



# VPS WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2017 – 2020

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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The Department of Education and Training acknowledges and pays respects to Elders and all Victorian Aboriginal communities. We honour and respect Traditional Owners, past and present, and value the rich culture and history of the First Peoples of this land.

Throughout this document the term Koorie is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the term Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of the programs and initiatives and unless noted otherwise are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



I am pleased to present *DET's Victorian Public Service Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2017-2020*. This Strategy is the first of its kind for the Department and I am incredibly proud that it will support our staff to be the best they can be, provide freedom from discrimination and harassment, and allow them to feel supported, valued and included.

As articulated in the recently launched *Investing in Our People Strategy*, the Department's vision is to have a high performing, valued, empowered and supported workforce. Investing in our people is central to this vision. Having work environments and colleagues that value and respect their differences is just as important as having the right skills and capabilities for their jobs.

This Strategy outlines our goal to achieve safe and inclusive workplaces, where diversity is valued and inclusive practices are the standard way of doing things. It builds on what we have already done and provides the framework for planning and monitoring the work ahead of us.

It also focuses on improving the day to day experiences of our staff when they are at work, and harnessing their diverse experiences and talents to inform the work we do with and for our community. Diversity is an asset and makes us better. It enhances our ability to understand and meet the needs of our service users, and design and develop strong, relevant and workable policies and programs. It helps us work through challenges, hear and consider different perspectives and lived experiences, anticipate problems and deal with setbacks. Encouraging and valuing diversity through demonstrating inclusion is essential for our staff to perform at their best.

I'm excited about the opportunity this Strategy presents for our Department to become a beacon for workplace culture. All of our staff should feel safe, supported and included.

As the people charged with the privileged position of educating the next generation, I want to be striving for a culture of the highest standard that the community we serve has trust and pride in.

# VISION

The Department has set a bold vision in the Statement of Strategic Intent:

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Together we give every Victorian the best learning and development experience, making our state a smarter, fairer, more prosperous place.

This aspiration is for a future where:

- children and young people are confident, optimistic, healthy and resilient;
- students reach their potential, regardless of background, place, circumstance or abilities;
- Victorians develop knowledge, skills and attributes needed now and for the jobs of the future;
- the Department's workforce is high-performing, empowered, valued and supported.

To achieve this, we have developed the DET Victorian Public Service (VPS) Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Its vision is to have a:

VPS workforce that is broadly representative of the Victorian population;

- workplace culture that values the individual characteristics of each person, and supports each of them to thrive and reach their potential;
- workplace that acknowledges and values diversity, provides equal opportunities, and is inclusive of all differences.

# INTRODUCTION

As part of the Department's *Investing in Our People Strategy* (the People Strategy), a focus on building a workplace culture that values diversity and respect is necessary to ensure all our VPS workforce can do their best work.

This *DET VPS Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy* (the Strategy) outlines the Department's commitment to building a workplace that is grounded in respect, fosters inclusion, promotes diversity and embraces the unique skills and qualities of all our people. It supports other work being undertaken to build safe and inclusive workplaces described in the *People Strategy* and is complemented by the *Culture of integrity and respect* sub-strategy.

The organisational benefits of developing a workplace that values diversity and inclusion are undeniable (Roberge & van Dick, 2010). People thrive and are more innovative in working environments that are free from bias and discrimination and where diversity of experiences and views are valued. In addition, organisations that have strong reputations in workforce diversity and inclusion attract and retain top talent (Deloitte, 2012; VPSC, 2015).

## WHAT IS WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

### Workforce Diversity:

- Acknowledges the diverse skills and perspectives that people bring to the workplace because of their gender, age, language, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation, working style, work and life experiences, and other qualities and diversities.
- Ensures that our workforce is reflective of the Victorian community that we serve.
- Means having diversity of thought and leadership to make our work the best it can be.

### Workforce Inclusion:

- Removes barriers to enable all staff to reach their potential and feel included.
- Supports the development and achievement of organisational outcomes.
- Values the individual characteristics each person brings to the workplace.
- Creates an environment of respect, trust and appreciation of difference.
- Allows all employees to work to their potential and produce the best outcomes for the Victorian community.

### Inclusion results in:

- People feeling valued and supported in their work to achieve their full potential.
- Increased collaboration, innovation, initiative and improvement in overall organisational performance.

**Diversity is the mix; Inclusion is getting the mix working well together.**



### **This Strategy:**

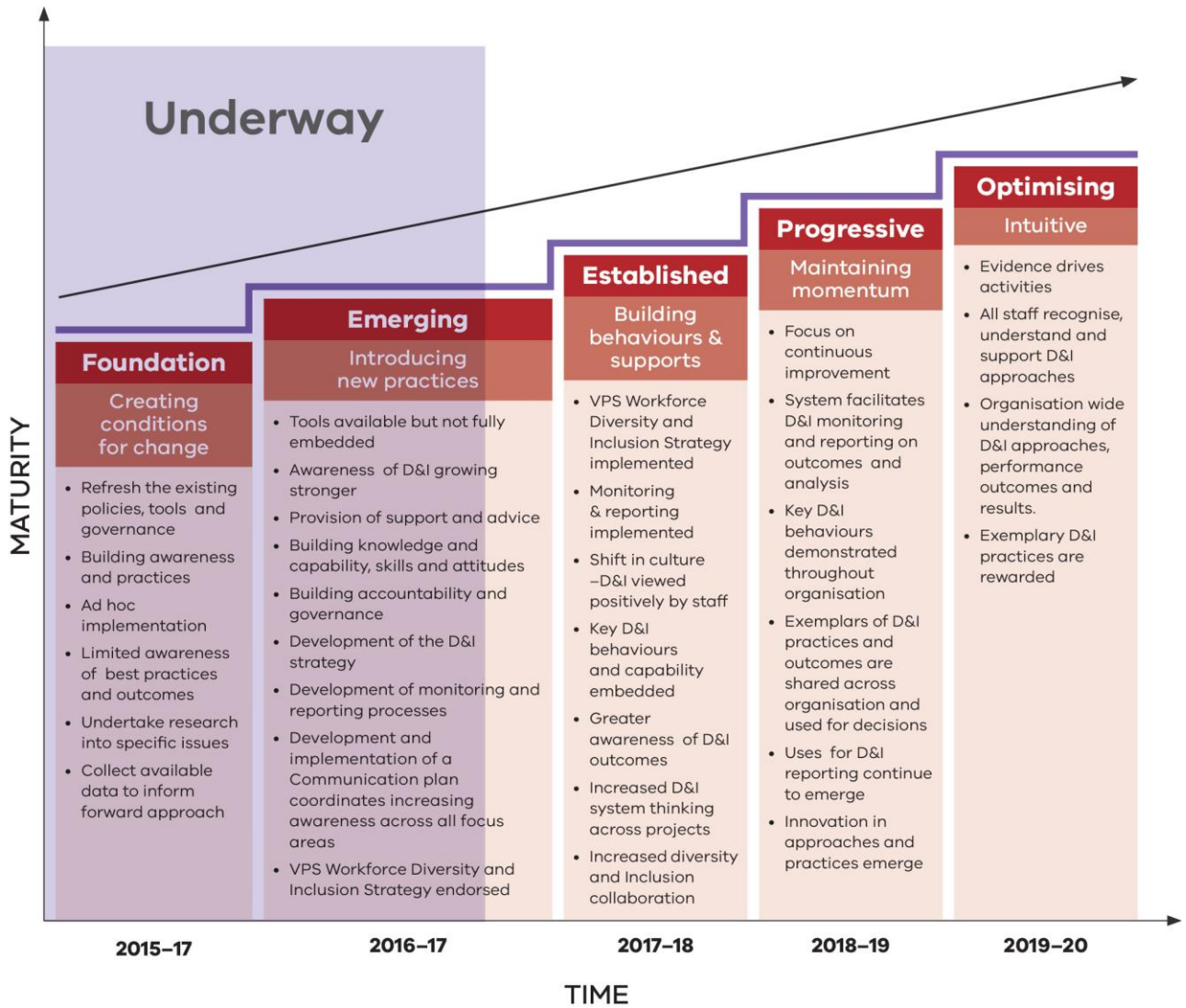
- Recognises the need to reflect the diversity of our community in the way we promote, design, develop and deliver our services.
- Sets the foundations for us to build an inclusive workplace culture, based on the Department values, where all staff are valued and recognised for their unique qualities, ideas, voices and perspectives.
- Promotes the significant benefit of the skills, experience, backgrounds and talents that exists within our workforce.
- Demonstrates the Department's commitment to being a model employer for diversity and inclusion with the aim to retain current and attract new staff.

### **SCOPE**

The Strategy is focused on the VPS workforce, corporate and regional, employed directly by the Department. A range of actions, including resources and tools will be developed as part of this Strategy's actions, and it is intended that these would be made available for other public sector workforces including schools.

This is a four-year strategy that acknowledges that change, especially significant cultural change, takes time. The efforts in the first year of this Strategy will aim to establish the foundations on which further actions will be built over time. This can be described through phases of maturity. The diagram below depicts the predicted progress in Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Maturity over time covered by this Strategy.

# DET VPS WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MATURITY



# CONTEXT

## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY

In 2016 the Department released the People Strategy. The People Strategy highlights our people as the strength of the organisation in achieving its goals and commits to working across five key areas to ensure our people are capable, able to perform at their best, and feel empowered, valued and supported.

The five elements are:

- **Leading for Outcomes:** strengthening our leadership practice and developing our future leaders.
- **Learning-Centred Organisation:** developing our people to be their best.
- **Culture of Integrity and Respect:** ensuring we act with the highest ethical standards, as well as treating each other with respect.
- **Safe and Inclusive Workplaces:** safe and healthy workplaces free from physical or psychological harm, where everyone's contribution is valued.
- **Empowered and Responsible People:** delivering on commitments at every level of our organisation.

This Strategy is a key enabler of the People Strategy and its implementation is an action under the **Safe and inclusive workplaces** element.





## DET VALUES

The Department's values underpin the behaviours that the government and community expect of all public sector employees. The values provide guiding principles for the decisions we make and the behaviours we seek to demonstrate every day at work. All our values are important, however the values of Respect and Human Rights are the foundational values that underpin this Strategy.



### RESPONSIVENESS

We respond in a timely way with our best work



### INTEGRITY

We are honest, ethical and transparent



### IMPARTIALITY

We behave in the best interests of the public by making fair and objective decisions



### ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves and others to account for the work that we do



### RESPECT

We value others and accept their differences



### LEADERSHIP

We are genuine, supportive and do the right thing



### HUMAN RIGHTS

We uphold and respect the rights of others

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

### **Unlawful discrimination in employment**

Discrimination means treating a person unfavourably because of a protected attribute, such as the person's age, disability, race, gender, gender identity or sexuality. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats a person with a protected attribute unfavourably because of that attribute. Indirect discrimination occurs if a person imposes a requirement or condition on everyone but it has the effect of disadvantaging persons with an attribute and is not reasonable.

State and federal anti-discrimination laws make it unlawful for employers or prospective employers to discriminate against a person in the area of employment on the basis of a protected attribute (including age, disability, race, gender, gender identity and sexuality).

It is unlawful for an employer or prospective employer to discriminate in offering employment, determining the terms of employment or limiting access to opportunities.

### **Positive duty to eliminate discrimination**

In addition to making discriminatory conduct unlawful, state and federal anti-discrimination laws also create a positive duty for employers to take reasonable measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination from the workplace.

The Strategy aims to ensure a workplace free from discrimination and to set out positive actions to achieve a diverse and inclusive workplace.

### **Relevant legislation**

- The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

## **WHOLE OF VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Together with the Department's Strategic Priorities, the People Strategy and the DET Values, the Department works within the context of broader social change. In Victoria this includes a range of social change policies aimed to improve tolerance and acceptance of difference within the Victorian community, to reduce stereotypes and biases towards groups because of their difference, and to facilitate greater social cohesion.

Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) priorities:

- Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria's Social cohesion and the Resilience of its Communities (2015)
  - Its key purpose is to guide the Victorian Government in how to further strengthen Victoria's social cohesion and how to build and empower resilient communities in order to prevent and reverse the development of racial, ethnic and religious intolerance that can lead to violence.

- Victorian Gender Equality Strategy (2016)
  - Changing stereotyped attitudes towards women, contribute to the prevention of family violence and work towards gender equality.
- Multicultural Policy Statement
  - The key purpose of Victoria's Multicultural Policy Statement, Victorian. And proud of it. (2017) is to safeguard our social cohesion and ensure that every Victorian is able to contribute and belong. It contains a Victorian Values Statement, which sets out the shared values upon which our success as a multicultural state has been built: equality, freedom and shared responsibility. It also details the policies, programs and services that will extend this work, and sets out clear outcomes to measure progress.
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Inclusion Plan 2016-2017
  - A commitment to the right to equality and removing discrimination. Attitudes and ideas that might be adverse to LGBTI inclusion can be the result of conscious and unconscious behaviours. It is our responsibility to challenge these ideas and work towards promoting inclusion for all employees.
- Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework
  - The Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework, released in November 2011, outlines the main barriers Aboriginal Victorians face in accessing services and resources, following consultations in 2009 and 2010. The Framework includes as a key action the development of departmental action plans to demonstrate how access to and inclusion in mainstream services will be improved. Progress against inclusion plans is reported in the annual Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Report.
- Aboriginal Employment Strategy
  - The Victorian Public Sector Commission is developing a Strategy for implementation in 2017. The Strategy will encompass 2016 initiatives such as the Aboriginal Undergraduate Cadetship Program, the Aboriginal Career Development Program, and Aboriginal Pathway to GRADS and develop a coordinated approach to Aboriginal employment across the Victorian Public Sector.
- State Disability Plan 2017-2020
  - Greater inclusion, to tackle the negative attitudes and barriers that many Victorians with a disability face, and to focus on changing attitudes and reduce discrimination.
- Public sector reforms 2016
  - Building a public sector that is open, results-orientated and collaborative, uses the latest technology, is innovative, joined up and is an employer of choice.
  - Building public sector capabilities to match new requirements, take a systems approach to the work of the public sector, focus on outcomes to demonstrate value to the community; ensure accountability that places integrity at the centre of the public service.

## **WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US**

The Department's data on workforce diversity compares well with other VPS organisations and the broader Victorian labour market.

We have an older workforce and a higher proportion of women than other public sector organisations. Six in ten of our employees are aged over 45, and nearly three in every four VPS employees are women. We have an even gender split in our executive officer (EO) cohort. We are

comparable with other departments in our proportion of employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and employees who report having a disability. We have a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and fewer employees working part time than other VPS organisations.

To reduce discrimination, ensure human rights are upheld, and to increase opportunities for all people who want to and are able to work, there are goals emerging from the whole-of-government work that call on the Department to increase its workforce diversity, including to:

- meet a 1 per cent public service employment target for Aboriginal people by 2018
- increase the proportion of employees with
- a disability
- increase the use of flexible work options
- meet a 50/50 gender target at executive level and address gender pay gaps
- prevent discrimination against all diversity groups, especially through recruitment processes and addressing unconscious bias.

## **PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY RESULTS 2016**

The People Matter Survey, conducted by the Victorian Public Sector Commission, is an employee opinion survey that provides data that helps us understand our current diversity profile and attitudes. The 2016 survey results found strengths of:

- work colleagues having positive attitudes towards other employees with diverse backgrounds
- a positive culture in relation to cultural diversity. Managers support people with diverse backgrounds.

Opportunities for improvements included:

- perceptions about senior managers supporting diversity
- perceptions about the organisation having an environment that fosters inclusiveness, that treats employees with fairness and respect, and that is supportive towards people with a disability.

While some groups have benefited from increased awareness, such as LGBTI inclusion, other areas, like disability employment are falling behind. Furthermore, the intersectional characteristics found across diversity areas can make inclusion and monitoring inclusion even more difficult for some groups.

The People Matter Survey is conducted annually and will help us track our progress.

# FOCUS AREA

The Strategy has nine focus areas.

This approach allows for a range of coordinated and overarching actions that support the broad organisational culture, policy and behaviour changes to best support diversity and inclusion. There will be specific actions in each focus area.

The Strategy specifies how the Department will develop, implement, monitor and report on progress towards achieving its commitments.

It provides a strong foundation for driving change over the coming years.



Figure 1 circular image with petals

## FOCUS 1: INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

***‘Leaders who fail to appreciate this fundamental precept of accountability must also fail to muster the profound commitment true leadership demands.’***

*General Sir Peter Cosgrove, A Very Australian Conversation, Boyer Lectures, 2009*

Inclusive leadership is associated with greater team engagement. People working in more inclusive teams report higher levels of commitment and satisfaction (Roberege and van Dick, 2010).

Building inclusive leadership will support the development of inclusive capability in all individuals, teams and leadership roles so we can deliver work that best meets the needs of the community.

Effective leadership is key in promoting and supporting workforce diversity and inclusion. Every EO and manager in the Department is responsible for actively encouraging an open and collaborative culture that demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Inclusion is about understanding what influences inclusion, and exclusion, and how to create new behaviours and work practices.

Strengthening the diversity in our leadership group will assist organisational decision-making to be informed by a wider range of experience and knowledge and reflect the diversity of the Victorian community.

All leaders in the Department have signed up to a Leadership Charter, which sets out their shared commitment to living the values and modelling the behaviours the Department needs to realise its Strategic Intent. Strengthening leadership capability while fostering diverse leadership is critical to cultural change. Please refer to the Leadership Charter page on HRWeb

## FOCUS 2: INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

***‘Innovative thinking in technology has the potential to be a game changer for diversity and inclusion.’***

*Chandler Macleod, The Future of Work, 2016*

Building effective systems and processes that everyone can use helps us to deliver our services more effectively. It also shows that we are serious about ensuring everyone has access to opportunities, that we are committed to accommodating a diverse range of abilities, and effectively adapting our systems and processes to eliminate barriers to participation.

Changes in technology provide opportunities to design approaches that better support diversity and inclusion than ever before. For example, automation of some stages of the recruitment process may eliminate some unconscious bias and increase the diversity of the pool of candidates that make it to shortlisting.

Technology to support accessibility can also be used to assist people to overcome workplace impediments that prevent them from doing their job well. For example, improving web accessibility and providing hearing loops in our conference spaces.

It’s not just about our technology. The Department’s systems and processes can present barriers and make it harder for staff to feel included. For example, the lack of inclusive language in Department documents and reports; only providing binary descriptions of gender on forms; not providing accessible options for documents for those with a vision impairment; or limiting flexible work options. We need to enhance our understanding of these systems and processes in order to overcome these challenges.

### **FOCUS 3: WORKFORCE FLEXIBILITY**

*'Our communities are full of people who are caring - for children, grand-children, parents, in-laws, for others in our community with disability, chronic illness or old age... As caring is not simply an after-hours job, or something that ceases when the kids grow up, flexible working arrangements provide immense assistance in reducing the stress associated with managing these responsibilities.'*

*Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, 2013*

The Department has well-established and long-standing flexible work options available to all its VPS staff. Many staff have formal and informal arrangements in place.

We are working towards enhancing our current arrangements to support a whole of Victorian government approach to 'mainstreaming flexible work' across the VPS. We know that each job is different and there are a wide range of options when it comes to working flexibly. Individuals and managers are encouraged to consider each case on its merits when making these decisions.

Flexible work requires genuine commitment from individuals, their managers and their team. Mainstreaming flexibility is about building a culture at the Department where we say 'yes' to flexibility, and to giving people permission and support to balance their work and careers with other things they love, care about and need. Offering flexible work also increases employment options for people with disability or chronic illness.

The demands of work, the way we work, where, and how we work are less defined than ever before. New technologies make it easier to undertake work in many locations, any hour of the day. Flexible working gives employees a meaningful level of control over when, where and how they work. This impacts positively on staff productivity, efficiency and quality.

### **FOCUS 4: CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

*'Discriminating against men and women in terms of their race or ethnic heritage or sexual orientation is ridiculous and it means we deny in society the talent that is on offer by everybody.'*

*David Morrison, Retired Chief of Army and Australian of the Year, 2016*

Australia is one of the most successful multicultural nations in the world (Kymlicka, 2007) and Victoria is a leading multicultural state. Victorians speak more than 200 languages at home (including Aboriginal and migrant languages) and follow 135 different faiths - and more than a quarter of Victorians were born overseas (2011 ABS Census). Having a diverse workforce that is reflective of the cultural backgrounds of the wider population helps us to make policy and program decisions that best meet the needs of the Victorian community we serve.

Cultural diversity is an important dimension of our organisation's diversity that brings experiences and knowledge relevant to both the workplace culture and the provision of services to the Victorian Community.

The Victorian community expects that the public service ensures fairness and equity in employing staff and does not discriminate. This is because our work plays a significant role in helping Victoria grow and develop as a multicultural community that values diversity, and supports new immigrants and refugees to settle and flourish in our community.

## FOCUS 5: DISABILITY

***‘There are more than one million people with a disability living in Victoria. They have a wide range of conditions and impairments. What they have in common is a shared experience of encountering negative attitudes and barriers to full participation in everyday activities.’***

*State Disability Plan 2017-2020 (December 2016)*

Around one in five Australians has some form of disability. These are our existing employees, clients, service users, stakeholders, students and service providers.

Discrimination in the workplace is the number one barrier for people with a disability (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2016). Many wish to work, are capable and have the skills, however face individual and structural barriers to employment.

Research in Australia and overseas shows that workers with a disability are no more likely to be injured at work than other staff and there are no differences in performance and productivity. Staff with disability have fewer scheduled absences and increased length of service than those without (Morgan and Alexander, 2005; Linkow et al 2010).

A disability confident organisation is one that understands the relevance of disability to the organisation and identifies and removes barriers for individuals with disability. This includes organisational plans to prioritise disability employment issues, provision of flexible work arrangements and process for workplace adjustments. Training and support is also involved to ensure managers and staff have a better understanding of disability.

The implementation of the actions in this strategy will enable the Department to provide a more ‘disability confident’ workplace that provides a supportive, positive and inclusive environment for employees with a disability. These actions will also assist the Department to eliminate disability discrimination, direct, unintentional or indirect.

## FOCUS 6: GENDER EQUALITY

***‘We are all responsible for making gender equity a reality in our workplaces and this change needs to be led from the top. Real change becomes possible when we have open and challenging conversations about gender equity.’***

*Adam Fennessy, Secretary, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, in the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy 2016*

Workplace gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016).

Despite there being progress in recent years, the gender gap in the Australian workforce is still prevalent; women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men, and accumulate less retirement or superannuation savings. At the same time, men have less access to family-friendly policies such as parental leave and flexible working arrangements than women.

The aim of gender equality in the workplace is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, where all can achieve their ambitions, experience gender-balanced leadership, and value men’s and women’s contributions equally. This requires:

- challenging conscious and unconscious bias
- removal of barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce



- access to all occupations including leadership roles, regardless of gender
- elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender, particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities
- flexible work arrangements for those suffering from or caring for someone suffering from family violence.

## FOCUS 7: KOORIE

***‘The Department acknowledges and respects Aboriginal culture, its values and practices, and is committed to take actions to provide better support to Aboriginal people employed by the Department. These actions will develop a more inclusive culture through leadership, workforce practices and communication.’***

*Wiralung Ganai, DET, 2015*

Research has found that organisations have much work to do to create inclusive working environments where Koorie people feel safe to identify as such. Part of the problem is that many non-Indigenous Australians have little knowledge about Indigenous history and culture (DCA, 2013).

The Department has a strong commitment to Aboriginal inclusion as evidenced by its Aboriginal Inclusion Plans which support a more inclusive culture and provide better support to Koorie people employed by the Department. The Strategy lends support to the Department’s commitment to Aboriginal inclusion by promoting a workplace which respects Koorie culture, values and practices. Fundamental to these efforts is the provision of a safe and welcoming environment for everyone that ultimately contributes to making the Department a more inclusive workplace and an employer of choice for Koorie people.

More broadly the Department’s Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-26, Marrung, which is framed within context of the Education State, provides a long-term vision for Aboriginal inclusion including the aspiration of making *‘the success of Aboriginal Victorians the core business for all educational leaders’*.

The aim of the Strategy is to complement the Department’s approach to Aboriginal inclusion by increasing the visibility and support for Koorie culture across the Department and to facilitate career development opportunities that supports Koorie people to develop and progress their careers to match their aspirations and potential. These efforts are framed within the People Strategy which is dedicated to ‘empowering our people to be the best’.

The following actions will complement and support existing departmental commitments regarding Aboriginal inclusion.

## FOCUS 8: LGBTI

***‘With workplace equality now an integral part of many businesses in Australia, more and more companies are recognising the enormous value and benefits of creating an inclusive workplace for their LGBTI employees. All the available data shows that people will perform better and make a more productive contribution to a workplace if they can be themselves and feel safe at work. That is precisely why so many of Australia’s leading companies have recognised that workplace inclusion is not only good for their employees but also good for their business bottom line.’***

*Mark Orr, Former President, Aids Council of NSW, 2015*

Sexual orientation is often a sensitive topic in the workplace but is not something unique to those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. We all have a sexual orientation. Most people, identifying as heterosexual, don't even consider the fact that their sexual orientation is on display 24/7 and is brought to work on a daily basis (Pride in Diversity, 2016).

One in two LGBTI Australians hide their sexual identity in the workplace for fear being 'out' could damage their careers (Pride in Diversity, 2016). Furthermore, LGBTI people who are not 'out' at work worry about hiding their sexual orientation.

The 2016 Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) found that people in the public sector feel there is less support (than the private sector), and that their senior management are less likely to genuinely support inclusion initiatives (Pride in Diversity 2016).

The Department is committed to ensuring that we are raising awareness about the specific challenges and experiences LGBTI staff have at work, and to promote inclusion and make it safe at the Department for LGBTI staff to be who they are.

Raising awareness and showing support for LGBTI staff is essential to support a diverse and inclusive workplace. Addressing unconscious bias and discrimination are critical to creating a workplace that is inclusive and enables people to meet their potential.

## **FOCUS 9: GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY**

*'Workplaces are becoming increasingly age diverse... Just as we went through with gender and ethnic differences – what can we learn from that? This is not about assimilating the generations, it's about adaptability for the people and for the organisation's initiatives.'*

*Julie Cogin, Australian School of Business, 2011*

Negative stereotypes about people's abilities to undertake tasks can apply to young and older people. Age discrimination has the potential to shape how people are treated and perceived by others, limit a person's potential and can impact on their health and wellbeing (Willing to Work, Australian Human Rights Commission 2016). Addressing ageism upholds a person's rights and enables their full contribution to work and job satisfaction.

It is critical that we support mature age workers, that we do not make assumptions about their work life intentions, and that we support them in achieving their goals. In some cases, this may be by supporting staff who wish to further their career aspirations or to scale back their hours if they wish, encouraging them to take on mentoring roles in the organisation or work on specific projects that can tap into their extensive expertise.

It is also important to support younger staff by providing them with challenging and interesting work that helps them to realise their potential and to learn the skills they will need for the future. Staff in-between who might be experiencing a career plateau for example, or who are returning from study or family leave may also need support to consider their next career steps.

# THE WORKPLAN

There is much work to do. The Department will develop an annual workplan each year that will set the Department up to support and sustain the cultural and behavioural changes to come in the years ahead. The annual workplan has been organised around types of actions. Each focus area is then addressed within as follows:

## **Providing guidance and support**

This includes policies, guidance documents, tools and resources to support inclusive practice. It also includes having knowledgeable staff who can provide advice and influence decisions that will improve workforce diversity and inclusion.

## **Raising awareness**

This focuses on the range of communications options available to raise awareness of workforce diversity and inclusion, foster supportive attitudes and influence the workplace culture over time.

## **Building skills and capability**

Focuses on actions that provide learning and development opportunities for staff to improve their practice. This includes providing formal and informal development opportunities such as the 70:20:10 model – experience, engage, educate.

## **Building evidence and tracking progress**

Enhancing our ability to capture and access data and research that can inform our decisions about where action is needed, and help us to prioritise actions over the life of the strategy. This could include influencing current data collections or introducing new ones that will help us to track our progress and report on our achievements and opportunities.

## **Ensuring good governance**

Strengthen the governance around diversity and inclusion, including leadership buy-in and sponsorship. Develop governance processes that model accountability and champion respect and human rights. Be good public sector citizens by contributing to improving the WoVG diversity and inclusion agenda.

For a copy of the annual workplan go to Diversity and Inclusion on HRWeb.

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