



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

Human Resources

Managing Diverse and Inclusive Workplaces



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OVERVIEW

The Department is committed to diversity and inclusion in providing the highest level of service to the Victorian community. As one of Victoria's largest employers the Department aims to create an organisation that is diverse, fair and inclusive. By reflecting the diversity of the Victorian community within its workforce and equipping staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to work with a diverse community, the Department's service and business is enhanced.

Respect and diversity are also CORE values of the Department and the foundation for provision of equal employment opportunity. Managers, Principals and employees are expected to model inclusive behaviours in the workplace and in their service provision to students, parents and the community.

Diversity management is underpinned by Commonwealth and State anti discrimination law, the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, the *Disability Act 2006*, the *Public Administration Act 2004*, and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. It includes whole of government diversity requirements such as Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) planning, the Disability Action Plan and Aboriginal Inclusion and Employment Plans.

Diversity management in the Department also includes policy and initiatives in relation to gender equity, sexual diversity and flexible work for employee work & family life balance.

Diversity management is included in corporate, business and strategic planning processes. Managers and principals are responsible for contributing to better diversity management and achieving the outcomes it can deliver.

Diversity in the Department evolves with changes in government policy and legislation and is linked to accountability frameworks. In turn, diversity monitoring and reporting is undertaken through whole of government and departmental accountability frameworks and is included within the Annual Report.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Current trends making diversity management an imperative are:

- globalisation of business and cultures interacting across borders as a result of this process
- an economy increasingly focused on services and knowledge industries
- competition for talent in the context of an aging population
- labour market skill shortages
- changing demographics

The Department is responsive to the rapidly changing demographics of the Victorian community and seeks to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects this diversity.

Ageing - Due to the ageing population, the number of people retiring and exiting the workforce is outpacing the number of school leavers and new entrants coming into the workforce. The increasing gap between workforce demand and workforce supply provides opportunities to secure skills from diverse groups and previously untapped talent in the Victorian community.

Gender – The proportion of women in the Australian workforce and in leadership positions is increasing. In the Department, the percentage of female teachers has increased since the 1960's (52% in 1960 compared with 70% in 2009) in part as a result of legislation changes including women receiving equal pay to men for equal work; an increase in the number of women participating in higher education; and changes to employment conditions (Maternity, Family leave and Flexible Work Options). The proportion of females in the Principal class has increased rapidly over the last decade and was 53.6 per cent in 2009¹.

Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – 23.8% of Victoria's population were born overseas. 43.69% have a parent who was born overseas. Victorians come from more than 200 countries and speak more than 230 languages and dialects. Workforce management must take into account this diversity to optimise business success.²

Disability – 1 in 5 Victorians currently have some form of disability. As the population ages, this proportion is expected to increase as older people are much more likely to have an impairment which limits their function. For example, the prevalence of *profound or severe core-activity limiting disability* increases from 3% of 0-4 year olds to 10% of 65-69 year olds.³

Overall changes in the wider population and in labour market demographics are driving increased diversity. Attraction, engagement and retention strategies are being adopted to harness the skills of diverse groups. New opportunities are emerging for increased workforce participation by indigenous people, women and carers, mature age people, people with a disability and immigrants. Organisational development strategies are deployed to effect cultural change, minimise stereotypes and increase diversity competence. The implications of diversity are being recognised and incorporated into strategic planning.

ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Diversity management is recognised in contemporary human resource management as a key to improving organisational performance, client service delivery and employee satisfaction. Organisations may take a diversity approach to improve the performance of the individual, team or organisation. Research shows that diversity management makes a positive difference to organisational performance and culture.

Diversity management enables the Department to better respond to the education challenges of the 21st century and improve our understanding of our diverse workforce, students and community.

Diversity management is built on the foundation of equal opportunity in the public sector where: employment decisions are based on merit; employees are treated fairly and reasonably; equal employment opportunity (EEO) is provided; human rights are upheld; avenues of redress against unfair or unreasonable treatment are available; and a career public service is fostered. See the [public sector employment principles](#).

In providing for equal employment opportunity, processes in the public sector ensure that diversity is valued and recognised, there is freedom from discrimination and harassment, there is a focus on essential job requirements and best practice is pursued. Diversity management essentially moves an organisation from compliance to good management.

¹ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Datazone.

² Victorian Multicultural Commission website <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/>

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers; Summary of Findings, 2003, p3

Diversity Benefits

Gender, cultural and generational diversity along with workplace flexibility are playing a significant part in impacting on organisational performance. Taking a diversity approach has been shown to deliver the following benefits:

- being recognised as an employer of choice
- recruiting and retaining the best candidates from a broader talent pool
- reduced turnover
- better knowledge and understanding of the community we serve
- provision of equal employment opportunity and respectful workplaces
- increased employee job satisfaction, recognition and productivity
- reduced absenteeism
- increased capacity to innovate in a diverse marketplace
- being recognised as responsive to 'diverse communities'
- improving reputation and locally and globally competitive

Attracting and Retaining Talent - Diversity and inclusion attracts the best employees and leaders from the widest possible talent pool in a competitive labour market. Candidates care about workplace diversity and judge an organisation's commitment to diversity by their perceptions of inclusion in the workforce. A diverse and inclusive organization increases employee intent to stay by as much as 24% ([Corporate Leadership Council, 2010](#)).

Diversity management assists the Department to tap into new talent opportunities through use of business levers such as

- workforce planning that is aware of changing labour market factors and actively integrates and plans for employee diversity
- recruitment and retention policies and practices that target diverse segments in the labour market
- professional development that increases capabilities of employees to work with difference and diverse people and teams
- performance management and development processes that recognise and reward diversity and inclusive practice

Performance - An effective diversity approach supports equal opportunity and mitigates legal risk and costly outcomes where antidiscrimination regulation is not complied with. Diversity strategies improve employee engagement, motivation and productivity; reduce absenteeism and turnover and improve employee health and well being; increases commitment to colleagues and drives team collaboration and effectiveness by as much as 21% ([Corporate Leadership Council, 2010](#)); contributes to employee flexibility and adaptability.

In addition, organisations now favour 'flatter' organisations with increased use of cross discipline teams where collaboration and connectivity make use of diverse competencies and capabilities to achieve better outcomes.

Service - Workplace diversity results in better service to the public by including diversity at all levels of planning and service delivery. Workforce diversity and inclusion enables better understanding and relationships with our community and client base - business units with inclusive environments have been found to perform better ([Corporate Leadership Council,](#)

[2010](#)). In the education context a diverse workforce enables us to better relate and communicate with our students and the community and to better respond to their changing service needs and expectations.

Innovation - Diversity fosters creativity and innovation. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring new and different perspectives, experiences and styles to problem solving and decision making, thereby increasing capability and return on investment

CREATING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Managers and principals can create a climate for attracting new and diverse skills to the workplace through diversity programs and implementing a range of diversity and inclusion initiatives tailored to their specific needs.

Workforce diversity policies and initiatives in the Department include:

Women	<p>advancement of women and women in leadership and gender equity data. The Department is committed to providing equal opportunities for women to participate at all levels of its workforce. The Department offers a suite of professional development programs to enhance the leadership skills of its female employees. Information about specific programs is available on HRWeb under Professional Learning.</p> <p>The Department acknowledges the differing needs of women at various stages of their career and life cycle, particularly women who have family and caring responsibilities. Consequently, the Department's Flexible Work for Work-Life Balance policies provide flexible work options to assist balance work and family needs and to access equal participation in the workplace.</p> <p>Each year in March the Department recognises and celebrates the achievements of women by observing International Women's Day. All Department workplaces are encouraged to organise events to observe this United Nations endorsed event.</p> <p>The Department monitors and reports annually on its progress towards enabling equal opportunity and workforce participation for women. These reports are included in the Department's annual report each year.</p>
CALD	Cultural and linguistic diversity policy and the <i>Cultural Diversity Plan</i> .
Indigenous	An Aboriginal Inclusion Plan and Aboriginal Employment Plan are under development to address barriers to education, training and employment for Aboriginal people. These are multiple and complex and include discrimination, cultural and educational barriers. The Department's focus is on building capacity.
Disability	Disability and Reasonable Adjustment in the workplace policy, the Department's <i>Disability Action Plan 2009-2012</i> and the Disability Employment Advisory Service .
Sexual	Same-sex attracted staff and Gender Identity.

Work-Life [Flexible Work for Work-Life Balance policies](#)

These policies and initiatives can be found at HRWeb: [Diversity and Equity](#).

These policies and initiatives provide a framework for the Department to achieve:

- a diverse and skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of our students and the wider Victorian community and leads to improved service delivery
- a workplace culture characterised by inclusive practices and behaviours where all differences are respected
- a work environment where there is awareness in all employees of their rights and responsibilities with regards to fairness, equity and all aspects of diversity
- awareness of the benefits of diversity and successful management of diversity
- Improved employment and career development opportunities for people who are underrepresented in our workforce through specific programs and initiatives. A key element is ensuring men and women are supported in balancing work and family responsibilities and that choosing part time work does not result in diminished career opportunities.

Implementation

Effective implementation of diversity management means

- diversity leadership (leaders and managers) encourage and support diversity, inclusion and equal employment opportunity practices
- diversity is integrated within mainstream business planning; diversity commitments are evident and accounted for in policies, strategic plans, accountability and improvement frameworks, service agreements and standards and supporting tools
- modelling of inclusive behaviours; managers model inclusion in everyday work and employee culture and climate are monitored for inclusion
- diversity is incorporated in all relevant policies and practices eg; HR recruitment policies including advertising, position descriptions, selection criteria, accountabilities and capabilities
- systemic and indirect discrimination are identified and addressed (eg in assumptions regarding competence, skills, commitment etc)
- meet changing expectations of men and women on issues of fairness, equity, diversity and work/life/family balance
- diversity and inclusion are addressed at individual, team and organisational levels and diversity capability is incorporated into all processes
- All employees are diversity confident and possess the skills and capabilities in delivering services to a diverse Victorian community
- leadership and development opportunities to increase employee knowledge and understandings of diversity and inclusion are available and staff participation encouraged

Diversity success factors

- Leaders value and promote diversity
- Employee actions and behaviours are consistent with Department core values and the VPS Code of Conduct
- Organisational and individual accountability and responsibility for diversity is embedded in core business
- Strategies exist for attracting and retaining a diverse workforce at all levels including leadership
- Employees are diversity confident and capable in delivering service to a diverse community
- Barriers to full workforce participation of women, carers, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people of mature age and sexual diversity are addressed and removed.

TRAINING

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is fundamental to workforce diversity. EEO principles aim to ensure employees are selected for positions on merit, provide equitable access to employment, professional development and workplace participation for people who are underrepresented in our workforce; and ensure that workplaces are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment.

All Department and school council employees are expected to successfully complete the online Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Course. The Course aims to raise awareness of Department policies on workplace conduct and educate staff about their rights and responsibilities under equal opportunity, discrimination and workplace bullying laws. It is one of a range of initiatives to ensure safe, inclusive and productive workplaces.

The Course comprises three components. A list of the three components and the required component completion timeframes are shown in the table below.

DEECD Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Course components and expected completion timeframes	
Course component	Expected completion time frame
1. Discrimination and Harassment	Within 3 months of employment or as soon as possible.
2. Bullying: a. for employees b. for managers	Within 3 months of employment or as soon as possible. (select either 2a or 2b as appropriate)
3. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying - Refresher	Three years after the Discrimination and Harassment and Bullying components have been commenced (whether or

	not components have been completed) and again every three years after that.
Note: When a Course component is completed, it becomes available as a general resource that may be accessed at any time thereafter.	

Course access

[DEECD Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and bullying Course](#)

Monitoring staff progress

Principals and executive managers can monitor staff progression and completion rates of the online course by registering as a Direct Manager at: www.techniworks.com.au/prinvic. Further information about monitoring usage can be obtained from the learning and development unit by emailing staffdevelopment@edumail.vic.gov.au

Work areas are encouraged to regularly self assess their internal contribution to diversity management through annual business planning and performance development processes.