role and our successes.

Mostly, we look forward to working with you to create a place where we all feel safe, valued, supported and included.

Zoé Kennedy and Martin Puddey
Co-Chairs, EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee



**Martin Puddey and Zoé Kennedy, Co-Chairs,
EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee**

Acknowledgement of Country and Vision

Acknowledgement of Country

The EPA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We recognise the connection to their land, their waters and surrounding communities and acknowledge their history here on this land. We also acknowledge our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are an integral part of our diverse workforce and recognise the knowledge embedded forever in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodianship of Country and culture. We further state that this land always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Our vision

As part of our goal to be an exemplar and innovative organisation the EPA has developed a statement that sets out our vision for diversity and inclusion. This is both an internal and external vision statement, with the power to engage our current staff to become more inclusive in their behaviours and to show our stakeholders and future employees what the EPA expects in terms of inclusion and diversity. This statement was developed into a postcard (shown right), encouraging our colleagues to pledge their support of improving inclusion at the EPA.



The EPA is committed to ensuring that all our staff feel safe, encouraged and supported in their work, and recognises the need to address and achieve diversity and inclusion. We know that diversity creates more acceptance, respect and understanding of differences, reducing fear and ignorance, with consequential benefits as people feel free to be themselves and to reach their potential. The EPA aims to create more cohesion between our colleagues, partners and community, leading to better outcomes for all.

To improve inclusion at the EPA, I pledge to:

Contact your committee diversity.committee@epa.nsw.gov.au

Photo: Sydney-based Cultural Heritage site, used with permission from Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Front and back of Inclusion and Diversity postcard

Purpose and objectives

As a public sector employer, the EPA has a moral and legal responsibility to provide an inclusive, safe and healthy work environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

This document outlines the EPA's diversity and inclusion strategic priorities, organisational and individual roles and responsibilities, the actions we will take to deliver on our commitment and how we will measure progress. The strategy builds on the goals highlighted in the EPA's *Strategic Plan 2017-21*.

Strategic priorities

Strategic priorities

Driving public sector diversity is one of [12 NSW Premier's Priorities](#). To achieve this, the EPA's *Inclusion & Diversity Strategy 2019–21* will focus on four strategic priorities.

Strategic priority 1: Becoming a truly inclusive workplace

Through raising awareness, providing education and celebrating our differences we will ensure all staff feel safe, welcomed and supported.

Strategic priority 2: Embodying inclusive leadership

Our leaders will promote an open culture that values every individual. Our leaders will role model inclusive behaviours and practices and encourage diversity of thought, perspectives and representation in the work we do.

Strategic priority 3: Improving employee attraction and retention

The EPA will build on the opportunities a diverse and inclusive workforce brings to an organisation. This includes increased productivity, innovation and employee engagement by implementing targeted programs and initiatives to attract and retain diverse talent.

Strategic priority 4: Enhancing community engagement

Our diversity and inclusion will be leveraged to produce better products, decisions and services. We will connect with our internal and external networks to build inclusive, engaged and active communities.

How the EPA defines diversity and inclusion

At the EPA we recognise that valuing the backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of our diverse workforce is critical to innovation, productivity and delivering quality services to the people of NSW.

At the EPA we understand **diversity** refers to the broad range of characteristics of the people that make up our workforce including gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, Aboriginality, cultural and ethnic background, religious or spiritual beliefs, disability, age, and family or caring responsibilities. Diversity refers to the seen and unseen characteristics that make every one of us different.

The EPA recognises the many ways that these characteristics **intersect** and how they potentially impact people's lives and experiences of disadvantage.

Inclusion in the EPA workplace refers to an environment where different characteristics and experiences are respected, supported and valued so that all employees feel they are heard and have opportunities to contribute to the success of the organisation.

Inclusion and diversity go hand in hand, with inclusion unlocking the benefits of diversity. The gains are realised by ensuring that employees feel accepted, valued and listened to.



Why inclusion and diversity are important for the EPA

NSW is a diverse and multicultural society with more than 7.95 million residents. As the country's largest employer, the NSW public sector touches the lives of more than 325,000 employees. In 2017, the EPA employed 589 full-time equivalent people. While our staff numbers are relatively small, our goal is to be a leader in inclusion and diversity within the NSW Public Sector.

Our values

As the state's primary environmental regulator, we are a leader, partner and protector for our community and the environment. Our vision is for a healthy environment, healthy communities and healthy business. To achieve this vision and to deliver for the needs of all people in NSW, we need a workforce that reflects the community we serve.

The business case for a diverse and inclusive workforce are well-known in Australia and overseas. Research shows there are many direct benefits when workforce inclusion and diversity are valued including:

- increased productivity and business performance
- increased innovation and problem solving
- improved decision making
- improved customer service
- increased employee engagement
- increased employee wellbeing and psychological safety
- enhanced collaboration and cohesion in teams
- becoming an employer of choice by attracting and retaining diverse talent
- reflecting the diverse community we serve.

Table 1: Workforce diversity and sector targets

	NSW population	Sector target	DPE Cluster (December 2017)	EPA June 2018
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	3.0%	1.8% across all salary bands	5.4%	1.8%
Multicultural (English not first language)	25.7%	19.0%	9.7%	13.6%
People with disability	19.0%	5.6%	2.8%	4.5%
Women in senior leadership		50% by 2025	43.2%	33.3%

A diverse and inclusive workforce is therefore critical to delivering services to meet the needs of the communities we serve and to organisational sustainability and success. Demonstrating our commitment to diversity and inclusion is also an important way for the EPA to show we value our people and their career development.

Our people

Our people are our greatest asset and part of being a great place to work is having a diverse workforce. The EPA's Inclusion & Diversity Committee, as a subcommittee of the EPA Executive, monitors the progress and develops strategies and programs to ensure that we meet our targets as a public sector organisation committed to enhancing workforce diversity.

Our values

As individual employees and as an organisation, the EPA's core values of integrity, service, accountability, trust, transparency and innovation are central to the way we work and deliver services to the people of NSW.

Responsibilities and accountabilities

Everyone has an important role in ensuring that our workplaces are accessible, inclusive and diverse. Each of us needs to make a commitment to help reach these goals. (See pages 8 and 9).

Responsibilities and accountabilities

Roles and responsibilities

All EPA staff

- Demonstrate commitment to workplace diversity and inclusion through inclusive practices and behaviours
- Support the implementation of diversity and inclusion plans and initiatives through active engagement
- Participate in Inclusion & Diversity Committee employee networks, their initiatives and events
- Share diversity stories and experiences to help build understanding about diversity and inclusion issues, needs and achievements
- Encourage colleagues to speak out against bias and exclusion
- Engage in active discussion with reporting manager on relevant inclusion and diversity items within the Performance Development Framework
- Ensure reports of any exclusive behaviours are dealt with quickly and in compliance with the Respectful Workplace Policy

Roles and responsibilities

EPA managers and team leaders

- Embrace a diverse workforce so that every person feels valued, respected and supported
- Promote workplace diversity and inclusion by raising awareness of plans and initiatives
- Role model inclusive behaviours, leadership and practices
- Engage employees to contribute to organisational goals and to participate in diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Allow and encourage staff to actively engage with employee committees and networks aiming to improve diversity across the EPA
- Call out and challenge behaviours, systems and processes that do not reflect our inclusion and diversity values, both internally and externally
- Actively demonstrate commitment through inclusive recruitment and providing opportunities to candidates and employees from diverse backgrounds
- Address and meet relevant parts within the Workplace Diversity Outcome KPI outlined in the EPA's Strategic Plan
- Encourage inclusion and collaboration and seek diversity in project teams
- Ensure hiring panels are inclusive and fully comply with processes to enhance diversity

Roles and responsibilities

EPA Executive

- Promote the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy to increase awareness of the EPA's commitment to inclusion and diversity for all staff
- Role model inclusive behaviours, leadership and practices
- Embrace a diverse workforce so that every person feels valued, respected and supported
- Work to ensure inclusion and accessibility are considered business as usual
- Sponsor and promote employee networks and committees, encouraging active engagement
- Create partnerships to promote the EPA as an employer of choice on the basis of accessibility, inclusion and diversity
- Set divisional/branch goals to improve accessibility and inclusion and lead actions to achieve goals
- Champion the EPA's internal and external diversity engagement initiatives
- Address and meet relevant parts within the Workplace Diversity Outcome KPI outlined in the EPA's Strategic Plan
- Call out and challenge behaviours, systems and processes that do not reflect our inclusion and diversity values, both internally and externally

Responsibilities and accountabilities

Roles and responsibilities

EPA People, Strategy and Culture Subcommittee

- Consult and advocate with the EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee on diversity and inclusion matters
- Champion diversity initiatives and events
- Chair to provide regular reports to the EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee

Roles and responsibilities

DPE Diversity Team

- Develop and implement cluster-wide diversity and inclusion strategies and initiatives in collaboration with the EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee
- Monitor and report on progress towards achieving goals set out in cluster-wide diversity and inclusion strategies e.g. Multicultural Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan etc.
- Promote and provide inclusion and diversity resources and training to all staff
- Plan for recruitment of a diverse workforce in conjunction with the DPE HR Workforce Planning team

Roles and responsibilities

EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee

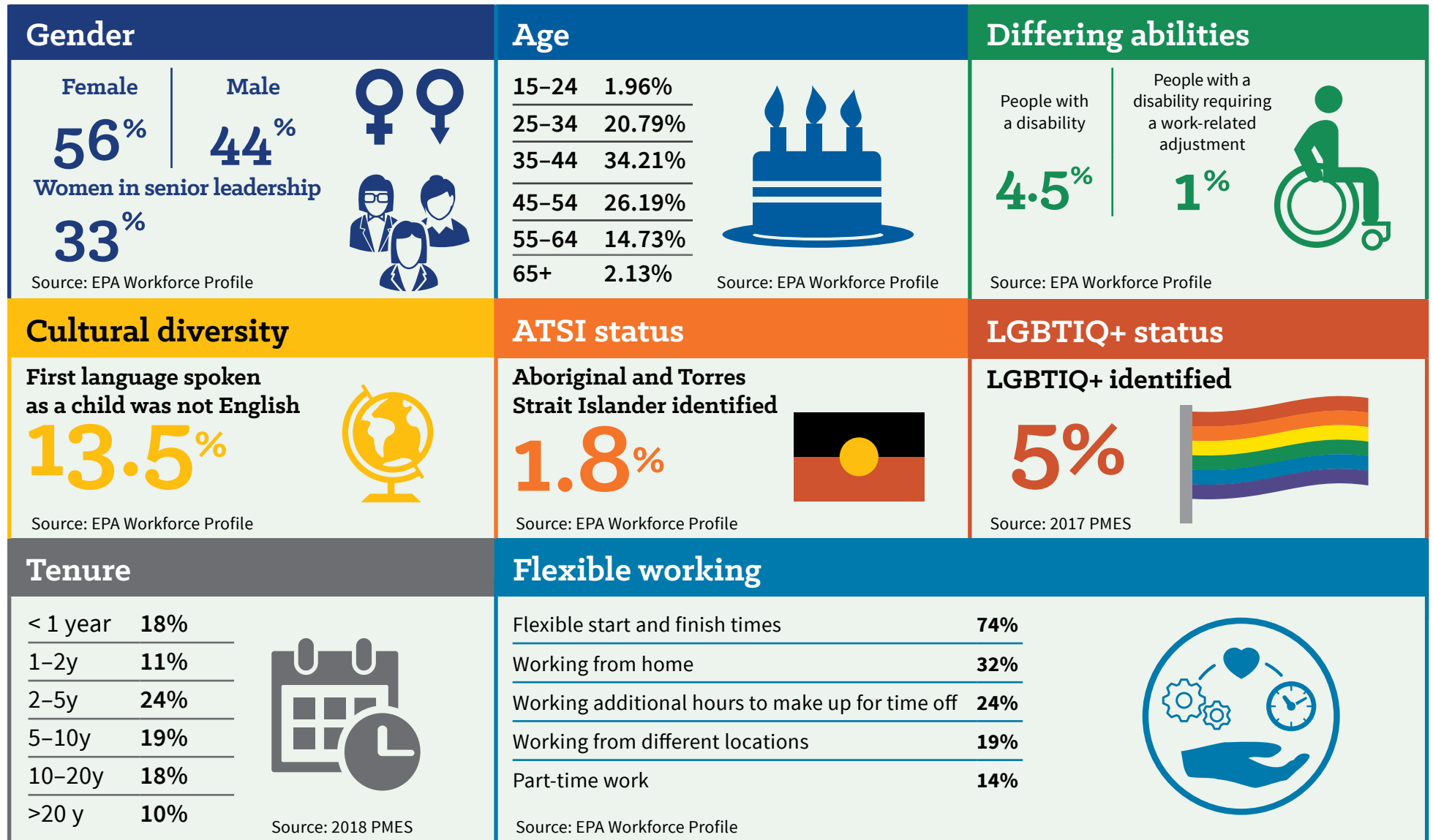
- Ensure our work is not limited to any single aspect of diversity
- Monitor and report on the progress of this plan
- Provide strategic advice on diversity and inclusion to the EPA Executive
- Consult relevant business units on diversity and inclusion
- Champion diversity initiatives and events
- Role model inclusive behaviours, leadership and practices
- Identify systemic barriers to inclusion and ways to address them
- Encourage EPA staff to highlight inclusion and diversity as key values of the organisation in their work through internal and external channels e.g. marketing materials, recruitment ads and branding

Roles and responsibilities

Employee networks (outside of the EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee)

- Provide relevant information and feedback to the Inclusion & Diversity Committee on diversity and inclusion plans and initiatives
- Consult staff on workplace diversity and inclusion issues
- Champion diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Identify barriers to inclusion of diverse employees and possible ways to address them
- Facilitate access to networks in diverse community groups
- Share information across different employee networks and identify synergies and intersections

Our people



Action plans for delivering inclusion and diversity

The EPA is implementing this *Inclusion & Diversity Strategy* and is supporting our strategic priorities through the following action plans:

DPE Cluster Action Plans applying to the EPA

- [Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2015–2019](#)
- [Planning and Environment Cluster Multicultural Plan 2018–2021](#)

Priority EPA Action Plans for development

- Aboriginal Employment Plan 2019–21
- Mature Age Workforce Plan 2019–21
- EPA Gender Equality Plan

Employee Network Action Plans

- [Spokeswomen's Strategic Plan 2014–2017](#)

Each action plan outlines the respective commitment and goals. They capture the actions and initiatives to support meaningful employment, professional development and engagement opportunities to leverage the skills, knowledge and experience of all our people.

Our goals and plans align with sector-wide targets, organisational objectives and this strategy's four strategic priorities.



Auslan workshop in progress with EPA staff.

Monitoring and reporting on our progress

Monitoring

We will monitor our overall progress in the four strategic priority areas and measure our success according to key performance measures.

These include:

Strategic priority 1:

Becoming a truly inclusive workplace

- Ongoing implementation, review and development of DPE Cluster Action Plans to incorporate the needs of the EPA
- Ongoing integration of this strategy across all EPA frameworks e.g. Strategic Plan, Branch Plans
- Yearly improvements in the People Matter Employee Survey on all inclusion and diversity related engagement scores

Strategic priority 2:

Embodying inclusive leadership

- Yearly review of staff demographic data and progress on achieving sector diversity targets
- Increased diversity and flexible working across leadership groups
- EPA Senior Management Group promote and sponsor inclusion and diversity initiatives and networks
- EPA Executive report on successes and ongoing challenges to achieving inclusion and diversity initiatives in communications with staff

Strategic priority 3:

Improving employee attraction and retention

- Ongoing integration of EPA principles of inclusion and diversity throughout local recruitment processes
- The EPA workforce increasingly reflects the diversity of the wider community we serve
- Partnerships are created to promote the EPA as an employer of choice. For example the CareerTrackers Indigenous Internship Program

Strategic priority 4:

Enhancing community engagement

- Increased participation with the biannual Diversity Council of Australia Inclusion@YourWork Index.
- Increased attendance and participation in inclusion and diversity events across the EPA staff community
- External communications reflect the value the EPA places on inclusive practices.

Reporting

We will report on our progress, achievements and future priorities against this strategy on a regular basis. These include regular updates to the EPA Executive and Board per our Terms of Reference. We will also provide updates in the EPA Annual Report. DPE Cluster Corporate Services - Executive Services, Culture and Diversity Unit will coordinate cluster-wide reporting to external agencies including the Public Service Commission, Multicultural NSW and the Disability Council NSW on our behalf.

We will communicate our progress and achievements to staff by sharing data and stories. This will be done through internal communications platforms such as the intranet, employee networks and at diversity and inclusion initiatives and events.

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

The legal framework

The *Inclusion & Diversity Strategy* is informed by legislative and regulatory requirements, NSW Government internal controls and EPA internal governance documents including:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*
- *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*
- Government Sector Employment Regulation 2014
- Government Sector Employment (General) Rules 2014
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*
- NSW Public Service Commission Guidelines: Respect, Reflect, Reset
- NSW Government Flexible Work Practices Policy and Guidelines
- DPE Cluster Wide Flexible Work Practices Policy
- [EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Policy](#)
- [EPA Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

APPENDIX B

Our achievements so far

The Inclusion & Diversity Committee formally launched in November 2017 as a subcommittee of the EPA Executive. The committee is made up of dedicated EPA staff who reflect the diversity of the wider community. Forming the Inclusion & Diversity Committee was a crucial move to identify opportunities for inclusion and diversity initiatives and improvements within the EPA, to drive best practice policy and practices, and to specifically address areas not covered by the existing employee networks.

With the support of the EPA Executive and senior management group, the committee has achieved progress in driving awareness and leadership on inclusion and diversity issues. The committee is dedicated to making real change to improve inclusion outcomes and an overall increase in the diversity of our workforce.



Achievements in year one of the Inclusion & Diversity Committee

Celebration, Education and Awareness

- Developed and launched a dedicated intranet site with resources and contact information for staff to raise inclusion and diversity issues
- Developed an EPA Diversity Statement articulating what inclusion and diversity means to the EPA, with staff encouraged to pledge support, aiming to create open conversations
- Conducted an official launch event – included a panel discussion on ‘Diversity and Inclusion in Action’ with Disability Discrimination Commissioner Alastair McEwin, Climate Change Research Centre academic Dr Angela Maharaj and ABC’s Head Operations and then ACON board member Manda Hatter
- A Harmony Day event with keynote speaker Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Australia’s Race Discrimination Commissioner 2013–18
- Held a panel discussion about age discrimination in the workplace held at the EPA’s Queanbeyan office in June 2018. Speakers included Amanda Crammon from the NSW Department of Industry, Andreas Stricker from the EPA and Anne Martin from the Australian National University – each representing a different generation of worker
- An event ‘engAGED’ on 6 December 2018 explored the aged care system and the wellbeing of caregivers in the workplace. Speakers included Carers NSW and the Seniors Rights Service

Leadership

- Senior executive sponsorship of diversity committee, employee networks, initiatives and events
- Promotion of cluster documents and guides to support the recruitment of people with diverse backgrounds
- Promotion of existing policies – flexible work policy, managing non-work related disability and health conditions policy
- Advertised on job boards targeting applicants interested in flexible work arrangements, who are from culturally diverse backgrounds or have a disability

Opportunity

- Supporting the participation of our female staff in the Cluster Women in Senior Leadership Mentoring Program which is developing a talent pipeline of future female senior leaders and has resources that can be adapted to support mentoring for employees from diverse backgrounds
- JobAccess – providing support to employees with disability to access government funding to purchase tools and equipment necessary to maintain employment

Culture

- Events for culturally significant days such as Harmony Day

- Employee-led initiative to support the charity Share the Dignity “It’s in the bag” – a campaign to support women who are homeless and living in shelters, often because of domestic violence
- Disability Awareness Training – participation in cluster provided face-to-face and online eLearning training
- Welcome to Country performed at the beginning of events and large-scale meetings and an Acknowledgement of Country is encouraged in internal meetings
- Broader awareness and understanding of the importance and benefits of diversity and inclusion across the EPA

Promotion

- Promotion of employee networks to provide staff with opportunities to connect, network, discuss ideas and learn from each other
- Promotion of activities and programs internally through a range of channels including intranet, staff emails, posters and events (also accessible through Skype where applicable)
- Ensuring external promotional material is accessible to as broad an audience as possible
- Memberships of the Diversity Council of Australia and the Australian Network on Disability
- External engagement and communication including targeted outreach to culturally and linguistically diverse communities

EPA Inclusion & Diversity Committee



Zoé Kennedy



Carmen Dwyer



Cathy Love



Kayal Shankar



Martin Puddey



Sarah Roebuck



Peter Bloom



Scott King



Gina Bradley



Mildred Palmer



Christina Low



Alicia Ryan



Hiromi Shimizu

“Our vision for 2021 is to become an employer of choice, attracting and retaining the most talented people from a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and abilities”

Mark Gifford PSM
Acting Chair and CEO, NSW EPA



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