Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which our students live and are educated throughout Western Australia.

We acknowledge and understand that Elders, parents, families and communities are the first educators of their children and we recognise and value the cultures and strengths that Aboriginal children bring to the classroom. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with country, community, language and culture, and through their oral histories, stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation.

We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.
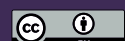
The word Aboriginal is taken to mean Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Indigenous. When referring to individuals, use the term Aboriginal person.

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Message from the Director General

I am pleased to release our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025.

We have over 50,000 staff working in public schools and workplaces in metropolitan, regional and remote areas. When our staff diversity reflects the diversity in our schools, and the Western Australian community, we can better meet the needs of our students, their families and communities. We know that when staff feel included, respected and valued at work, their wellbeing and professional skills flourish, leading to improved learning outcomes for students. Indeed, affirming the identifies of our workforce will support the students of Western Australia to also embrace their identities.

Our Plan builds on our work so far and provides us with a roadmap for the next five years to ensure we achieve our aspiration to reflect the communities we serve. We will be focused on strengthening the culturally responsive leadership, workplace behaviours and practices that empower a diverse workforce and fosters a workplace culture where all staff feel valued, supported and are equipped to achieve their full potential.

There is a strengthened connection in the Plan to diversity and inclusion outcomes for the people of Western Australia, sought by the State Government and the Western Australian Public Sector Commission and reflected in our strong employment diversity targets. Other new aspects in the Plan include: exploring deliberate and purposeful collaboration with peak diversity organisations to develop inclusive recruitment and employment practices accommodating diverse staff; broadening approaches to working flexibly, providing greater inclusion for staff; targeted recruitment approaches;

and professional learning opportunities supporting staff from equity groups to build their professional skills and progress their careers.

Delivering the outcomes in this Plan, in particular, our employment diversity targets, will require attention, committed effort and contribution from all of us. Measuring and reporting progress is a key element in the Plan, enabling leaders to monitor and deliver ongoing improvement in their areas of responsibility.

By sharing responsibility for achieving our outcomes, I am confident that together we can continue to strengthen a positive workplace culture for all staff, for the benefit of our students.

I acknowledge the contribution of our staff and education stakeholders in developing the Plan. Their perspectives and ideas are valuable in ensuring we have practical strategies that can be successfully implemented across our schools and workplaces.

I look forward to seeing the ongoing benefits of our organisation's support for equity, diversity and inclusion and, indeed, the wider benefits for the communities of Western Australia.

Lisa Rodgers
Director General

Introduction

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025 is our commitment to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion in our schools, our services and workplaces.

It outlines the actions we will take over the next five years to:

- attract and retain people with diverse experiences and backgrounds and support their career aspirations

- provide inclusive, culturally safe and responsive workplaces.

Our Vision and Principles

We will develop an inclusive and culturally responsive workforce reflecting the diversity in our schools and the Western Australian community, to better meet the needs and aspirations of our students, their families and communities.

We are committed to improving the cultural security and responsiveness of our workforce and ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are well-represented and supported at all levels across the Department.

The principles of equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in our Plan. They reflect our social and ethical responsibilities, guiding fair and ethical conduct, daily work practices and professional relationships, based on cultural responsiveness, respect and mutual trust.

Equity
Acknowledging peoples' differences and strengths, treating them fairly and supporting their development needs, enabling equal employment opportunity and enhanced workforce participation.

Diversity
Recognising the benefits of the differences and strengths people bring to the workplace; their characteristics, backgrounds and perspectives. The diverse experiences of our staff connects us to our students and their communities to better understand and meet their needs.

Inclusion
Providing workplace cultures where everyone is welcomed, feels a sense of belonging, supported to fully participate and are valued for their unique experiences, strengths and cultural knowledge.

Our Plan

Our Plan focuses on workplace inclusion for all staff, creating equitable opportunities and improving employment for diverse groups identified in the Western Australian Public Sector Commission's Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020–2025, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with disability
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- women in the Senior Executive Service
- youth (24 years and under)
- people of diverse sexualities and genders.

Our Plan is aligned to our strategic directions:

- Every student, every classroom, every day: Strategic directions for public schools 2020–2024 and its annual Focus documents outline key teaching and learning priority areas

- Building on strength: Future directions for the Western Australian public school system, our long-term vision for education over the coming decade

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018–2023

- Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework

- Western Australian Public School Leadership Strategy 2018–2021.

Measuring and Reporting
The Plan demonstrates our accountability for the:

- State Government's objectives for equity, diversity and inclusion in public sector employment under:

  ◦ A Western Australia for Everyone State Disability Strategy 2020–2030

  ◦ Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing to improve lived experiences for young Aboriginal people in Western Australian

  ◦ Part IX: Equal Opportunity in Public Employment of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984

  ◦ Path to Safety: Western Australian's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020–2030

  ◦ Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2030

  ◦ the Western Australian Public Sector Commission's Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020–2025

  ◦ Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework

- Commonwealth Government's National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets.

Progress against the Plan's employment diversity targets is reported to the Department's Corporate Executive through the Workforce Quarterly Report and to the Western Australian Public Sector Commission through the Human Resource Minimum Obligatory Information Requirements quarterly and the Public Sector Entity Annual Collection.

The Plan is delivered through a biennial operational plan with activities reported annually to Corporate Executive.

The Western Australian Public Sector Commission is advised of amendments to the Plan, as required.

Workforce Policy and Coordination coordinates implementing, monitoring and reporting activities and targets under the Plan.

What we have achieved

Under our former Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2015–2019, we successfully delivered a number of strong initiatives across the Department and achieved:

- **Increased female representation in all our targets for women in leadership positions**, with female representation in school administrator positions above parity for primary level 3, 4 and 5 and secondary level 3, 4 and 5 and Women in Management Tier 3.

- **Increased employment of Aboriginal people** including: Aboriginal and Islander education officers and education assistants from 670 (2015) to 731 (2019); school administrators from 26 (2015) to 43 (2019); our highest number of Aboriginal teachers (255) reached in 2018.

- **Significantly increased representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds** from 8.2% (2015) to 9.1% (2019).

- **Increased the number of staff who disclosed their diversity** from 79% (2015) to 84% (2019) and improved diversity data to more accurately reflect the composition of our workforce.

- **Implemented the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework** to continue driving the Department's work to build the cultural responsiveness of staff at all levels of the organisation. Professional learning, advice and guidance was provided to business areas and schools across the State.

- **Supported leaders build positive workplace cultures** through delivering our Enhancing Workplace Culture resource.

- **Enhanced support for staff affected by family and domestic violence** through our new Family and Domestic Violence Leave Guidelines.

- **Strengthened support for staff to address workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying** including: increasing the number of equal opportunity contact officers providing local level information and support from 120 (2015) to 134 (2019); reviewed the Bullying in the Workplace policy and procedures, Grievance Framework and Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, and Harassment policy and procedures; and provided extensive support resources.

- **Implemented initiatives to increase employment of people with disability** including, targeted recruitment under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984, support resources and information sessions for disability employment service providers.

Our current diversity profile

With over 50,000 employees across the State it is important to capture and share our equity, diversity and inclusion journey. We continue to encourage the disclosure of diversity to improve our data, enabling us to more accurately report our workforce.

2020 Employment Diversity
Diversity Groups

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

2.3%

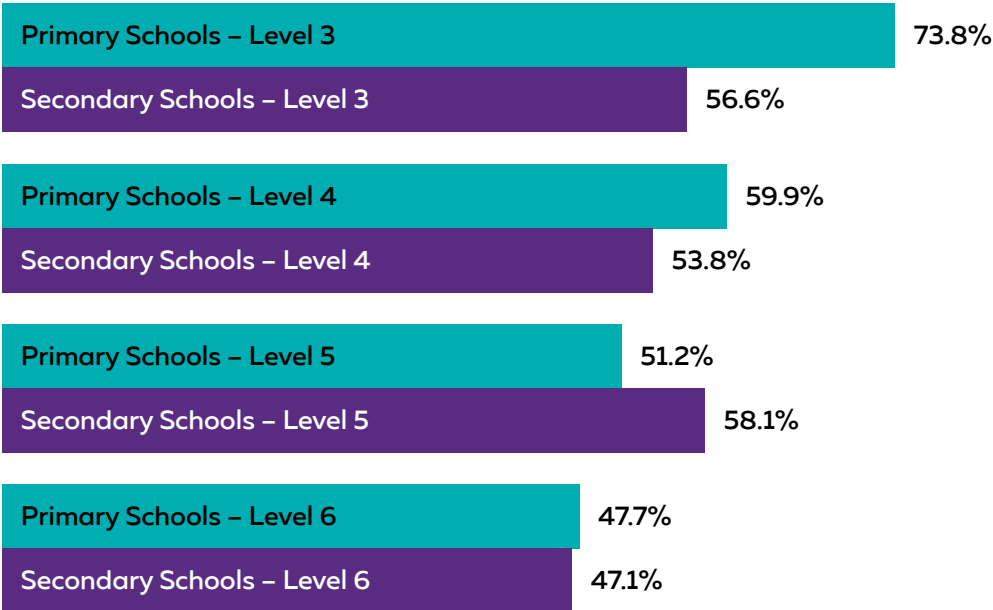**Culturally and linguistically diverse people**

9.4%

People with disability

1.3%

Youth (24 years and under)

4.0%

Women in Senior Executive Service

40%

Female School Administrators
Primary and Secondary Schools

Primary Schools – Level 3	73.8%
Secondary Schools – Level 3	56.6%
Primary Schools – Level 4	59.9%
Secondary Schools – Level 4	53.8%
Primary Schools – Level 5	51.2%
Secondary Schools – Level 5	58.1%
Primary Schools – Level 6	47.7%
Secondary Schools – Level 6	47.1%

Source: HRMOIR June 2020

What we are working towards

Our employment diversity targets indicate the progress we want to make towards equity, diversity and inclusion in our workforce over the next five years.

Employment Diversity Targets	Targets (%)					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.7
Culturally and linguistically diverse people	10.2	11.3	12.4	13.5	14.6	15.5
People with disability	1.9	2.5	3.1	3.7	4.3	5.0
Youth (24 years and under)	4.4	4.7	5.0	5.2	5.5	5.8
Women in the Senior Executive Service	40.4	42.3	44.2	46.1	48.0	50.0

Source: HRMOIR June 2020

Female School Administrator Targets	Targets (%)					
Primary School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Level 3	74.3	76.6	78.9	81.2	83.5	85.6
Level 4	63.9	68.2	72.6	76.9	81.3	85.6
Level 5	57.1	62.8	68.5	74.2	79.9	85.6
Level 6	43.4	51.8	60.2	68.6	77.0	85.6
Secondary School						
Level 3	56.7	58.1	59.5	60.9	62.3	63.8
Level 4	53.1	55.2	57.3	59.4	61.5	63.8
Level 5	57.0	58.4	59.8	61.2	62.6	63.8
Level 6	48.3	51.4	54.5	57.6	60.7	63.8

Source: HRMOIR June 2020

Benchmarking

Employment diversity targets including, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people with disability and youth, outlines our planned progress towards the 2025 aspirational targets for diverse groups in the Public Sector Commission's Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020-2025. Diversity targets for people of diverse sexualities and genders are not identified by the Public Sector Commission. Benchmarking focuses on building a strong public sector workforce representative of the broader Western Australian working age population.

Women in leadership targets in the Plan are benchmarked as follows:

- Women in the Senior Executive Service targets are based on the Public Sector Commission's targets in the Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020-2025.

- Female school administrator targets are benchmarked against the percentage of female teachers and school administrators in primary and secondary schools. These targets are established by the Department to reflect the significant number of leadership positions in our schools.

The employment diversity targets have been established based on workforce representation as at December 2019. Progress against these targets during the period of the Plan will be measured on a calendar year.

Our Focus

We have four focus areas to progress equity, diversity and inclusion. Within each are initiatives outlining our actions to attract and retain people with diverse backgrounds and provide workplace inclusion. These enable us, individually and collectively, to address our employment diversity targets.
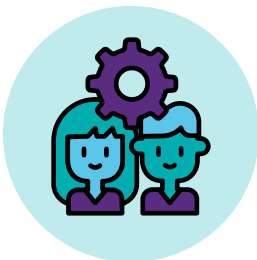
Inclusive and equitable workplaces

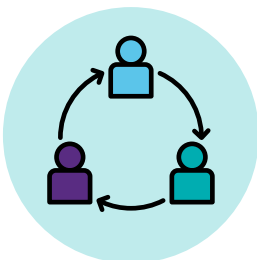Valuing, respecting and supporting staff through inclusive, culturally responsive and diverse work environments.
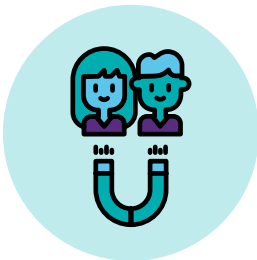
Attract a diverse workforce

Developing our workforce reflective of the diversity in our schools and their communities.
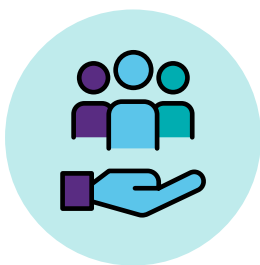
Develop and retain a diverse workforce

Enhancing the capabilities and careers of our diverse staff through professional learning and career development opportunities.

Share responsibility

Contributing to individual and collective practice by promoting, modelling and supporting equity, diversity and inclusion.

# Inclusive and equitable workplaces

Valuing, respecting and supporting staff through inclusive, culturally responsive and diverse work environments.

- Provide professional learning and support to enhance leaders' capability to foster positive workplace cultures that are equitable, inclusive and culturally safe.

- Acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' identities, cultures, histories and languages, and value the cultural knowledge and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, through:

  - co-designing Aboriginal employment initiatives
  - addressing equity and racism and promoting reconciliation, including developing a Reconciliation Action Plan
  - building workplaces that are welcoming, supportive and culturally safe for Aboriginal students, families, communities and staff.

- Continue to enhance culturally responsive leadership across the Department through professional learning and resources.

- Provide opportunities to develop staff cultural competencies and employment policies and practices that accommodate diverse staff.

- Accommodate and support staff with disability, aligned to our <u>Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018–2023</u>.

- Collaborate with organisations representing people with diverse sexualities and genders to build awareness and support.

- Respond to research addressing generational workforce diversity across age cohorts.

- Address the wellbeing and support needs of diverse staff, incorporating culturally responsive employee assistance support.

- Enhance local level support to address workplace discrimination, racism, harassment and bullying through training and support for principals, line managers and equal opportunity contact officers.

- Build cultural understanding and respect through recognising significant cultural events and celebrating achievements of people from diverse backgrounds.

What success looks like

- Employment policies and practices are equitable, fair, transparent and culturally responsive.
- Workplaces are culturally safe and responsive and free from discrimination, racism, harassment and bullying.
- Cultural knowledge and experiences of staff are recognised, valued and inform our practice.
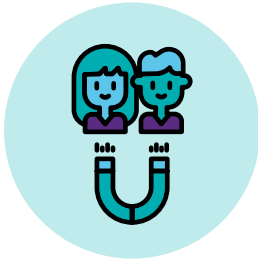
Attract a diverse workforce

Developing our workforce reflective of the diversity in our schools and their communities.

- Provide flexible and culturally responsive recruitment, addressing equity and building workforce diversity, including:

  - implementing targeted recruitment under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability
  - continuing to increase awareness of unconscious bias in recruitment.

- Recognise Aboriginal cultural identity and languages through establishing Aboriginal languages teacher positions under section 50(d) of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and strengthening recruitment and employment information and support for principals.

- Strengthen workplace flexibility promoting inclusion through:

  - implementing a survey of part-time employees
  - evidence-based support and resources.

- Leverage the expertise of peak disability organisations and employment service providers to attract and employ people with disability.

- Develop targeted approaches and alternative entry-level pathways to attract and retain youth, including:

  - a graduate program
  - participating in the Western Australian Public Sector Commission's traineeship and internship programs
  - exploring career pathway options for Aboriginal youth, including undergraduate paid internships and supported traineeships
  - attracting pre-service teachers to work in areas of need in public schools.

What success looks like

- Workforce employment diversity targets are progressed.
- Targeted recruitment addresses equity and improves employment outcomes for diverse staff.
- Enhanced workplace flexibility.

Develop and retain a diverse workforce

Enhancing the capabilities and careers of our diverse staff through professional learning and career development opportunities.

- Provide leadership professional learning aligned to our Western Australian Public School Leadership Strategy 2018-2021 for female school leaders and aspirants.

- Strengthen the capability and careers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including:

  ° implementing a culturally responsive co-designed approach to leadership professional learning for school leaders and aspirants
  ° continuing to support allied professionals achieve a Certificate or Bachelor of Education qualification
  ° implementing an 'on country' Bachelor of Education course for allied professionals
  ° implementing the Bob Hawke Aboriginal Teacher Scholarships.

- Promote and support career pathways to leadership for diverse staff.

- Collaborate with community organisations to enhance employment outcomes and career development for staff aligned to the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework.

- Provide professional learning that raises awareness of respectful workplace behaviours, discrimination, racism, harassment and addressing matters under the Grievance Framework.

- Implement return to work initiatives, including support for staff returning from a career break.

What success looks like

- Staff have opportunities to develop their professional capabilities and progress their careers.
- Professional learning for Aboriginal leaders and aspirants is culturally responsive.
- Staff are diversity aware and grievances are proactively and effectively addressed.
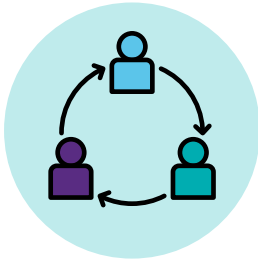
Share responsibility

Contributing to individual and collective practice by promoting, modelling and supporting equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Use data to drive achievement of employment diversity targets through:

  - incorporating the targets in executive performance agreements
  - supporting leaders contribute to the targets by providing workforce equity and diversity metrics in school workforce profiles
  - using targeted approaches encouraging staff to disclose their diversity to improve diversity data and more accurately reflect the composition of our workforce and inform initiatives.

- Listen and respond to staff views through conducting a workplace culture, engagement and wellbeing survey to inform employment and inclusion practices.

- Ensure gender equity and succession of senior female leaders is an integral part of the Department's leadership development initiatives through oversight from the Women in Leadership Strategic Group.

- Account for equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace by monitoring and reporting progress towards our employment diversity targets to Corporate Executive and the Western Australian Public Sector Commission, as required.

What success looks like

- Progress against employment diversity targets is monitored and reported.
- Staff diversity disclosure increases and informs initiatives and employment practices.
- Executive and school leaders monitor and address employment diversity targets for their areas of responsibility.

Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
People who identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Cultural responsiveness
The ability to understand, interact and communicate effectively and sensitively with people from a cultural background that is different to one's own, and demonstrating this ability with proficiency. It is characterised by respect for culture, ongoing self-reflection, expansion of knowledge and commitment to improving practices and relationships.
Source: Department's Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework

Cultural safety
Cultural safety provides an environment that is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.
Source: Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, vol. 23, no. 2, pp.213-214

Culturally and linguistically diverse people
People who are born in identified countries which are not mainly English speaking.

Female school administrators
Female employees at Level 3 to 6 who are employed under the School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement. This includes principals, deputy principals, heads of department and program coordinators.
Source: Gender diversity target group established by Department of Education

People of diverse sexualities and genders
People of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.

People with disability
People who have a mild or moderate core activity limitation.

Diversity groups
Groups identified by the Western Australian Public Sector Commission as being under-represented in the public sector workforce:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with disability
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- women in Senior Executive Service
- youth (24 years and under).

Women in Senior Executive Service
Women who are part of the Senior Executive Service.

Youth
People who are aged 24 years and under.

Shaping the future

This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.