



Multicultural Plan 2023-2026

Vision

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) is committed to its multicultural vision to engage fairly and equitably everyone across our services, partnerships and workforce.

Our *Multicultural Plan 2023-2026* (multicultural plan), the department's second, will help us achieve this goal. The plan lays out our actionable commitments to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people over the next three years, complete with delivery timelines and expectations.

We will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming society for all Western Australians and maximise the benefits cultural diversity can bring to the community, economy, environment and our department.

We are building positive relationships between the department and our communities with the goal of ensuring a healthy environment and sustainable water resources throughout Western Australia (WA). One way we will achieve this is by engaging with, and listening to, the CALD community and using this feedback to create a department and workplace where everyone feels welcomed and accepted.

As a department, we will support and inspire each other to be our whole and best selves, enabling us to thrive and reach our full potential. We celebrate, acknowledge, respect and embrace difference, because we know that when people from diverse backgrounds with different points of view work together, we add the most value and reflect the community we serve.

We acknowledge the First Australians of the land upon which we live and work across WA, and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present. We recognise the practice of intergenerational care for Country and its relevance to our work as water and environmental managers.



Scope

Our multicultural plan underpins our overarching commitment to creating an inclusive and diverse workforce. We acknowledge that discrimination and oppression on the basis of race, culture and language has resulted in the unjust treatment of people and communities, marginalising them and negatively impacting their ability to contribute to, and experience all of, the myriad benefits that come from societal inclusion.

We also acknowledge, and do not seek to minimise, the complexities of diversity and equality. We recognise that intersectionality – when people experience overlapping social categorisation of race, class, religion, ability, gender and/or sexual orientation, for example – creates multi-layered and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage.

Our dedicated [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-24](#) and [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029](#) demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation within our workplace, as well as across WA. They establish best approaches to make the state a place where all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and forge their own futures from a secure foundation.

Elements of this plan are relevant to Aboriginal people as well as people from migrant and refugee backgrounds; however, the key focus of this plan is people from CALD backgrounds.

Principles

Our multicultural plan is built on five key principles that inform and guide how we support inclusive society. These principles, outlined below, will provide the foundation for our guidance notes, tools and educational materials which will be developed as part of our plan:

- **We build relationships and trust through honesty, transparency, fairness, and equity**

We begin engagement early and build it into our department's processes. We are clear and open about the purpose and scope of the engagement, including what can and cannot be influenced during this process. We communicate regularly to make sure our approach is best practice and continues to work well throughout the engagement process.

- **We are inclusive and uphold civic values**

We are respectful and uphold individual freedom and dignity for all members of society. In our work and the delivery of our services, we value cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity so that everyone can feel they belong to the community. We work to address racism and discrimination at the individual and institutional, systemic level.



- **We are flexible and fair**

We are aware of cultural complexities and diversity within and between groups. We also respect the variety of aspirations and visions for the future of the environment and individual communities. We recognise the First Australians of the land upon which we live and work across WA, and seek to ensure everyone receives equal and fair treatment and protection under the law.

- **We listen, learn, and seek opportunities**

We take the time to listen and learn. We work to develop a shared understanding of each other's obligations, knowledge, concerns and aspirations. We seek opportunities for two-way capacity development to meet the department's responsibilities and support community aspirations for the future.

- **We coordinate and connect**

We recognise and support existing community relationships and protocols. We also acknowledge, and work with, other state, commonwealth and private organisations – and their initiatives – where possible.

Our cultural and linguistic diversity

WA is home to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with 32 per cent of its population born overseas, the highest of any state or territory in Australia.¹ In addition, 75 per cent of our population identify as having non-Australian ancestry.

Our department's inaugural DWERiversity census, undertaken as part of our first multicultural plan, revealed that of the 650 employees who responded:

- **35.1 per cent** were born overseas
- **13.1 per cent** said English was not their first language
- **24.5 per cent** speak another language in addition to English
- **17.7 per cent** said both of their parents came from a non-English speaking background (NESB)
- **7.2 per cent** have one parent from a NESB.

In 2023, our census program was replaced by the WA Public Sector Census. This inaugural census ran from 13 March to 12 April 2023, with 753 departmental employees participating (equating to 76 per cent of our staff).

This is the largest response rate by our workforce to a survey to date.

Detailed analysis of the department's data in relation to CALD groups will be undertaken later in calendar year 2023.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021, Cultural diversity of Australia, available at: [Cultural diversity of Australia | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/Cultural-diversity-of-Australia)



Outcomes from our Multicultural Plan 2020-2022

Our inaugural multicultural plan concluded this financial year. It was guided by the principles and desired outcomes established in the State Government's [Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework \(WAMPF\)](#).

It committed to actions spanning policy, programs, and services areas of our business – seeking to promote economic, social, cultural, civic, and political participation.

It delivered tangible actions against three main policy areas of the WAMPF:

1. Harmonious and inclusive communities.
2. Culturally responsive policies, programs and services.
3. Economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation.

Key highlights from the implementation of our first multicultural plan include:

Digital dashboard

In line with commitments made under our first multicultural plan, we delivered a diversity dashboard as part of our corporate reporting in May 2023.

The dashboard provides a daily snapshot of how we are progressing against our diversity employment targets (as set out by the Public Sector Commission).

In financial year 2022–23, we reached our diversity target of 15.5 per cent – with the number of staff identifying as CALD increasing from 119 to 164.

Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy

In 2023, we released a revised Code of Conduct and delivered a new Dignity at Work Policy, helping create inclusive and safe workspaces across our business. These documents form part of our onboarding and performance discussions for all staff and underpin our training and development activities.

vegetablesWA partnership

We are committed to providing targeted information packages in languages for key groups. Through a joint project with vegetablesWA during financial year 2022-23, we produced a Vietnamese translation of a *Gnangara Groundwater Allocation Plan* information poster, as well as a letter for licensees, with the documents distributed by vegetablesWA to Vietnamese growers in the Gnangara area.

Under the WAMPF, we were required to report on the outcomes of our first multicultural plan in our 2022–23 annual report, as well as record and report on the progress of this plan to the Office of Multicultural Interests (part of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries). Our department has satisfied these requirements and our WAMPF report can be viewed in full on our website.



Multicultural Plan 2023-2026

This second, three-year *Multicultural Plan 2023-2026* will build upon the actions committed to in our inaugural plan and establish tangible ways to further achieve dedicated policy, programs and services for CALD communities and groups across WA.

Our new multicultural plan will continue to deliver actions against three key outcomes:

1. A welcoming and inclusive workplace culture (which delivers against Policy Priority 1 of the WAMPF).
2. Culturally appropriate services that meet our clients' needs (which delivers against Policy Priority 2 of the WAMPF).
3. Engagement with culturally diverse communities (which delivers against Policy Priority 3 of the WAMPF).

Our actions and measures for the 2023–2026 period are outlined in the following tables.



Table 1: Three-year action plan

Outcome 1: A welcoming and inclusive workplace culture

Actions	Measure	Timeframe
<p>Participate in the WA Public Sector Census program. (The Public Sector Commission is currently reviewing what would be an optimal cycle timeframe, whether that is two, three or four years.)</p>	<p>This inaugural census ran from 13 March to 12 April 2023, with 753 department employees participating.</p> <p>Detailed analysis of the data will be undertaken later this year, with consideration of responses from the new Implementation Program Board.</p> <p>Participation in the census will continue to occur based on the cycle to be set by the Public Sector Commission.</p>	<p><i>Agency Insights</i> from the 2023 Census have been published on the department's intranet in October 2023, along with links to the results for whole-of-sector Insights publication on www.wa.gov.au</p> <p>This process will be repeated for each WA Public Sector Census</p>
<p>Participate in the Diversity Council of Australia's (DCA) Inclusion@Work Index</p> <p>Department results will be considered by the Strategic Workforce Sub-Committee to inform future planning and initiatives.</p> <p>Department results will be published on our intranet.</p>	<p>Department employees took part in the 2023 Index, which closed on 9 September 2023.</p> <p>Index data – which maps the current standard of inclusion demonstrated in Australian organisations – will be published by DCA.</p> <p>In financial year 2021–22, DCA recognised our department as an inclusive employer, noting our commitment to inclusion and equity across our business.</p>	<p>Participation will be biennially (2023, 2025, 2027).</p> <p>Results will be tabled at the Strategic Workforce Sub-Committee at the next available meeting.</p> <p>Results will be published on the intranet following this.</p>



Actions	Measure	Timeframe
	We are one of 47 DCA members nationwide to be recognised as exceeding the national index benchmark on at least five out of six measures.	
Continue to promote and build understanding of our digital dashboard of diversity data, showcasing CALD people in our leadership roles and candidate pools.	Following the launch of our digital dashboard in May 2023, we provide a daily snapshot of how we are progressing against our diversity employment targets (as set out by the Public Sector Commission). In 2023, we reached our diversity target of 15.5 per cent – with our CALD staff member numbers increasing from 119 (in 2022) to 164 – and we are committed to continuing this.	Ongoing.
Promote awareness on the intersectionality of culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) people across WA.	Engage DCA to present on their research paper about CARM groups.	July 2024.
Development of a welcoming and inclusive pre-onboarding portal.	Work is underway to create an engaging onboarding portal that demonstrates our commitment to diversity and inclusion, including CALD.	2024.
Plan and roll out an anti-racism workplace training program.	To date, three training providers have been sourced and one will be selected to establish our anti-racism workplace program.	In progress, with completion expected by July 2024.



Actions	Measure	Timeframe
	<p>Training will start at the senior management level, and cascade down. The expectation is that this program will be mandatory for all employees.</p> <p>Before a provider is appointed, online modules will be accessible for our employees to complete.</p>	
<p>Conduct anti-racism training.</p>	<p>Several online modules, as part of this action, have already been sourced. They are expected to be available to employees by late 2023/early 2024.</p> <p>Workshops will be rolled out in 2024.</p>	<p>In progress, with workshops anticipated to start rolling out in late 2024.</p>
<p>Department-wide promotion of culturally important days and events, such as Harmony Day/Harmony Week.</p>	<p>The department delivers a calendar of diversity, inclusion, and cultural events each year, which is easily accessible to all staff through our intranet, as well as communicated via email directly to staff members.</p> <p>This will continue for the duration of this plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing and at multiple times throughout each calendar year.</p>
<p>Implement Safe2Say – an online platform enabling staff members to report workplace misconduct and/or inappropriate behaviour safely and anonymously.</p> <p>Online reports are sent to HR for actioning, without the identity of the sender being compromised.</p>	<p>Available and easily accessible, the Safe2Say platform encourages and enables any staff member with concerns about, or who is experiencing, discrimination, unsafe, or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace to anonymously report it.</p>	<p>October 2023.</p>



Actions	Measure	Timeframe
	We are committed to ensuring all employees enjoy a safe, inclusive and diverse workplace where they feel they belong.	
Conduct a review of the CALD Equity Index in relation to intersectional groups to inform and identify any inequities and/or needs for targeted development and opportunities.	Data reviewed by the department's Multicultural Plan Implementation Board, with recommendations considered in our strategic workforce planning.	December 2024.



Outcome 2: Culturally appropriate services that meet our clients' needs

Actions	Measure	Timeframe
Develop a comprehensive governance structure and processes to ensure oversight, monitoring and review of both our current, and future, multicultural plans.	Internal department Multicultural Plan Implementation Board established, with a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan developed.	Implementation Board established before December 2024, with M&E. Plan developed for Board review and endorsement by April 2024.
Review and update a priority selection of compliance and enforcement tools; e.g.= warnings and infringement notices, to ensure language translation services are clearly identified.	Review completed. Update completed.	September 2024. March 2025.
Analyse how self-identified CALD data might be collected and aggregated (to ensure anonymity) through online services; e.g. through broader online feedback surveys to better improve our service to CALD groups (links to M&E Plan)	Analysis completed. Options for additional data collection and aggregation identified and implementation started.	August 2024. October 2024.



Actions	Measure	Timeframe
Continue to access and offer translator services for approvals, licensing, and compliance activities.	Number of occurrences of translator services accessed.	Ongoing.
Review and update a priority selection of water licensing fact sheets and forms for use of plain English, links to translation services, and other CALD issues.	Review completed. Updates completed.	December 2024. June 2025.
Working with the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, explore opportunities to engage with international delegations in shared work on water, environment, climate change and the circular economy, lifting cross-cultural awareness of our staff.	Number of international delegations hosted or co-hosted.	Ongoing.
Work with diverse business groups to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate explanations about water and environmental regulatory systems.	Continue to partner with other government agencies, local government, industry groups and the community, to provide targeted water licensing and compliance information to at least one identified CALD group.	Commencing March 2024. Ongoing.



Actions	Measure	Timeframe
Ensure our corporate stakeholder research approach addresses trust and understanding of our department's business and CALD communities.	Report findings each year to Multicultural Plan Implementation Board.	Annually.



Outcome 3: Engagement with culturally diverse communities

Actions	Measure	Timeframe
Review our public-facing website to ensure best practice accessibility guidelines, including mindfulness of CALD needs, are being met.	As part of our website review, we will assess and determine where improvements can be made to ensure ease of access and use including translation services, alternative formats (Braille, in languages other than English and so on), particularly with a focus on web pages that encourage reporting of incidents; e.g. Pollution Watch.	Start in July 2024. Ongoing.
Utilise department social media channels to share CALD stories and achievements	Highlight positive stories across various industries on our X and LinkedIn accounts to showcase how people from CALD communities contribute positively to the state’s environment and water security.	Ongoing from early 2024.
Prepare and publish our third multicultural plan.	Develop and deliver our next multi-year multicultural plan	January 2026.



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