Diversity & Inclusion Plan

2024–2028

Strategic Direction
2024 - 2029

The 2024 Diversity and Inclusion plan will help guide us to deliver our workforce and workplace culture objectives, by aligning with the WGCMA Strategic Objectives in the area of Organisational Capability & Capacity:

A high-functioning, well-supported and appropriately resourced staff group is a critical component of our campaign to improve the resilience and adaptability of our region. We commit to nurturing a workplace culture that provides a stimulating and fulfilling employee experience, securing and retaining the best people at all levels of leadership and governance in order to achieve our goals

WGCMA Strategic Vision

Healthy and resilient catchments, valued and cared for by the community, that underpin the environmental, social, cultural and economic wealth of the region.

Diversity & Inclusion Objective

Develop and nurture a collaborative workplace culture that is inclusive of different points of view, actively removes barriers to participation, and which fosters a culturally safe environment where everyone feels safe to express who they are at work.

Principles

Our principles will help guide us to deliver our Diversity and Inclusion Objective, this is done by:

- ✓ Ensuring equity of employment is underpinned by workforce policies that are actively inclusive and enrich diversity.

- ✓ Encouraging a flexible and supportive workplace that provides a balanced work/life environment.

- ✓ Our leaders value and inspire by being role models for respect, equity, diversity and inclusion.

- ✓ Identifying and removing barriers to ensure everyone can fully participate in the workplace and is empowered to contribute.

- ✓ Building stronger, sustainable relationships with First Nations communities and partners.

- ✓ Appreciating varied perspectives to enhance our capacity to gather knowledge from others and enhance our ability to share that knowledge.

Monitoring & Reporting

The implementation and progress of the actions within this Diversity and Inclusion Plan will be monitored in line with the Executive Managers' quarterly review schedule. These results will be reported to the Board Annually.

Why is Diversity and Inclusion Important?

Diversity encompasses the full range of human experience; the differences and unique individualities that exist between people in how they perceive and engage with society.

Diversity can take on many forms and may include characteristics such as age, cultural identity, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious beliefs, education, social identity, working style and life experiences.

Workplace diversity and inclusion is about recognising the varied capabilities, perspectives, and backgrounds that people may bring to work. An inclusive culture is one where everyone feels valued and respected, has equitable access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organisation. It is one where all individuals feel safe to share and express their identity and perspectives and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's goals.

Our ongoing workforce representation
as at 30 June 2024

Taken from VPS People Matter Survey 2023 ●
Refers to Executive and Senior leadership roles. ●

45
total number
of employees

62%
women
employees

52%
women in senior
leadership roles ●

22%
employees working
part time

87%
employees
working hybrid

12
employees aged
55 and over

96% Employees feel
culturally safe at work ●

92% Employees feel
they can be themselves
at work ●

Our Diversity
& Inclusion Journey

2017–2020

Developed policies and
procedures that support
Diversity & Inclusion

Established
opportunities
for flexible and
balanced work
arrangements

Delivered Multicultural
awareness training
to all staff

2021

Established development
opportunities for Women
to advance towards
leadership positions

Celebrated days of
significance for Diverse
groups

Supported participation
in the GEA Women in
Leadership forum

Delivered Diversity
& Inclusion in the
Workplace training to
all staff

2022

Development of Cultural
Awareness Training to be
delivered to Board and
Staff

We are recognised as
a trusted organisation
with Traditional Owner
partners

Continued to celebrate
days of cultural
significance

Participated in a range
of mentoring programs
including GEA WIL and
the Twinning program

2023

Implemented
internal and external
communication
activities to promote
LGBQTIA+ awareness
and inclusion

Delivered Neurodiversity
Awareness training to
all staff

A culture of inclusion is
embedded across the
organisation

Towards
2024

Diversity and inclusion
led by all Senior
Executives and
integrated into business
decision making

Recognised as
a safe organisation
for Neurodivergent
individuals

Our staff can contribute
fully and bring their
unique and best selves
to work

We are recognised as
a diverse and inclusive
organisation

Key Focus Areas

Action	Timeframe	Measure Increased Improvement
LGBTQIA+ • Continue to embed cultural change and advance inclusion of LGBTQIA+ staff in the workforce • Improved organisational understanding and skills to support LGBTQIA+ individuals • Increase visibility of LGBTQIA+ employees within the organisation • Continue to visibly support transgender and gender diverse people within our organisation and our community	Ongoing	• Improved representation of a diverse workforce • Above 70% agreement achieved for Employee Diversity & Inclusion Index People Matter Survey • We maintain a culturally safe workplace for LGBTQIA+ community • We have removed systemic barriers to recruitment and progression for any individuals
Disability and Neurodiversity • Improved organisational understanding and skills to support persons with disability or neurodiverse individuals • Improve accessibility in our workspaces and our events to prevent disability being a barrier to participation • Improved career opportunities, including the use of Affirmative Measures • Improve accessibility during recruitment practices to reduce barriers of participation • Review business practices to include workplace adjustments and to embed conversations about workplace adjustments into all stages of the employee lifecycle	Ongoing	• Barriers are removed to create work environments where people are enabled to openly identify as neurodiverse or persons with a disability • Improved inclusive accessibility in our workspaces is embedded and considered in all processes and programs • Above 70% agreement achieved for Employee Diversity & Inclusion Index People Matter Survey • There are no systemic barriers to recruitment and progression for anyone • We have removed barriers to performance and support career development for all employees, including people with disability
First Nations People • Embed and integrate cultural competency and safety principles into all our processes, programs and people • Improve the understanding of First Nation cultures in the workplace to support the development of culturally-safe workspaces and services • Identify the barriers to career advancement for First Nation peoples within the CMA and embed appropriate measures to address these barriers • Increase recruitment and career advancement support through partnerships • Continue collaborating with network agencies to improve accessibility to sector jobs and events to prevent barriers to participation • Improve our workforce planning capabilities and link this to the career management of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce • Continue to deliver the HR Inclusion Forums as a way of building cross agency innovation and information sharing networks • Explore options to standardise cultural leave provisions in Enterprise Agreements	5 years - Ongoing	• Increased First Nations People workforce participation (through direct employment) • Increased economic opportunities/ employment within the TOCs from procurement • Maintain high levels of employee participation with cultural competency initiatives • Employees understand the practical aspects of Self Determination and our role supporting it • There are no systemic barriers to recruitment and progression for anyone • We have removed barriers to performance and support career development for all employees

Action	Timeframe	Measure Increased Improvement
Cultural & Linguistic Diversity (CALD) • Improve visibility of CALD representation in our workforce across all levels including Senior Executive Champions • Build leadership through embedding cultural (CALD) capability training employees • Increase ethnic and racial inclusion with opportunities for staff to share lived experiences • Support Cultural Diversity to ensure that the standard for culturally respectful and safe workplaces is upheld	5 years - Ongoing	• Above 70% agreement achieved for Employee Diversity & Inclusion Index People Matter Survey • We provide fair opportunities for all, irrespective of cultural or racial background • We have considered and removed systemic barriers to recruitment and progression • We have achieved cultural capability to lead and manage culturally diverse teams effectively and demonstrate we are a model employer • Our attitudes and behaviours with respect to cultural diversity clearly reflect the VPS Values and Code of Conduct
Age Inclusion • Increase awareness of age inclusion to attract and retain the skills and experience of workers aged over 55 • Increase structured opportunities to leverage valuable knowledge and experience with workers aged under 35 • Create awareness of certain life milestones and how they may affect employees in the workplace • Strengthen HR support services when individuals are exiting the CMA including career planning and transition to retirement plans • Provide ongoing access to superannuation resources and awareness sessions to all employees to understand superannuation and impacts of career and life events	5 years - Ongoing	• Above 70% achieved for Employee AGE INDEX Victorian Public Sector Workforce Data Report • High levels of employees participating in initiatives are maintained • Above 70% agreement achieved for No Barriers to Success at work Index People Matter Survey • We have removed systemic barriers to recruitment and progression for any individuals
Gender Equality • Continue building a more diverse gender representation in management and leadership roles • Continue to encourage women in leadership development opportunities • Review WGCMA parental leave provisions, with a view to create more flexible parental leave entitlements to enable a greater choice for parents • We are proactive in offering parental leave and flexible work arrangements to all employees including those with caring responsibilities • Ensure gender diversity in selection processes, including internal processes and EOIs. Selection panels are gender-balanced and are equipped to call-out any potential bias during the process • Increase efforts to attract people of different genders into traditionally gendered roles • Review internal and outward facing communication for gender inclusive language and images. This will include agency intranet, internet, internal policy documents and recruitment ads. • Review and strengthen approaches to preventing and responding to bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace	5 years - Ongoing	• Maintain and achieve at least 50% women in senior leadership roles over the life of the plan • Maintain high levels of women participating in leadership development initiatives • Parental leave is normalised and accessible for all genders. This includes having more men work part-time and/or take parental leave • We have removed systemic barriers to recruitment and progression for any individuals • We will aim to have zero reportable instances of sexual harassment in the workplace