



AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION  
& CONSUMER COMMISSION



AUSTRALIAN  
ENERGY  
REGULATOR

# Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025

November 2021

## Acknowledgement of country

The ACCC/AER acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge their continuing connection to the land, sea and community.

We have acknowledged that certain conduct has the potential to specifically impact on the welfare of Indigenous Australians and we have committed to prioritise our work in these areas while these challenges remain. We seek a culture that shares the histories, cultures and contributions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission  
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The ACCC and the AER value and are committed to having an inclusive culture and a diverse workforce. We recognise, honour and welcome the rich mix of thought, experience, capability, disability, gender, culture, sexuality, age and race and the intersection of these identities that make up our organisations and the communities we serve.

# Message from ACCC and AER Leadership

The ACCC and AER aim to represent the rich diversity of all Australians and to be recognised as an inclusive employer of choice, where all our employees can come to work feeling valued, respected, and free to be themselves. Diversity allows us to harness the broad range of perspectives and experiences that our employees can bring.

The objective of this strategy is to acknowledge and respect the individual diversity of employees, and create an environment where every member of the ACCC and AER feels empowered to fully contribute their skills. A diverse workforce, where intersection of identities is recognised, ensures we have access to a variety of abilities, perspectives, and experiences; inclusivity allows those to be used to the fullest possible extent, creating a dynamic environment with enhanced problem-solving ability.

We are strongly committed to creating a safe and inclusive workplace. We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment. We are committed and accountable to achieving a safe and inclusive workplace culture in which we can all thrive and in which all employees have a responsibility to contribute.



**Rod Sims**  
ACCC Chair

**“We aim to achieve an inclusive culture where all our employees can come to work feeling valued, respected, and free to be themselves”**



**Clare Savage**  
AER Chair

**“Our people need to feel safe, we should all be able to have frank and fearless conversations and express a diverse view in an honest, collaborative and respectful way”**



**Scott Gregson**  
ACCC Chief Operating Officer

**“The objective of this strategy is to acknowledge and respect the individual diversity of employees, but also to create an environment where these can be embraced because every member of the ACCC and AER feels empowered to fully contribute their skills”**

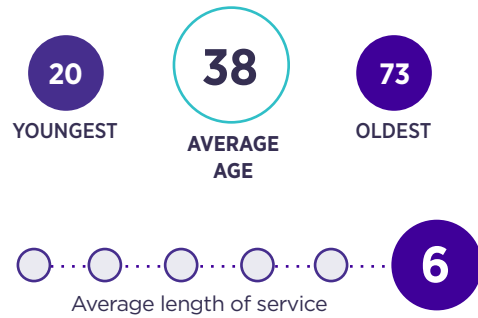
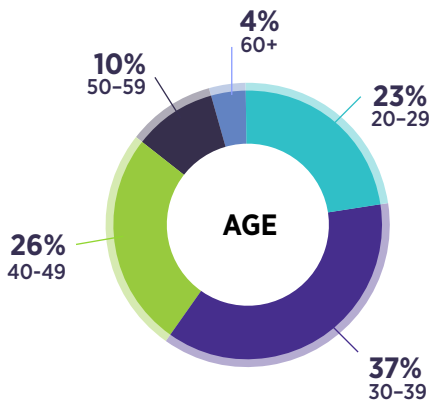
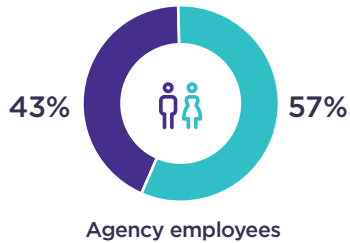


**Dr Liz Develin**  
AER Chief Executive Officer

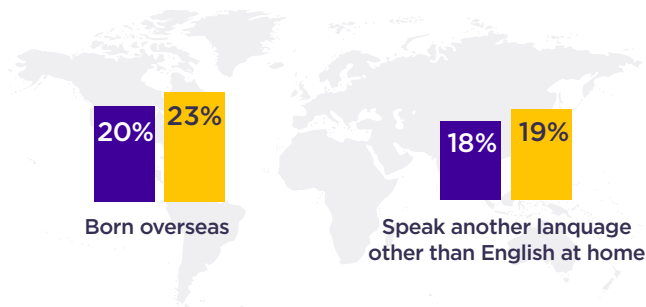
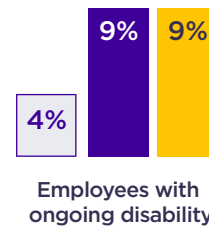
**“We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment.”**

# Diversity and Inclusion at the ACCC and AER

ACCC/AER PROFILE 30 JULY 2021



## 2021 APS CENSUS SNAPSHOT



**90%** of ACCC/AER employees feel that the agency supports and promotes an inclusive workplace culture.

**79%** of all APS employees feel that their agency supports an inclusive culture.

□ Reported to People and Culture   ■ ACCC/AER census data   ■ APS census data

# Our diversity and inclusion journey

Since our first Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2019 we have taken the following steps towards creating an inclusive environment:

- Launched our 2020-22 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and Disability Action Plan 2019-21 (DAP)
- Developed our first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Strategy to increase our positioning as an employer of choice and support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with professional development and career pathways
- Updated our recruitment policy to address unconscious bias through compulsory training for selection panels and ensured neutral terminology within application kits
- Introduced a default position for all vacancies to be flexible (part-time, job share and full-time and in all capital cities whenever possible)
- Introduced and embedded an updated 'if not, why not' position for all flexible working arrangements, ensuring equitable access and encouraging a flexible workforce
- Required a minimum of 50% female representation on all selection panels to ensure gender balance
- Consistently performed acknowledgement of country at the beginning of events and formal meetings
- Developed a 'returning from extended leave pack' with a focus on supporting those taking parental leave
- Developed a gender affirmation policy
- Elevated governance structure for the Inclusive Workplace Committee (IWC) for greater accountability and decision making on diversity and inclusion matters
- Commenced the gender pay gap project.

# Diversity and inclusion priorities

Over the next four years our focus is to continue to foster an inclusive workplace through increased cultural competency and leadership accountability. We will continue to build and strengthen our diverse workforce through measurable action plans tailored to diversity groups. We will prioritise our data collection and management as this is a crucial tool in building our diversity and measuring our progress as an agency.

Our leaders champion and model diverse and inclusive practices and behaviours and challenge those who don't support these values. It is the expectation that our senior leaders exhibit inclusive leadership behaviours in their everyday work, this will include reflecting on their own conduct and setting personal goals to build diverse capability in their teams. This expectation is an integral component of senior leadership performance plans. Progress against the diversity and inclusion plans will be reported to the Inclusive Workplace Committee (IWC).

At the ACCC/AER, we introduced an Inclusion and Cultural Competency Development Plan which is an enduring action plan dedicated to building the knowledge and capability of all employees to engage and support people from diverse groups. This will be achieved through general and targeted development opportunities, storytelling from diverse perspectives and active celebration of significant events to develop a shared understanding of diverse backgrounds.

Creating deliberate employment pathways including working towards whole of government and agency targets will form part of senior leadership performance metrics:

- a. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee representation of 5% of APS4-6 levels by 2022, 5% of EL1 and EL2 by 2024 and 3% of SES by 2024
- b. a representation of 7% across all levels of employees with disability by 2025
- c. an ongoing SES composition of 40% females, 40% males and remaining 20% of any gender, including a heavier focus on the combined SES Band 2 and 3 group
- d. a representation of 20% Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees at EL2 level and SES by 2025.

We have implemented a number of plans and strategies to support and expand upon these targets, including the agency's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Professional Development Strategy, Disability Action Plan (DAP), Gender Strategy, CALD and Pride Plans. These plans contain detailed, concrete actions that not only support the employment pathway targets but a number of other deliverables related to diversity and inclusion. The deliverables in these plans are facilitated and monitored by their respective employee networks and are accountable to the Inclusive Workplace Committee.



# Priorities

Our diversity and inclusion priorities outlined below are the desired outcomes for the life of the strategy. These priorities were developed with regard to whole of agency and whole of Australian Government targets, employee and leadership feedback (including from the APS Census), resource needs and substantial input from our employee networks.

1

Provide an inclusive and safe workplace for all employees

2

Achieve cultural competency through education and awareness raising on diversity and inclusion issues

3

Inform future diversity and inclusion initiatives by improving diversity data collection

4

Leaders who are fully committed to diversity and inclusion principles and held accountable

5

Represent the community that we serve across all levels of our workforce

6

Narrow the gender pay gap

When we deliver on these priorities through the actions below, we create a sense of belonging for our people, become an employer of choice and an organisation that reflects the broader community that we serve.



# Priorities and actions

In addition to the commitment from our leaders to our diversity and inclusion priorities, we extend this responsibility to each and every person in the ACCC/AER. We outline each priority, associated actions and areas of responsibility delivered by committees, business areas and individuals who are held to account by the IWC.

These actions will work in conjunction with our existing frameworks and action plans such as our RAP, DAP, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy, Gender Strategy, CALD and Pride Plans and are to be delivered within the life of the strategy unless otherwise specified.

## Priorities

- 1** Provide an inclusive and safe workplace for all employees
- 2** Achieve cultural competency through education and awareness raising on diversity and inclusion issues

## Actions

- Leadership Development Committee (LDC) will dedicate at least 10% of learning and development budget annually for diversity and inclusion activities. This will include whole of agency cultural awareness training.
- IWC will facilitate intersectionality by committing to at least 5 joint network events every 12 months.
- IWC will evaluate diversity and inclusion activities by reporting on employee participation rates, feedback received and engagement scores from the APS Census (with regard to inclusion).
- Diversity networks will acknowledge days of significance annually by coordinating events, communications, and opportunities for development. Strategic Communications Branch will report on intranet and social media hits. People and Culture Branch and networks will report on participation rates.
- IWC will report bi-annually (at minimum) on career progression, self-identification, and demographic data for all diversity groups. An improved uptake and identification will likely result in a closer alignment to census figures.

## Priorities

### 3 Inform future diversity and inclusion initiatives by improving diversity data collection

## Actions

- Accurate, reliable data is the first step in ensuring the ACCC and AER represents the broader community and addresses the needs of our diverse employees. IWC and People and Culture Branch will identify and address any gaps in our HR system diversity data collection:
  - a. Lead a project to understand the reasons employees choose not to self-identify in year one and develop action plan to address identified concerns for implementation in following two years.
  - b. Pilot Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) data collection in line with Diversity Council Australia (DCA) guidelines in year one.
  - c. Review data collection of remaining diversity groups and ensure our data collection is in line with DCA guidelines in year two.
  - d. Review action plan from a. to determine success and any follow-up actions.

### 4 Leaders who are committed to diversity and inclusivity principles and held accountable

Senior Leadership will:

- uphold policy and lead by example in order to facilitate a culture where bullying, harassment and discrimination is not tolerated in any way. This type of culture will manifest itself in a reduction of inappropriate behaviour, and be evidenced by a reduction from 2020 census scores related to discrimination:
  - 6% of the organisation reported experiencing discrimination
  - of those, 50% was attributed to gender, 20% attributed to age, 15% attributed to disability.
- include personal goals towards diversity and inclusion in annual performance plans
- complete 100% of inclusion training modules available to maintain awareness of inclusive leadership behaviour.

People and Culture Branch will report to the IWC on progress.



## Priorities

### 5 Represent the community that we serve across all levels of our workforce

- IWC and Senior Leadership to implement our multifaceted employment strategies (RAP, DAP, Gender and CALD) in order to reach whole of government and agency targets:
  - a. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee representation of 5% of APS4–6 levels by 2022, 5% of EL1 and EL2 by 2024 and 3% of SES by 2024
  - b. a representation across all levels of 7% of employees with disability by 2025
  - c. an ongoing SES composition of 40% women, 40% men and remaining 20% of any gender (including the combined SES Band 2 and 3 by 2023)
  - d. a representation of 20% CALD employees at EL1 level to SES by 2025.
- IWC and Senior Leadership to create a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ employees by supporting our PRIDE network, increasing participation and visibility of our allies, providing training, celebrating events, and increasing participation in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) survey to at least 500 participants.
- Operational areas to deliver national inclusion outreach programs, such as Indigenous outreach activities and Scamwatch that increase consumer engagement and outcomes for diverse consumers.

### 6 Narrow the median gender pay gap from 9.1%<sup>1</sup> to less than 5% for at least 2 years by 2025

- People and Culture Branch and Strategic Data Analysis Unit (SDAU) to conduct annual pay gap analysis and report.
- People and Culture Branch to undertake any recommendations and actions arising from the Pay Equity Audit by 30 June 2022.
- People and Culture Branch to advocate for changes to the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973* and the Australian Government Employment Bargaining Framework by 2025.

<sup>1</sup> The ACCC calculated its 2018 pay gap as 13.9% median and 9.3% mean. The ACCC median pay gap as at June 2020 was 9.1% the mean pay gap was 5.4%

# Governance

## Inclusive Workplace Committee

The Inclusive Workplace Committee (IWC) provides the overall structure and oversight of diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

The IWC is chaired by the ACCC Chief Operating Officer (COO) and includes contributions from the AER Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and external members.

IWC meets quarterly and includes SES diversity champions and an employee representative from all diversity networks (CALD, Mipla Tunapri, RAP Working Group, Gender, DaCEN and Pride).

## Disability and Carers Employee Network

Our Disability and Carers Employee Network (DaCEN) provides a safe forum for employees with disability, injury, illness or medical condition, employees who are carers and those with an interest in workplace accessibility and disability inclusion to:

- speak up with confidence regarding issues and challenges relating to workplace accessibility, disability inclusion and reasonable adjustment
- exchange information and provide support to one another
- act as a consultation body on these matters.

## Pride Network

The Pride Network supports employees who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual/Ally (LGBTQIA+) and aims to create a culture of inclusion, so that all employees can feel comfortable and supported in the workplace, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Network also is a point of contact and confidential support system for any employees who may be facing discrimination in the workplace on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Network also monitors the ACCC/AER's performance on LGBTQIA+ workplace inclusion measures against the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) national benchmarks and provides feedback to the ACCC/AER, including input into diversity policies and initiatives, on how to maintain a best practice approach to workplace inclusion.

## Gender Network

The Gender Network was established to support the promotion of gender equality and the delivery of gender-balancing initiatives. It is open to everyone. The network aims to contribute to a safe work environment for all gender identities that is free from gender-based harassment and discrimination and sexual harassment.

The Network aim to reduce the gender pay gap, raise awareness, address gender imbalance and unconscious bias and inclusion of all gender identities, including non-binary and those that prefer not to say or identify.

# Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employees (CALD) Network

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) network is open to all employees, with CALD referring to those who:

- were born overseas and/or whose parents or grandparents were born overseas
- belong to a household that is culturally diverse
- belong to a household where a language other than English is spoken
- identify as belonging to a religious, ethnic, or racial minority.

The CALD network was established to contribute to a safe, welcoming, and culturally sensitive environment for all ACCC and AER employees and to promote awareness and inclusion of cultural differences to improve diverse representation in the organisation. The network celebrates the achievements and improves visibility of CALD employees and provides input into relevant ACCC and AER policies.

## Reconciliation Action Plan working group

The ACCC/AER Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a commitment to support our vision for reconciliation and relies on a working group for its development and implementation.

The purpose of the RAP Working Group (RWG) is firstly to create the RAP and then ensure the commitments contained in the RAP are implemented. Further, the working group supports the delivery of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Professional Development Strategy. The RWG is central to promoting and delivering on these strategies for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All employees including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees can nominate themselves to be part of the Working Group.

## Mipla Tunapri

Mipla Tunapri is the Indigenous Employee Network, which is a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees of the ACCC and AER to support each other and share information and experiences.

*Mipla* (me-plar) is a Torres Strait Island word that means 'we/us'. *Tunapri* (tu-nup-pri) is a word from the Palawa Language in Tasmania that means 'to give knowledge and understanding'. Together, Mipla Tunapri means we give knowledge and understanding.

The Mipla Tunapri Indigenous Employee Network has two important roles: to provide support to its members and to offer strategic advice to the ACCC/AER on workplace and workforce matters impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The network is an opportunity to provide guidance and support to other members, encouraging peer support and mentoring that promotes career development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.



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