



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department

ACHIEVING  
A JUST  
AND SECURE  
SOCIETY

# WORKPLACE DIVERSITY



## STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Our goal is to support and maintain an inclusive work environment where employees can contribute to their full potential by having their diverse strengths and needs recognised and supported.

# SECRETARY'S FOREWORD

At the Attorney-General's Department we recognise that 'ensuring equity in employment and eliminating workplace discrimination and harassment are essential for developing a diverse workforce, attracting and retaining high quality employees and maximising productivity'.

By successfully being able to draw from our workforce's diverse experiences and skills the Department is better equipped to fulfil our business requirements.

Harnessing our diversity contributes to our internal environment of being a harmonious, inclusive place to work, it also improves communication and understanding of both internal and external stakeholders and makes us a stronger more effective unit.

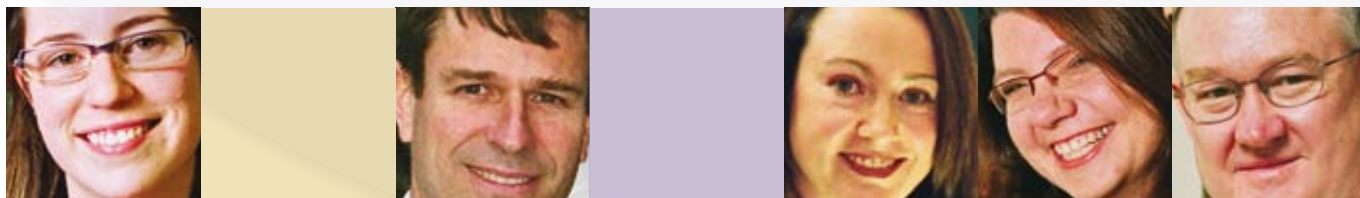
Diversity is not simply about cultural and linguistic differences. It involves a broad range of factors, including gender, age, attitude and socio-economic background. To maintain an environment that is all-encompassing, we need to continually review and adapt work practices.

The Workplace Diversity Program 2008–2010 continues to demonstrate the Department's commitment to understanding, valuing and incorporating differences to ensure a workplace that is fair, equitable and inclusive.

We are all responsible for the successful implementation of the Workplace Diversity Program.

I encourage all employees to adopt, affirm and comply with the strategies and actions contained in this document.

Robert Cornall AO  
Secretary



# WHAT IS WORKPLACE DIVERSITY?

Diversity relates to gender, age, linguistic and cultural background, disability, religious belief and pregnancy and family responsibilities. Diversity also refers to the many other ways we are different in other respects such as educational background, socio-economic background, personality profile, geographic location, marital status, etc.

Diversity of employees in AGD can be one of our greatest strengths.

Managing diversity well means recognising and respecting the value of human differences and creating an environment where all the abilities and experiences of our employees—diverse as they are—can be used to their fullest.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Employee Relations Advice documents outlined below:

Cooperative Workplace Relations  
Harassment in the Workplace  
Leave Policy  
Part Time Work

## Workplace Diversity Program

Our objectives are:

- to use our people's differences to improve business outcomes and achieve our goals

- to enhance the opportunities for employees to participate and contribute to the work of the Department
- to prevent and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace
- to ensure that workplace structures, conditions, systems and procedures, foster diversity and allow employees to manage work and personal life, and
- to promote awareness of the value of diversity in the workplace.

Our principles are:

- that the behaviours and actions of employees should be in line with both the APS Values and Code of Conduct and the Department's own values
- that workplace structures and conditions should enable all employees to contribute to their potential at work while taking into account personal commitments and interests outside of work
- that decisions affecting employees should take into account their individual needs, and all communication should recognise our diverse workforce and use inclusive language, and
- that decisions affecting employees should be based on facts and be free of discrimination.



## Workplace Diversity—linking with our business

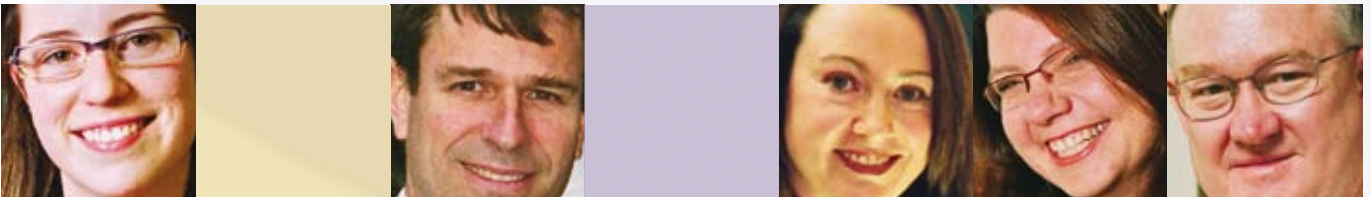
The benefits of having a successful Workplace Diversity Program include:

- improved recruitment outcomes through being an employer of choice
- higher retention rates of employees
- reduced training cost due to less staff turnover
- better relationships with clients and stakeholders
- greater sense of unity as an organisation, and
- reduced workplace stress and conflict and improved work attendance.

## Compliance with government and parliamentary requirements

An effective Workplace Diversity Program will comply with government and parliamentary requirements by:

- incorporating workplace diversity principles and the APS Values and Code of Conduct into the Induction Program for all new employees and promoting these within the Department
- making reasonable adjustment to the workplace or work practices to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities, and
- reporting equity and diversity data, including harassment complaints through appropriate channels such as reports to AGD Executive, the Annual Report and the annual State of the Service report.



# Workplace Diversity is everyone's responsibility

Each individual needs to:

- behave in a way that is consistent with the APS Values and Code of Conduct
- respect different ways of thinking and working to maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment
- support employees who access reasonable adjustment and flexible work arrangements, and
- be aware of the AGD Workplace Diversity Program and contribute to its achievements.

Each manager needs to:

- practise and promote behaviour consistent with the APS Values and Code of Conduct
- incorporate workplace diversity principles into their team and management practices
- recognise and use the diverse skills and knowledge of employees
- support employees who require reasonable adjustment\*

\* Reasonable adjustment: entitles a person with a disability to necessary adjustments or accommodation in order to perform the inherent requirements of the job, except where such adjustments would impose unjustifiable hardship on the employer.

- support employees who seek flexible work arrangements, subject to business needs
- resolve workplace issues quickly, sensitively and effectively wherever possible
- maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment
- ensure meetings, travel and other work arrangements do not place inappropriate pressure on employees with personal or family commitments, and
- consider innovative job solutions to meet business and employee needs.

The Secretary is responsible for:

- upholding and promoting the APS Values
- complying with the Public Service Act 1999, by establishing a Workplace Diversity Program within the Department which gives effect to the APS Values and Code of Conduct
- preventing direct and indirect discrimination in employment within the Department, and
- recognising those employees and work areas that have demonstrated commitment to the Program.



# Our strategies

## 1 **Become an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities and people from non-English speaking backgrounds**

The following actions contained in the Attorney-General's Department Reconciliation Action Plan also support this strategy

# Our actions

- advertise employment vacancies within the Department through various media to attract a diverse range of applicants
  - review recruitment and selection processes to ensure diversity principles are being considered and applicants are not impeded from fair and equitable consideration
  - ensure all new agency recruiters (external recruitment agencies) utilised by the Department are aware of the Department's diversity commitments and policies
  - revise the Induction Program to ensure we maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment and to ensure that all staff have reasonable access to the program, and
  - develop guidelines for managers to support them in making reasonable adjustment to accommodate the needs of staff with disability
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- facilitate secondments and transfers for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff into the wider Department workplace to gain more mainstream experience and skills
  - facilitate employment for up to six months on specific projects for representatives from organisations funded through Departmental programs to work at the Department
  - seek increased involvement in the Australian Public Service Commission's APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees
  - further promote employment through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeships and graduate programs
  - better target recruitment with employment opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media such as the Koori Mail and the National Indigenous Times
  - adapt the Induction Program to include particular provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander new starters
  - develop a mentoring program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
  - establish a Departmental policy on Indigenous representation on interview panels to promote diversity of membership on such panels (where appropriate) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific selection criteria for identified positions, and
  - develop further opportunities for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Monitor attraction and retention, identify any issues that arise and develop strategies to address issues in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

# Our strategies

# Our actions

## **2 Diversity principles are known and embedded into the AGD culture**

- integrate workplace diversity principles into workplace structures and conditions through the collective agreement
- incorporate diversity awareness into the Induction Program, and
- distribute departmental information to the public and employees in accessible formats.

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## **3 Implement dispute resolution strategies which ensure that AGD is providing a fair and equitable workplace**

- promote the active network of HCOs who are trained to provide information and support, and
- provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) service which provides professional and confidential supportive advice to employees and their immediate families.

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## **4 Raise awareness of Workplace Diversity in AGD**

- launch the AGD Workplace Diversity Plan 2008–2010
- promote and celebrate calendar days that relate to workplace diversity, and
- training and development programs will include information on disability issues as they relate to the content of the program, and
- continue to support the Harassment Contact Officers Network and raise awareness regarding bullying and harassment.

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## **5 Promote understanding of Indigenous culture**

This action is contained in the Attorney-General's Department Reconciliation Action Plan

- ensure cultural awareness training is available for all staff and required for those staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities.
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# WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Information &  
support in AGD

Equity &  
Diversity Adviser  
Tel: 02 6250 6178

Employee  
Assistance  
Program (EAP)  
Tel: 1300 366 789

## **AGNet link**

Corporate Services Group/Human  
resources/Workplace Diversity>

- Harassment Contact Officers (HCOS)
- Online Bullying Prevention Videos
- Online Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Legal compliance Course
- Online Cultural Awareness Legal Compliance Course
- AGD Reconciliation Action Plan