



Public Sector
Commission

*We're working for
Western Australia.*

People with Disability

Action Plan to Improve WA Public
Sector Employment Outcomes

2020–2025





We acknowledge the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to their cultures, and to elders past and present.

Public Sector Commission
2 Havelock Street West Perth WA 6005
T: 6552 8500 E: admin@psc.wa.gov.au
WA.gov.au

This publication can be copied in whole or part with due acknowledgement.

Copies are available in different formats on request.

August 2020

PSC2064649

ISBN: 978-0-7307-0295-5

From the Minister

Increasing employment and development opportunities for people with disability in the public sector is a Government priority.

I first released the People with Disability Action Plan in December last year. Since then, broad consultation has been undertaken on an overarching Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy. We have also developed five complementary action plans for specific diversity groups.



As a result, some new actions have been added and other actions have been updated in this plan.

We also have new data on the working age population of people with disability - now at 5.5%.

Unfortunately, the representation of people with disability employed in the sector has remained low.

The McGowan Government is committed to a public sector that is more confident and capable in employing, retaining and developing people with disability.

As the State's largest employer, the Government wants – indeed requires – the sector to lead by example. That's why we remain fully committed to our target of 5% by the end of 2025.

It is my expectation that the work will be done and this target will be met.

There is an abundance of evidence showing that employing people with disability makes good business sense, with increased productivity and decreased absenteeism.

With the right leadership, support and actions, I am confident that greater workforce representation can be achieved.

Stephen Dawson MLC
Minister for Disability Services

From the Commissioner

Workforce diversity is not only about everyone being treated with dignity and respect, it's key to improving productivity and innovation in organisations.

It's also important for our workforce – our people – to have diversity of thought. This means different and more expansive thinking beyond our worldviews.

To shift the focus of diversity from compliance to workforce imperative, we have to change gears. We must move from a singular focus on awareness raising to deliberate action and intervention – and see this move as both a personal and collective responsibility.

This action plan is part of the Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020–2025. The twin goals of the strategy are to increase the representation of people from different backgrounds at all levels across our sector, and to ensure all staff in the sector experience a sense of belonging and inclusion in the work environment.

Like this action plan that focuses on people with disability, there are also action plans for women, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people and people of diverse sexualities and genders.

There is no suggestion that achieving greater workforce diversity and inclusion is easy. However, we must do more to take full advantage of the opportunities that having more people with disability across the sector represent in our work to deliver services to the community of Western Australia.



Sharyn O'Neill
Public Sector Commissioner

Aspirational target for people with disability

This plan aims to increase the representation of people with disability employed in the public sector to 5% and support inclusive work environments.

While this target is aspirational – and ambitious – progress is achievable over time if it is driven from the top.

The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics disability, ageing and carers data (2018) shows that 5.5% of working age people (15 to 64 years old) in Western Australia are considered to have a moderate or mild core activity limitation.

This ABS definition of disability is currently used by the sector. It should be noted that the definition of disability varies across Australian jurisdictions so comparisons are not possible. However, in this plan there is an action for the Public Sector Commission to work with stakeholders to contemporise the definition.

The target was based on matching the 2015 Western Australian working age population of 5%, which was the most recent data when the plan was originally released in 2019.

In 2020, the representation of people with a disability across the sector was 1.5%, where it has remained for some years.

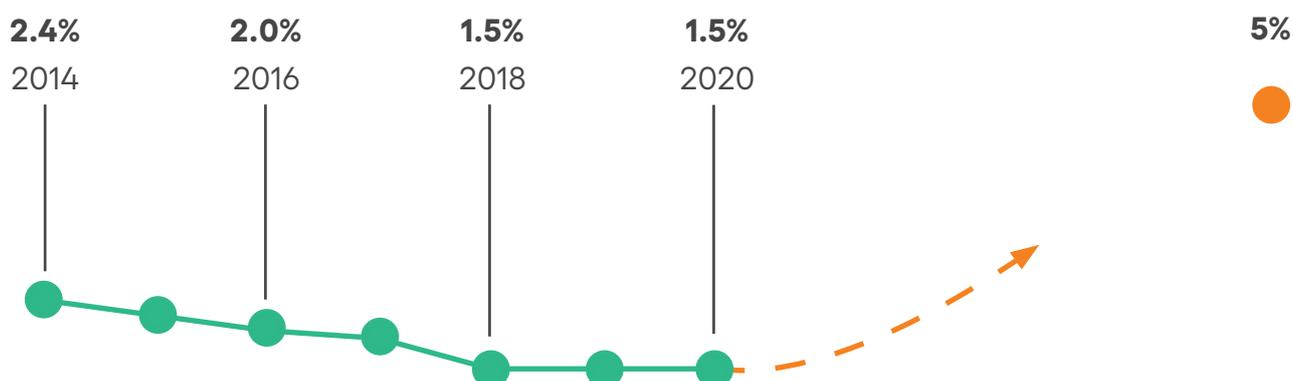
Focused effort is needed to turn this around. It will take time to see an increase as actions are implemented and employment outcomes improve.

Data reform work across the sector (see the Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for more details) includes reviewing collection, definitions and methods applied to diversity groups. This work will be used for the ongoing refinement and implementation of the strategy.

At the same time, the next ABS Census in 2021 will provide more contemporary population data and projections.

Workforce diversity targets, including targets for people with disability, will be reviewed in line with the data reforms and new Census data.

Such reforms are critical to develop a complete picture of the workforce and changes over time to better shape workforce strategy, policy and practice.



Key actions to achieve the target

Increasing the representation of people with disability employed in the sector requires sustained effort, a different way of doing things and stronger accountability.

All agencies are responsible for working towards the aspirational target. Actions taken also require collaboration with people with disability whose ideas and participation are essential in making our sector as inclusive as possible.

Actions for the Public Sector Commission are described in this plan, together with a suite of actions for agencies to implement.

Most value can be gained by considering actions across the four improvement areas, rather than actions in just one or two areas.

As agencies have differing needs and contexts, they should adopt those actions appropriate to their circumstances in ways best suited to their needs.

This action plan has four key areas for improvement that flow across the strategy and other action plans:

1

Educate and empower

A knowledge and capability uplift is a priority consideration in workforce planning for people with disability.

2

Attract and develop

Recruitment and development practices proactively identify and support the talent of people with disability.

3

Lead and build

There is deliberate leadership to build organisation cultures where all people are treated fairly and respectfully.

4

Account and celebrate

Responsibility is taken for improving the representation and inclusion of people with disability in public sector employment.

1 Educate and empower

Actions for the Commission

Provide tools

- 1.1 Work with people with disability to provide evidence-based tools to increase knowledge of and confidence in inclusive recruitment and retention.
- 1.2 Provide advice on streamlining the onboarding of people with disability when they move between agencies.
- 1.3 Supply agencies with equity index data, where available, to better understand their workforce profile.
- 1.4 Develop a guide to ensure managers and staff are aware of and promote the use of flexible working opportunities.

Encourage sharing of diversity status

- 1.5 Design safe and appropriate ways to encourage staff to share information about their disability.

Recruit for diversity

- 1.6 Provide guidance on the use of provisions in the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to specifically target employment of people with disability.

Use data analytics

- 1.7 Provide agencies with comparative data to support greater insight into performance and workforce planning.
- 1.8 Participate in the interjurisdictional public sector working group for people with disability to explore consistent definitions for national comparisons, identify issues, and share good practice

Partner for greater impact

- 1.9 Support cross-sector forums to share innovative ideas and practices to improve progression and employment of people with disability.
- 1.10 Partner with education institutions to provide opportunities through work experience, internships and other career pathways.

Build employee networks

- 1.11 Initiate a new support network to connect people with disability working in the sector with collegial support.

Build disability confidence

- 1.12 Develop a disability confident employment program in partnership with the National Disability Service.
- 1.13 Work with agencies to pilot the Disability Confident Recruitment accreditation program.

1 Educate and empower

Actions for agencies

Make better use of data

- 1.1 Use public sector people with disability workforce and community representation data to set specific agency targets, and to inform recruitment and workforce planning.

Learn to target

- 1.2 Trial the implementation of strategies under sections 66S and 66R of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to target recruitment and development opportunities to increase representation and progression of people with disability in public employment.

Encourage sharing of diversity status

- 1.3 Explore different avenues (such as inclusive messaging, induction, mentoring and surveys) to provide regular opportunities for staff to share information about their disability.

Design workplaces

- 1.4 Design workplaces and systems that support identified adjustments, to enable people with disability to perform their duties.

Become disability recruitment confident

- 1.5 Implement 'disability confident recruiter' training, and encourage participation in shared learning opportunities to improve awareness and understanding.

Establish agency networks

- 1.6 Consider establishing an agency network for staff with disability for collegial support, and to contribute to the review and design of practices that impact employment outcomes.

Establish community links

- 1.7 Consider establishing links with disability community groups to improve service outcomes.

Encourage co-design

- 1.8 Include people with disability in the review and design of agency practices that impact employment outcomes.





2 Attract and develop

Actions for the Commission

Strengthen the rules

- 2.1 Remove opportunity for discriminatory practices to occur when reviewing recruitment, selection and appointment legislation, instruments and policies.
- 2.2 Provide agencies with information on inclusive practices to promote the retention of staff with disability.

Partner to extend reach

- 2.3 Implement processes to distribute all public sector vacancies to disability employment providers.
- 2.4 Partner with Jobs and Skills Centres and disability employment service providers and networks to attract job seekers with disability.

Work towards removing bias

- 2.5 Work with agencies to provide guidance on initiatives that name and remove bias such as de-identified job applications.

Set targets for talent pools

- 2.6 Ensure new sector-wide talent pools include people with disability.

Strengthen talent pipeline

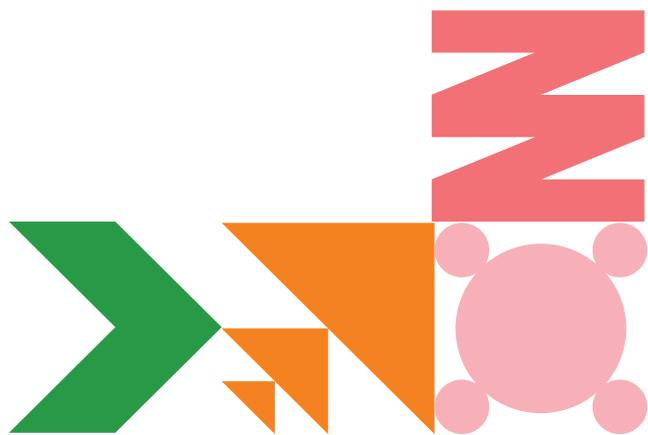
- 2.7 Review mechanisms such as RecruitAbility to provide opportunities for people with disability to obtain job interviews, work experience and support role matching to skills.
- 2.8 Expand numbers in vocational training (cadetships, traineeships and other employment-based training pathways and programs) for people with disability through examination of alternative funding models.

Move towards direct employment

- 2.9 Explore direct employment pathways for graduates of public sector traineeships and other programs.

Promote the sector

- 2.10 Promote the public sector as an employer of choice for people with disability.



2 Attract and develop

Actions for agencies

Identify barriers and develop solutions

- 2.1 Examine agency job applicant data and information to identify and address any barriers to the recruitment and progression of people with disability.
- 2.2 Promote the use of disability employment service providers and networks to attract job seekers.
- 2.3 Conduct accessibility audits and modify or improve workplaces and equipment for the inclusion of people with disability.

Work towards removing bias

- 2.4 Develop initiatives to remove unconscious bias in recruitment, training and workforce practice.

Provide appropriate support

- 2.5 Work with employee assistance program providers to ensure programs are disability confident.

Help create jobs

- 2.6 Identify places on traineeship and graduate programs to increase participation of people with disability.

Advertise opportunities broadly

- 2.7 Distribute all advertised positions through Jobs and Skills WA and other disability employment providers, networks and on social media.

Expand opportunities

- 2.8 Proactively give people with disability opportunities to participate in mobility and development programs such as peer mentoring, university placements, secondments, internships, work experience and projects.

3 Lead and build

Actions for the Commission

Lead from the top

- 3.1 Conduct an annual review for the Public Sector Leadership Council to consider progress against the aspirational target.

Update definition

- 3.2 Work with stakeholders to review the definition of disability, and ensure a revised definition is adopted across all information systems and platforms.

Target executive decision making

- 3.3 Increase the representation of people with disability on boards, committees and other decision making forums.

Co-design and advise

- 3.4 Create a forum for staff with disability to inform public service policy and direction.

Build diversity into planning

- 3.5 Provide model workforce and diversity plans for agency use that feature strong measures for increasing employment and progression of people with disability.

Model flexibility

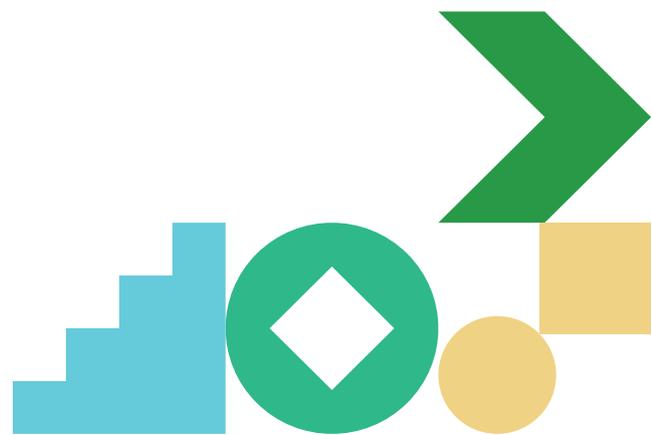
- 3.6 Give guidance to agencies on contemporary workplace flexibility practices such as customised employment, job redesign and workplace adjustments to increase employment of people with disability.

Improve culture

- 3.7 Crowdfund innovative ideas for improving employment outcomes for people with disability.

Promote respect

- 3.8 Explore the development of a respectful relationships program to support the sector.



3 Lead and build

Actions for agencies

Lead change

- 3.1 Deliberately plan for people with disability in workforce and diversity planning activities, and link strategies to business and operational plans.
- 3.2 Reinforce zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment, and provide a clear complaints pathway for staff to feel confident in raising issues.

Challenge inappropriate behaviours

- 3.3 Ensure senior leaders act as role models, demonstrating respectful behaviour and challenging inappropriate language and attitudes.

Target executive decision making

- 3.4 Increase the representation of people with disability on boards, committees and other decision making forums.

Sponsor

- 3.5 Identify executive champions to promote the importance of people with disability in the workforce, and give visibility to the commitment of executive.
- 3.6 Provide supervisors with support to mentor and coach people with disability.

Review policies and practices

- 3.7 Ensure policies and practices do not discriminate against people with disability, and published materials are inclusive.
- 3.8 Where possible, use Australian Disability Enterprises to deliver contracted services.

Support staff

- 3.9 Review and implement flexible work options such as job redesign and workplace adjustments to enable accessible and inclusive workplaces for people with disability.
- 3.10 Implement actions in the Safe Spaces guide for staff who may be experiencing family violence, and ensure an adequate number of staff are trained as contact officers.
- 3.11 Support managers to have the capability and confidence to manage flexible working arrangements.

Plan for adjustments

- 3.12 Support and enable reasonable adjustments for people with disability when planning agency budgets.

Build an inclusive workplace

- 3.13 Build a safe environment so staff can identify as having disability.



4 Account and celebrate

Actions for the Commission

Listen and respond

- 4.1 Introduce a requirement for agencies to include staff perceptions of workplace inclusiveness in annual reports.

Set targets

- 4.2 Establish targets to increase the representation of people with disability, and monitor sector and agency progress.

Aim higher

- 4.3 Require agencies to set goals to shift the equity index for staff with disability to ensure they are increasingly represented in mid to high salary groupings.

Account for progress

- 4.4 Add diversity targets for staff with disability into the CEO Delivery and Performance Agreement and annual reporting guidelines.
- 4.5 Identify opportunities for agencies to report on innovative initiatives that promote the inclusion of staff with disability such as the use of flexible working arrangements.

Improve use of data

- 4.6 Review qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies to ensure the best information about the employment of people with disability is gathered and used to inform improvement.
- 4.7 Work with colleagues in other jurisdictions to ensure alignment of data collection, reporting and activities.

Share good stories

- 4.8 Publish stories and share initiatives about better employment and inclusion outcomes across a range of communications channels.



4 Account and celebrate

Actions for agencies

Work towards targets

- 4.1 Set explicit expectations across the agency to work towards the aspirational target for people with disability.
- 4.2 Set a target to improve the equity index, ensuring staff with disability are increasingly represented in mid to high salary groupings.

Report progress

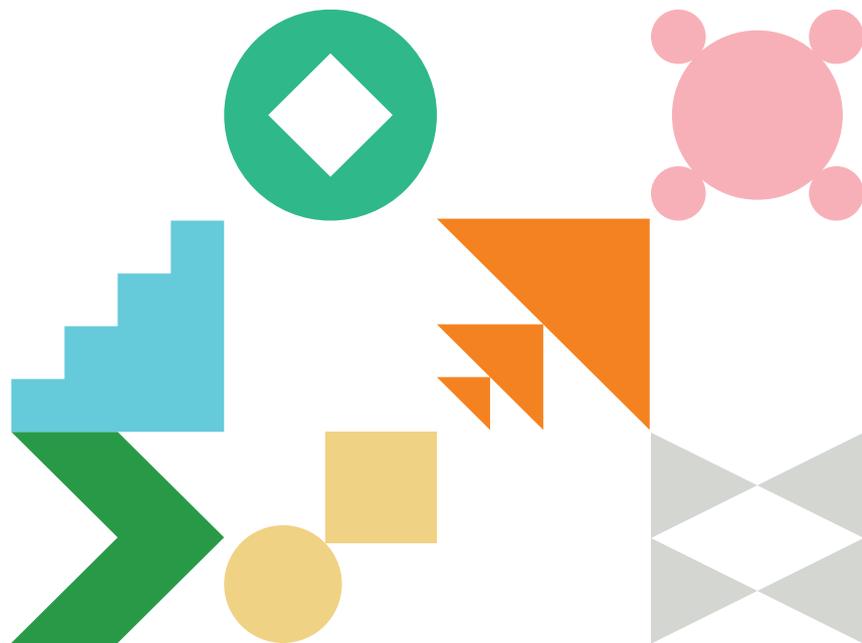
- 4.3 Monitor and report progress against the aspirational employment target for people with disability, including in the CEO Delivery and Performance Agreement.

Celebrate

- 4.4 Celebrate events such as the International Day of People with Disability.
- 4.5 Commit to proactively seeking nominations for State and national awards to celebrate the achievements of staff with disability.

Share success

- 4.6 Highlight positive stories and achievements of staff with disability through internal and external communications, including annual and other reports.



Principles, monitoring performance, data and definitions

Principles

Sustainable improvement in workforce diversification is driven by four principles guiding agency actions.

Leadership

Public sector leaders are visible advocates who take strong and deliberate action to drive improvements in workforce diversification, and lead a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment.

Collaboration

Public sector agencies work together to improve diversity employment outcomes and share best practice.

Accountability

The head of each public sector agency is accountable for improving workforce diversification.

Cultural inclusion

The public sector has culturally inclusive workplaces where staff are supported and valued for their contribution, and where managers are diversity aware.

Monitoring performance

Equal employment opportunity and diversity related information collected by the Commission will continue to be used to monitor progress against the targets and action plans. Outcomes will be reported through the state of the sector report and other workforce reporting.

Under the strategy, the Commission will work with key stakeholders to identify and refine reporting obligations currently required across multiple agencies for identified diversity groups.

Data

All public sector data used in this strategy and the supporting action plans are based on the March point in time series.

There are further [data definitions and methods](#) on our website.

Definitions

The terms used in this strategy and the action plans are defined below.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

People who identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Culturally and linguistically diverse people

People who are born in identified countries which are not mainly English speaking.

People of diverse sexualities and genders

People of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.

People with disability

People who have a mild or moderate core activity limitation.

Women in the SES

Women who are part of the Senior Executive Service.

Youth

People who are aged 24 years and under.

