



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

OFFICIAL

Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy 2024-29



OFFICIAL

Table of Contents

Secretary's Message	3
A message from our Diversity Champions	4
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Home Affairs	5
Our vision	5
Our goals	5
Objective	5
Purpose	5
Our commitment to APS employment targets	5
Our diverse workforce representation	6
Our commitment in action	7
Key actions our staff can take	7
Key actions our leaders will take	7
Our ongoing journey	8
Our Diversity and Inclusion focus areas	8
1. A diverse and flourishing workforce	9
2. Positive staff experience	9
3. Inclusive work processes, policy, and systems	9
4. Improved diversity and inclusion capability	9
5. Good governance	9
Governance	9
Diversity Champions	9
Staff-led networks	9
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Section	10
Our diversity and inclusion action plans	10
Measuring progress	10



Secretary's Message

On behalf of the Department of Home Affairs, including the Australian Border Force (Home Affairs), I am so proud to present our first Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy 2024-2029. This Strategy outlines our vision for enhancing the diversity of our workforce and embedding a culture of inclusion, and demonstrates our continuing commitment to building and valuing a workforce that fosters inclusive culture and embraces the diversity of our people.

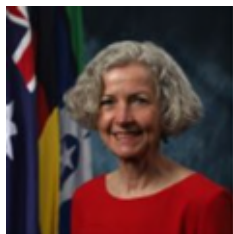
Home Affairs is a large government organisation with over 15,000 staff dispersed across 81 locations (including Australia). Our organisation has a responsibility within the Australian Public Service (APS) for the security, prosperity, and unity of Australians. We aspire to have a workforce that reflects the Australian community and we acknowledge the diversity of our people is our greatest strength.

We are proud to lead an organisation that is committed to building and valuing a workforce that cultivates an inclusive culture, embraces the diversity of its people, and fosters social cohesion in the wider Australian community. Each person who works in Home Affairs is respected and brings their unique capabilities, experience, values, and behaviours to their role to support our shared mission of prosperity, security, and unity in Australian society.

To enable staff to perform at their best, we must foster a workplace culture of collaboration, inclusion, support and respect. There is strong evidence on the benefits of driving an inclusive workforce. The [APS Diversity and Inclusion Report 2022](#) identifies diversity and inclusion as powerful enablers of performance, positions APS agencies to be adaptive to future challenges, and increases productivity. This Strategy will create a more diverse and inclusive workforce where people belong and can deliver innovative programs and services to improve outcomes for our staff, and the community.

I am excited to launch this Strategy to drive positive change and enable us to continue to deliver on government priorities and outcomes for Australians.

"Through the (2023 diversity and inclusion awards) nominations you could get a real sense of the passion and willingness to make colleagues and friends feel comfortable and safe in our workplace. Your achievements are significant and I'm proud of the changes you're making bringing more views to the table, collaborating with others, contributing in a meaningful way to build a workplace where we can all achieve our potential and find fulfilment." (Stephanie Foster, opening address 2023 Home Affairs Diversity and Inclusion Awards ceremony).



Stephanie Foster
PSM Secretary



A message from our Diversity Champions

We are proud to support Home Affairs Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy 2024-29, which aligns to APS commitment to embed diversity, equity and inclusion, and our commitment to building and valuing a diverse, professional, and empowered workforce that authentically represents the community we serve.

Through this Strategy, we commit to increasing diversity, and embedding a culture of inclusion through our targeted action plans for diversity pillars, and ongoing actions in this Strategy that will lift diversity and inclusion. We recognise the journey toward equity is felt differently by every person whether through lived experience or supporting somebody close to us. This Strategy will help create inclusive spaces where our staff are proud to be themselves at work.

We have seen great progress already in creating a diverse and inclusive organisation including:

- Continued upwards trend in female representation at APS 4 to EL2 and SES Band 1
- Twice being awarded Bronze level status in the Australian Workplace Equality Index
- Terms of Reference for our Diversity Champions and staff-led networks
- Embedding First Nations and Disability Liaison Officer roles
- Establishing neurodiversity and intergenerational online communities
- Welcoming new Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ+) Champions.
- Undertaking a CALD Sprint project to examine cultural capability within the department
- Accessible and diverse group inclusion learning products
- Facilitated a series of disability listening circles
- Employee engagement has increased, achieving our highest ever score in staff engagement in the 2024 APS Employee Census.

This Strategy builds on the progress we've made so far, establishing a clear pathway for continued change, and creating growth opportunities for staff and leaders.

As champions, we are passionate about empowering real change and breaking down barriers. We look forward to working with you all over the coming years to drive initiatives through this Strategy to ensure our workplace is safe and inclusive place for all.

"My hope for the future is that the role of the diversity champion becomes obsolete, replaced by a workplace culture that inherently recognises and celebrates the unique contribution of us all.... I hope one day in the future we reach a point where diversity is not a checkbox on a list of workplace initiatives but a welcome and celebrated aspect of our community". (Diversity Champion, Erin Dale, 2023 Home Affairs Diversity and Inclusion Awards ceremony).



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Home Affairs

Our vision

We are an employer of choice.

Our workforce culture is inclusive, respectful, and inspires connection and belonging.

We attract and retain a diverse workforce representative of the Australian community.

Our goals

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a priority at Home Affairs. As articulated in our Statement of Commitment to workplace culture, diversity and inclusion, we commit to:

1. Increase workforce diversity to ensure we have a workforce that represents, understands, and best serves the Australian community
2. Embed a culture of inclusion
3. Identify and break down systemic barriers to full inclusion

Objective

We will support and grow our diverse workforce and build a more inclusive workplace through our diversity action plans, Respectful Workplace Plan, and ABF Inclusion and Belonging Approach.

Purpose

This Strategy is a five year plan (2024-29) with annual reviews to enable adjustment or refining to help us achieve our business and people goals. This timeframe recognises the complexity of the challenge and the need for long-term coordination, commitment, and reform to achieve real change. Five years provides sufficient time to implement measures and track progress, with annual reviews providing the opportunity to course correct where required.

The Strategy provides a shared direction and continued commitment to support and respect our diverse workforce and build a more inclusive workplace. Additionally, it incorporates Home Affairs Respectful Workplace Plan, ABF Inclusion and Belonging Approach, and diversity action plans for reconciliation, gender equality, accessibility and inclusion, CALD, and LGBTIQ+.

Our commitment to APS employment targets

Home Affairs is committed to assisting the APS to achieve diversity targets set out in the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020-2025 and APS CALD Strategy and Action Plan for:

- Five percent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at the APS4 to EL2 classification levels by 2024








- Three percent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at the Senior Executive Service (SES) levels by 2024
- Seven percent representation of staff with disability by 2025
- 24 percent CALD representation in SES by 2030

Home Affairs representation (as at 30 June 2024) against these targets was self-reported in our HR system as:

- 1.8 percent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS4 to EL2
- 1.9 percent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SES Bands 1-3
- 2.6 percent staff with disability
- 4 percent CALD SES Bands 1-3

Our diverse workforce representation

Our diversity	Home Affairs representation (as at 30 June 2024)	2024 APS Census staff feedback
15, 207 staff	63.9% are located outside Canberra Average staff member age is 43	81% of staff report their supervisor actively ensures that everyone can be included in workplace activities
 First Nations	2.0%	78% of Home Affairs staff report they receive the respect they deserve from their colleagues at work
 Disability	2.6%	
 CALD	21.4% Non- English Speaking Background	
	25.3% Born overseas	
 LGBTIQ+	3.2%	
 Female	52.9% of staff are female 48.6% of senior executives are female	

The 2024 Home Affairs Census Highlights Report indicates higher levels of representation for staff with ongoing disability (8 percent), female representation (54 percent), and LGBTIQ+ (8 percent).

For more information about current employment participation rates, see [Department of Home Affairs Annual Reports](#) or the [State of the Service Reports](#).



Our commitment in action

Key actions our staff can take

- Act with respect, demonstrate inclusive behaviours, and constructively challenge and/or report non-inclusive behaviour that may represent harassment, discrimination, bias, or racism
- Actively seek and consider diverse perspectives, collaborate, share information, and be open to giving and receiving constructive feedback
- Take time to understand the experience of others, their working styles, and strengths
- Get involved in our diversity networks or online communities, and participate in days of significance, cultural events, and APS inter-agency opportunities to collaborate on diversity and inclusion
- Be curious and engage in learning opportunities about inclusion, and differences in people, cultures, and communities including (where possible) cultural appreciation, and language training to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Share your diversity details in easySAP, our HR System and participate in the annual APS Employee Census to better understand our workforce
- Nominate a colleague or team for a diversity and inclusion award which acknowledges their contribution to promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion
- Share stories and experiences to contribute to diversity and inclusion at Home Affairs

Key actions our leaders will take

- Set the standard by demonstrating inclusive leadership behaviours to ensure new ideas, diverse ways of thinking, and working, are encouraged and staff are treated fairly, and are able to flourish
- Understand APS and Home Affairs diversity and inclusion agenda, commit to continued learning about inclusion, and actively share this knowledge
- Support and invest in the capability development of staff including cultural capability and awareness
- Foster a safe workplace free from harassment, discrimination, bias and racism, and provide a safe space to discuss concerns
- Address inappropriate workplace behaviour and barriers in workplace processes, policies, and systems
- Acknowledge diversity days of significance and encourage and support staff to be involved in inclusion activities, events, diversity networks, and training
- Mentor staff to establish a pipeline for future leaders
- Be open to recruiting people with transferrable skills and developing their subject matter expertise to create career pathways
- Support anti-discrimination against racism campaigns such as the Australian Human Rights Commission's 'Racism. It stops with me'
- Recognise staff who demonstrate inclusive behaviours by nominating or sponsoring them for a diversity and inclusion award



Our ongoing journey

This Strategy seeks to build on and advance Home Affairs ongoing commitment to workplace inclusion now and into the future, by bringing together its diversity initiatives as a program of work. Diversity and Inclusion in continued action at Home Affairs is a priority and looks like:

- Progress against our dedicated Action Plans, key actions under this Strategy, ABF Inclusion and Belonging Approach, and Respectful Workplace Plan
- A performance framework that promotes inclusive behaviours
- Active and engaged Diversity Champions, and staff-led diversity networks and online communities who are consulted on diversity initiatives, policies, and programs
- Inclusive leadership behaviour
- Dedicated staff support through Indigenous and Disability Liaison Officers
- Recognition and celebration of annual days of significance, embracing diverse cultures, histories, and achievements
- Participation in external diversity and inclusion benchmarking
- Opportunity for staff and SES to engage, share stories, and lived experience to build respect, cultural competence, and increase understanding
- Access to workforce demographic and diversity data for all staff through online dashboards
- Participation in whole of government entry-level and career pathways programs, Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner scholarship, and Jawun secondment program
- Use of Affirmative Measures recruitment and the RecruitAbility scheme
- Access to workplace adjustments, inclusion and cultural training, studies assistance (including additional provisions for First Nations staff), flexible work, diversity facilities for the purposes of care, breastfeeding, and prayer; cultural and ceremonial leave, parental leave, support for staff affected by domestic and family violence, and information supporting navigating gender affirmation and transitioning staff in the workplace
- Safe avenues to raise inappropriate behaviour including through ABF SpeakSafe, Harassment Contact Officers, and Performance and Behaviours Section

Our Diversity and Inclusion focus areas

Building on our existing work, Home Affairs will continue to prioritise diversity and inclusion in our workplace through five focus areas, which will guide our action plans, and selected actions under this Strategy.



1. A diverse and flourishing workforce

Our workforce is reflective of the Australian community, and staff can contribute to their full potential through challenging work and professional development

2. Positive staff experience

Our staff and leaders foster collaboration and contribution, and value diversity. Our workplace is accessible, physically and psychologically safe, and free from racism, harassment, discrimination, and bias. Staff feel safe to be their full selves at work

3. Inclusive work processes, policy, and systems

We address and remove barriers in our processes, policies, and systems to support inclusion. Our policies are modern, use inclusive language, and consider the diverse needs and social identities of our staff

4. Improved diversity and inclusion capability

We continue to invest and grow awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion, including cultural capability and integrity. Our leaders confidently support and promote our diversity and inclusion agenda

5. Good governance

We will strengthen our governance, monitoring, and reporting process for our diversity and inclusion work program

Governance

Diversity Champions

Home Affairs has five key diversity pillars comprising Disability, First Nations, Gender Equality, LGBTIQ+, and CALD. The department currently has three champions, and the ABF has four champions. Our Champions support staff-led diversity networks and provide visible leadership, sponsorship, and commitment to inclusion and diversity at Home Affairs.

Diversity Champions meet monthly with their diversity pillar co-chairs and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) Section.

Staff-led networks

Home Affairs has five staff-led networks and two online communities that support and connect staff and allies who identify with specific diversity groups. These include:

- Indigenous Staff Support Network



- CALD Network
- Staff Advancing Gender Equality Network
- Focus on Ability Network
- LGBTIQ+ Staff and Allies Network
- Intergenerational Network (online community)
- Neurodiversity Network (online community)

The Networks help to foster a culture where everyone feels valued, safe and included at work. They help staff celebrate diversity, share lived experience and support each other to reach full potential at work. They promote specific initiatives such as training and events, including days of significance for all staff.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Section

DE&I Section within Recruitment, Diversity, and Learning Branch drive implementation of the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy and action plans, and support Diversity Champions, staff-led networks, and staff.

Our diversity and inclusion action plans

The department has implemented actions plans that define priorities and initiatives to actively include staff. These include:

- [Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-26](#)
- [Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan 2021-25](#)
- [Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-26](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2024-26](#)
- CALD Action Plan – in development

Measuring progress

In consultation with our Diversity Champions and networks, DE&I Section will monitor and report progress and achievement of the Strategy annually through the department's People and Workforce Plan (PWP) 2025 and the next iteration, the Workforce Strategy, once the PWP concludes in December 2024. Progress is informed by evidence-based information including:

- Workforce demographics and diversity data
- Diversity and inclusion training participation
- Annual benchmarking results including:
 - Australian Workplace Equality Index
 - Workplace Gender Equality Agency Gender Pay Gap analysis



OFFICIAL

- APS Employee Census results (with attention to employee sentiment on inclusion, wellbeing, flexibility, mobility, and leadership)
- External reporting activities including to:
 - APS Agency Survey
 - State of the Service Report
 - Reconciliation Australia

OFFICIAL

