

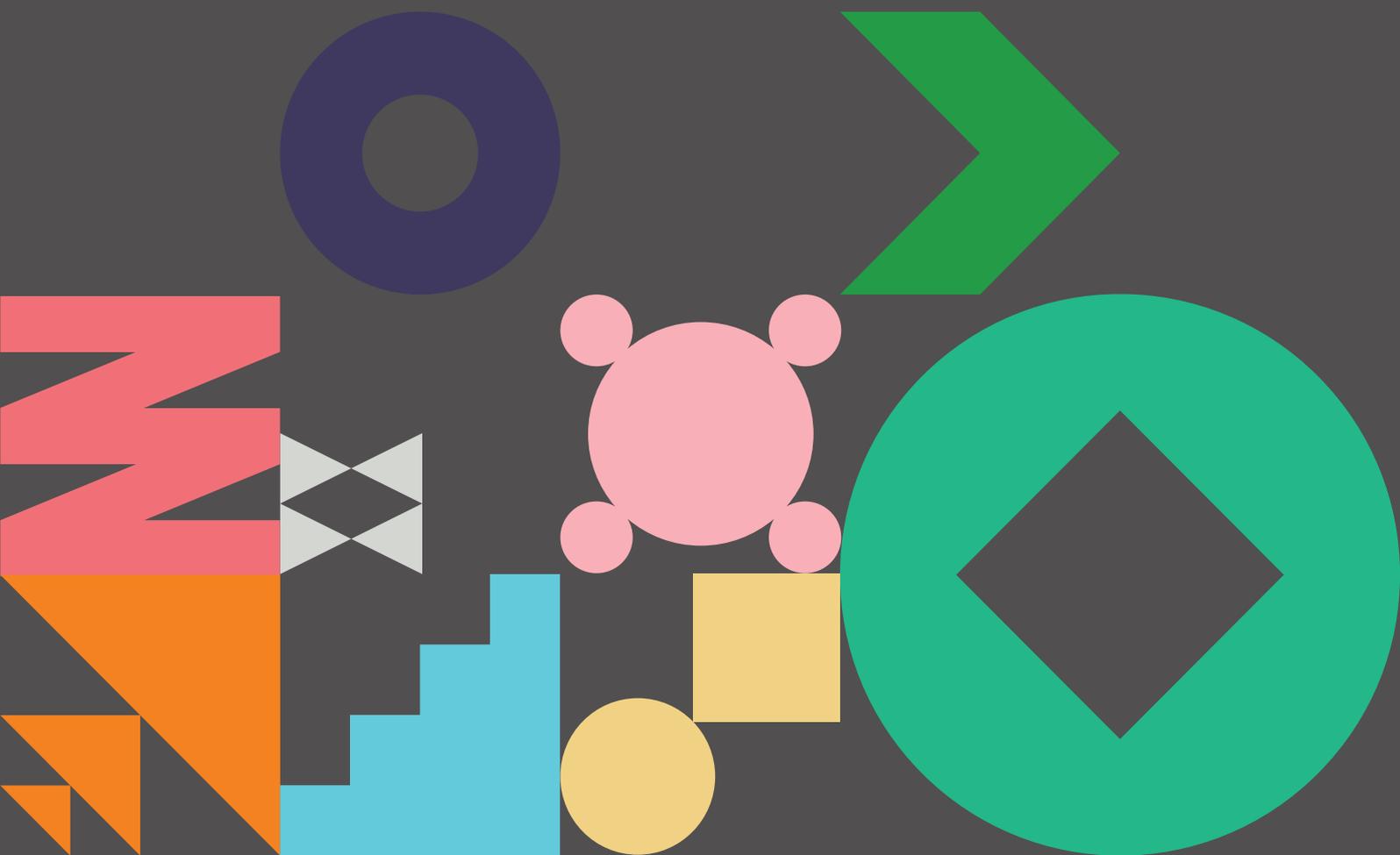


Public Sector  
Commission

*We're working for  
Western Australia.*

# Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy

for WA Public Sector Employment  
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.

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# From the Premier

There is clear evidence that diversity and inclusion in the workforce are key to improving productivity and innovation.

More diverse organisations are better able to win top talent, improve their customer orientation, increase employee satisfaction and get greater returns.



Organisations that are able to attract and retain diverse talent – diversity of gender, ethnicity/race, age and sexual orientation as well as diversity of experience such as a global mindset and cultural fluency – are likely to have an advantage.

This strategy positions diversity and inclusion as aspects of the public sector that can be, indeed need to be, developed and extended.

It clearly focuses agencies across the sector to play their part, with central support and resources.

It sets aspirational targets to drive change. I know that moving the needle on diversity is hard and I do not shy away from the fact that these targets are ambitious.

Visible commitment from the leadership team of every agency is needed for this strategy to have the improvement impact we want.

For the public sector, improvement means even better services for Western Australians – and my Government wants the people of this State to have access to the very best services we can provide.

Mark McGowan MLA  
Premier of Western Australia

# Diversity and inclusion in public sector employment matter

There is growing consensus internationally that pursuing diversity and inclusion in public sector workforces can help achieve important outcomes in major policy areas, advance reform agendas and promote good governance practices.

It can also improve relations between the government and citizens, and strengthen trust in government. With our environment changing rapidly, and the needs and expectations of the people we serve becoming more dynamic, diversity and inclusion can be powerful levers to better understand and meet these needs.

## Better for staff and customers

Research shows that organisations which value diversity and inclusion achieve greater staff satisfaction, better customer service outcomes and improved decision making and performance. The workforce is more connected, motivated and productive.

The challenge is how to do this in a way that is coherent, responsive and sustainable. It also demands a strong and committed leadership to motivate people, promote sector-wide adaptation and maintain the impetus for change.

## Sector-wide approach

This strategy and six supporting action plans have been developed with input from agencies of all shapes, sizes and contexts – and other stakeholder organisations and groups. Together, they set out a sector-wide approach to workforce diversification and inclusion.

They also link with broader reform objectives. This is imperative as diversity and inclusion initiatives cannot succeed in an isolated strategic context.

## Reality of today

The reality is that representation of diverse groups in our sector continues to be low compared to the wider community, particularly at senior levels. This is despite a range of initiatives and interventions over a number of years.

As a sector, we can be leading or lagging. This strategy firmly positions us to lead, and sees diversity and inclusion having tangible benefits and outcomes. It sets aspirational targets that are challenging but crucial to articulate and aim towards.

There is no suggestion that achieving greater diversity and inclusion is easy. However, we must do more to take full advantage of the opportunities diversity and inclusion represent.

## Agencies as leaders

This strategy offers each agency in our sector – and thereby the sector as a whole – the opportunity to become a leader in diversity and an inclusive employer where the qualities, contributions and perspectives of every individual are valued.

Collectively, through the strategy and action plans, we can make the sector a place where people from all walks of life are empowered to better serve the community.

Given the higher returns that diversity and inclusion are known to bring, we must invest our time and effort now.

# Facts on diversity in the public sector workforce

Public sector workforce data helps provide a picture of employment trends for diverse groups.

**Women** have represented almost three quarters of the public sector workforce over the past seven years.

Over the same period, progress has been made on the representation of **women in the Senior Executive Service (SES)** with a 11.9 percentage point rise to 42.5% in 2020.

**Young people** aged 24 years and under have decreased in representation in the public sector workforce over the past seven years, with representation at 4.1% in 2020.

Representation of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** in the public sector workforce has remained at 2.7% for the past five years.

Representation of **culturally and linguistically diverse people** was about 12.5% of the public sector workforce between 2014 and 2017, rising from 13.1% in 2018 to 13.9% in 2020.

Representation of **people with disability** has trended down from 2014 to 2017 and has remained at 1.5% of the public sector workforce since 2018.

## Public sector diversity profile 2014–2020

	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %
Women	71.8	72.2	72.3	72.7	72.4	72.8	72.7
Women in the Senior Executive Service (SES)	30.6	31.7	32.9	33.6	33.3	36.0	42.5
Youth (24 years and under)	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Culturally and linguistically diverse people	12.4	12.4	12.6	12.7	13.1	13.3	13.9
People with disability	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.5

Figures based on March quarterly data.

# Strategy to increase diversity and inclusion

This strategy represents a collaborative effort across the public sector on workforce diversification and inclusion over the next five years.

The Public Sector Commission plays an important leadership and coordination role across the sector. However, the most significant work is done by and in agencies.

The strategy encompasses action plans for identified diversity groups as well as specific and aspirational targets for some of these groups to increase their representation in public sector employment.

The identified diversity groups are:

- women
- youth
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- people with disability
- people of diverse sexualities and genders.

There are aspirational targets for the representation of women in the SES, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and people with disability.

While these aspirational targets are ambitious, progress is achievable over time if driven from the top.

The strategy has been informed by data, research and broad consultation with agency leaders and staff as well as subject matter experts and stakeholders committed to diversity and inclusion.

Over time, the strategy also aims to deliver the associated benefits of better attraction and retention of talented people; a public sector culture that is viewed positively; and more satisfied customers, clients and stakeholders.

## Twin goals of the strategy

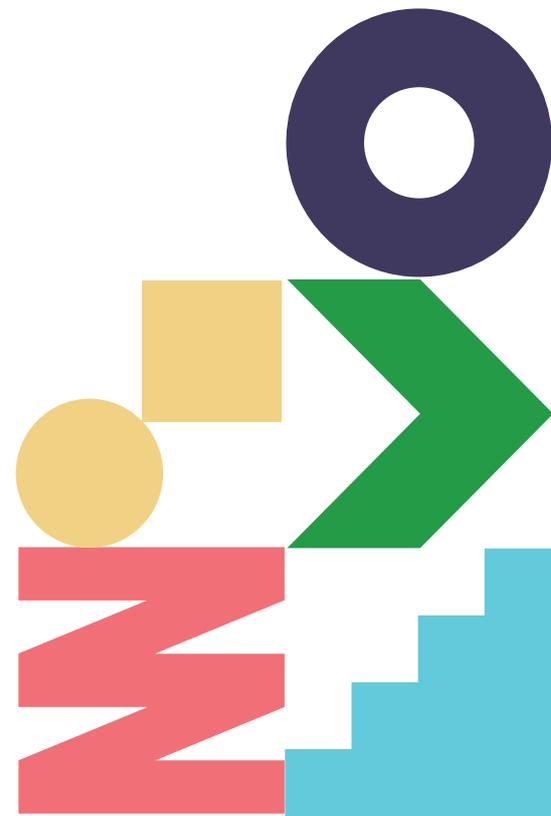
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Increase the representation of people from different backgrounds at all levels across our sector (workforce diversification)

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Ensure all staff in the sector experience a sense of belonging and inclusion in the work environment (workforce inclusion)

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# Aspirational targets for diversity groups

With this strategy positioning the sector to lead, the targets for identified diversity groups are deliberately aspirational and transcend the five-year window to the end of 2025.

The targets are intended to drive change, monitor the effectiveness of actions and measure achievements. They reflect a long term ambition to increase the representation of diversity groups in public sector employment.

Indeed, the targets can also help monitor and measure inclusion. As staff feel more comfortable in the workforce, they are more likely to share their diversity status.

The targets have been set through benchmarking Australian and Western Australian workforce and population data, considering current public sector representation and projecting the progress required to achieve workforce diversification.

Much of the data used to set the targets are based on the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics Census which was in 2016, and extrapolation from the 2006 and 2011 Census data.

The next ABS Census in 2021 will provide more contemporary population data and projections. In the lead up to this, the Commission is undertaking a comprehensive review of sector data collection, definitions and methods to ensure they are up to date, inclusive and fit for purpose.

With a contemporary approach, the relevance, timeliness, accuracy, coherence, interpretability and accessibility of data can be improved.

Workforce diversity targets will be reviewed in line with the data reforms and new Census data.

This is central in shaping workforce strategy, policy and practice. It is also critical in developing a complete picture of the public sector workforce and changes over time.

## Aspirational targets

Women in the SES	50.0%
Youth	5.8%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	3.7%
Culturally and linguistically diverse people	15.5%
People with disability	5.0%

# Key actions to achieve the twin goals

Improved workforce diversification and inclusion across the sector requires sustained effort, a different way of doing things and stronger accountability.

All agencies are responsible for further diversifying the workforce. Any actions taken are greatly strengthened when the ideas and participation of staff from diverse backgrounds are a key feature. This is important in making our sector as inclusive as possible.

Supporting this strategy are action plans for each of the six identified diversity groups. Some plans include aspirational targets.

Actions for the Commission are described in each plan together with a suite of actions for agencies to implement.

Most value can be gained from this strategy 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.

The strategy also provides a common language for how we talk about diversity and inclusion across the public sector.

**This strategy has four key areas for improvement that flow across the supporting action plans for six diverse groups:**

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## 1

### Educate and empower

A knowledge and capability uplift in diversity is a priority consideration in workforce planning.

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## 2

### Attract and develop

Recruitment and development practices proactively identify and support the talent of diverse groups.

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## 3

### Lead and build

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

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## 4

### Account and celebrate

Responsibility is taken for improving workforce diversification and inclusion.

# Principles, monitoring performance, data and definitions

## Principles

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

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### 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.

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### Collaboration

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

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### Accountability

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

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### 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.

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## 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.

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### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

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

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### Culturally and linguistically diverse people

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

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### People of diverse sexualities and genders

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

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### People with disability

People who have a mild or moderate core activity limitation.

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### Women in the SES

Women who are part of the Senior Executive Service.

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### Youth

People who are aged 24 years and under.

