



Different backgrounds shared values

one government

Queensland public sector
inclusion and diversity strategy
2015–2020



Queensland
Government

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned this publication may contain images, names or descriptions of deceased people, which may cause sadness or distress.

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1. Introduction

Our goal is to build workforces and workplaces that better reflect the diverse community we live in. We want to embrace inclusion and diversity, not just because it's the right thing to do but because it makes great business sense. The legal framework is found in the *Public Service Act (2008)* which requires:



Public service employment is to be directed towards promoting a diverse and highly skilled workforce drawing from government and non-government sectors.

Importantly, beyond the legislation, our workplace culture and values reflect the way we do business and will ensure our aspirations translate to opportunity.

We are working in an increasingly global economy and marketplace. In such an environment greater diversity at all levels lowers risk and improves organisational performance and productivity. Similarly, the more homogeneous a workforce is, the higher risk to sustainability and relevancy.

The value proposition for inclusion and diversity is no longer only about social justice or equal opportunity—**it is best understood by reflecting on all of the dimensions that are enriched and strengthened through genuine inclusion.** In this way, we will build on existing approaches to foster diversity of thinking, and a deep appreciation of understanding and serving a diverse community.

1.1 Inclusion and diversity as a lever for strategic advantage

If we are not thinking about—and actively pursuing—an inclusion and diversity agenda, we will be left behind. The business logic for inclusion and diversity is strong. The connection between diverse workforces and improved innovation are well documented, as are the links between more engaged employees with increased productivity, performance and resilience. All this leads to better decision making, improved problem solving, valuable reputational benefits which all underpins our aspiration to provide better services to the people of Queensland. As such, inclusion and diversity is a lever for strategic advantage that:

- increases productivity and performance
- enables better decision making and better customer service
- promotes an engaged, resilient workforce
- is a source of enrichment, balance and different ways of thinking
- underpins an agile, innovative, nimble, thinking organisation
- enhances our reputation as an employer of choice.

2. Purpose — why diversity matters

As a key provider of services to the community with a responsibility to deliver public value, we will only ever fully understand the needs of Queenslanders when our workforce better reflects the community we serve.

The purpose of the strategy is to create an overarching framework for the kind of sector we hope to be, one where:

- individual differences are respected
- diverse skills and knowledge are valued and utilised
- opportunities are available for all
- engagement and partnership with stakeholders is effective; and
- the voice of the community is represented.

In this way, diversity becomes a strategic asset which drives performance by creating a strong and dynamic working environment that effectively accesses the potential of an untapped workforce. The principles of respect, inclusion and embracing difference will be reflected in our culture and values. Legitimacy and excellence in service delivery will come from genuinely understanding the community and stakeholders in all our diversity.

The strategy also provides agencies with a point of reference for the development of diversity strategies, policies and guidelines to embed the principles of inclusion and diversity in their culture, systems and processes.



3. What is inclusion and diversity?

Contemporary approaches often liken workplace diversity to an ‘iceberg’ to convey the notion that while traditional approaches to diversity focused on a person’s visible characteristics, **true diversity recognises characteristics of the whole person.**

Inclusion refers to the way our organisational culture, values, and behaviours make a person feel valued, included and welcome. It relates to a work environment where all people are treated fairly and respectfully, with equal access to opportunities and resources. It is not about treating everyone exactly the same all of the time, but that our culture, values and behaviours are such that everyone has the same opportunities to contribute and thrive.

Coupled with this, and equally important, is the concept of diversity. Built on the principles of Equality of Employment Opportunity (EEO) which primarily directed efforts to removing disadvantage, diversity has a broader meaning that encompasses the wide range of differences across the community. It includes inherent characteristics such as age/generational differences, ethnicity, gender, intellectual and/or physical ability, cultural background, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Diversity also refers to less visible aspects such as education, socioeconomic background, faith, marital status, family responsibilities, thinking, experience and work styles.

”

Diversity is about counting people. Inclusiveness on the other hand is about making people count. You need both diversity and inclusiveness in order to have sustainable diversity in your organisation. Understanding and utilising diversity is about consciously creating a work culture that brings out the best in everyone.

Kevin Cocks AM, Anti-discrimination Commissioner, Queensland

”

Visible and non-visible aspects of diversity



4. The diversity dividend

Inclusion and diversity in the Queensland public sector manifests in many different forms and extends beyond the legal framework of removing disadvantage in employment through equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination, to a vision where the workforce better reflects the community it serves. Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are usually, and appropriately, included in diversity strategies. However, contemporary approaches extend beyond the traditional dimensions of employee representation, to embed inclusion and diversity of all people, and to actively seek diversity of thought, ideas and approach. In this way, diversity is seen as a source of enrichment, balance and different ways of thinking.

The standard you walk past, is the standard you accept.

Lieutenant General, David Morrison AO

4.1 Creating value

There is no shortage of research across public and private enterprises providing strong evidence that there is a dividend to be gained from increased inclusion and diversity. **When supported with complementary cultural change programs that address collective decision making, inclusive problem solving and resilience, the benefits are compelling:**

Economic factors 

- Increasing female workforce participation by 6% could add \$25 billion to the nation's bottom line.¹
- If a third more people with disability moved off welfare and into work in the next decade, Australia's GDP could increase by \$43 billion.²
- There is a link between female directors and performance in businesses with better financial outcomes.³
- Workplace diversity is among the most important predictors of a business, sales revenue, customer numbers and profitability.⁴
- Organisations with the highest share of women outperform companies with no women by 56% in terms of operating results.⁵

Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.

Steven R Covey, author

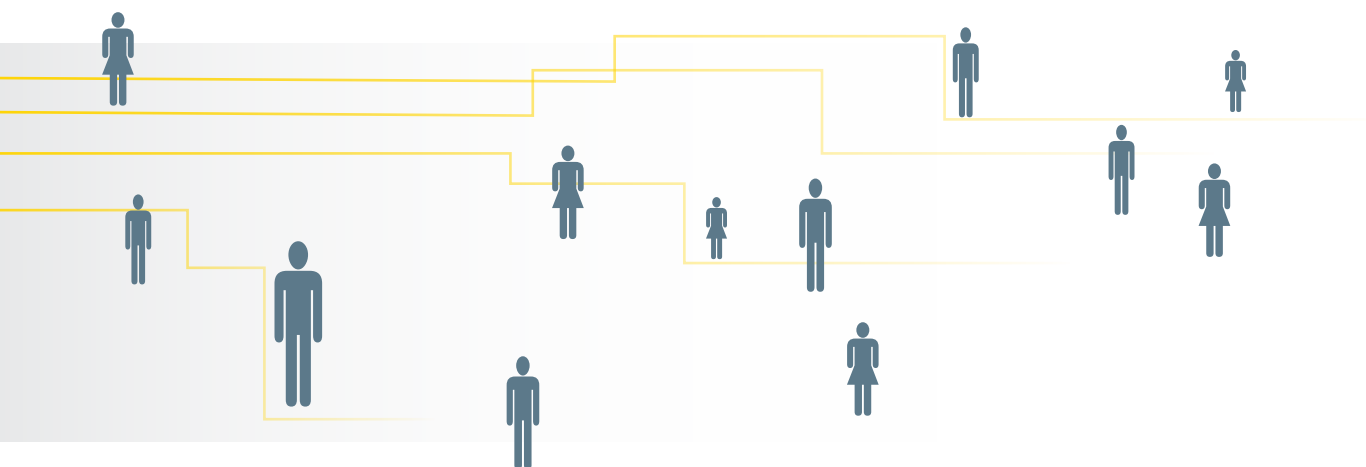
Workforce factors

- An organisation's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce was viewed by 27% of employees as very important and by 42% as important.⁶
- When Deloitte modelled the relationship between 'diversity and inclusion' and business performance, they identified an 'uplift' of 80% when both conditions were high.⁷
- Australia ranks first in OECD countries for female educational attainment, but ranks 52 out of 142 countries for female labour force participation.⁸
- Leaders who focus on long-term success and building 'constructive cultures' have a 43% greater impact on employee productivity than those who focus on the short-term.⁹
- 90% of employees with disability are equally or more productive than other workers.¹⁰



Organisational factors

- When employees feel they have a more diverse and inclusive workforce, turnover is almost 20% lower and employee effort is nearly 12% higher.¹¹
- Organisations that respect and value diversity are better able to attract and retain high performers and improve operational performance.¹²
- Australian companies promote gender equality to preserve and enhance their reputation.¹³
- The research provides compelling evidence that diversity unlocks innovation and drives market growth.¹⁴
- Diverse teams are more creative and perform better in problem solving than homogeneous teams.¹⁵
- Diversity in workforce and processes results in better decision making.¹⁶



4.2 Guiding principles

The presence of legal frameworks and the detailing of the obvious benefits of a more diverse workplace do not always evoke a change in mindset or behaviour. Workplace culture plays a major part in nurturing inclusive practices, coupled with the Queensland public sector values which provides the framework to embrace and embed inclusion and diversity in the workplace. **As such, diversity is not just about employee representation or numbers, it is about enhanced problem solving and genuine inclusion, by embedding constructive cultures into all aspects of the organisation.** This strategy has been shaped by a number of guiding principles:

- Inclusion and diversity requires a holistic approach that encompasses activity across the public sector.
- Inclusion and diversity is everyone's responsibility and requires a collective approach.
- Diversity is broader than labels—it is a way of thinking and is driven by constructive workplace cultures and performance.
- Diversity requires a focus on the whole person—both visible and non-visible characteristics of people.
- Capitalising on diversity of thought and experience is equally important.
- Better services and outcomes for our customers will be achieved through our diverse collective intelligence.
- Approaches should include leading edge—providing thought leadership, challenging the status quo and pioneering new approaches.
- Inclusion and diversity should be agency led and align with strategic workforce planning processes.
- Our aspirations should translate to opportunity.

Throughout high school, I wish I had known the importance of noticing others and allowing their experiences to enrich my own life. Other people's stories and experiences will inspire you to learn, to change and to evolve.

**Elizabeth Broderick,
Australian Human Rights
Commission**



5. A snapshot of our present state

5.1 Queensland

Queensland has an increasingly diverse population. We are a state that is heavily influenced by not only immigration from overseas, but also migration from within Australia, with more than 75,000¹⁷ moving to the 'Sunshine State' each year.

Data from the last Census in 2011 highlights:



One in five Queenslanders (888,636 people) were born overseas



One in ten Queenslanders (423,841 people) spoke a language other than English at home



Indigenous Australians represent 3.6% of Queensland



People with disability represent 17.7% of Queensland¹⁸



One in three Queenslanders are aged under 25



One in five Queenslanders are aged over 55

People from minority groups are often over-represented in lower paid and less secure jobs.

5.2 Queensland public sector

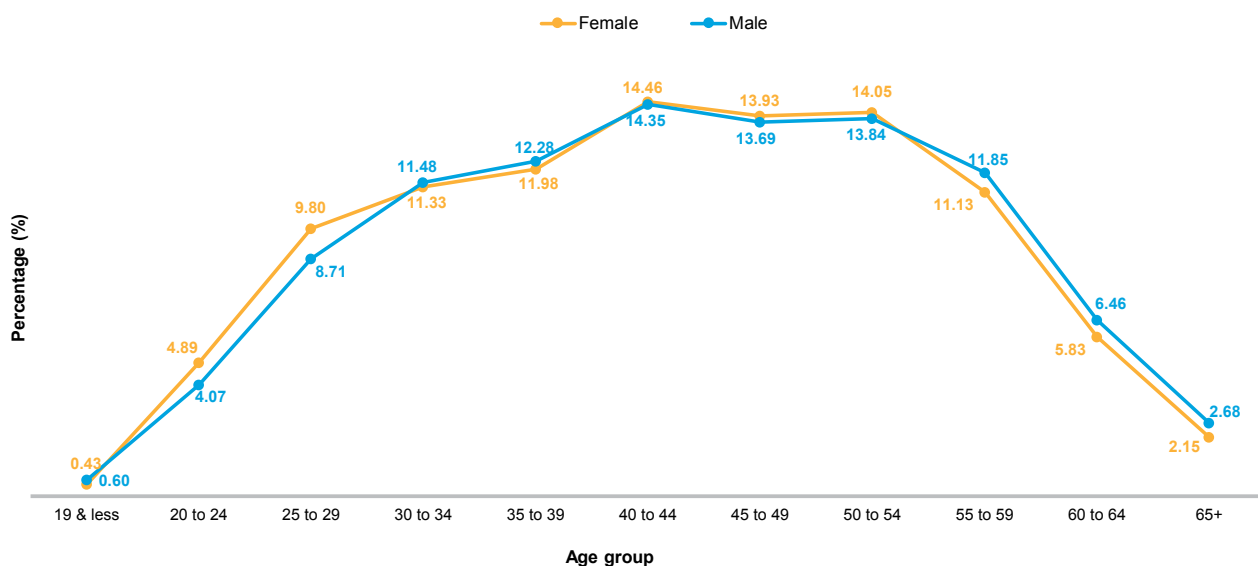
Although diversity is considered in the broadest sense and the emphasis is on inclusion and diversity from all sectors in the community, it is useful to reflect on the shape of our workforce across some key groups. This is intended to provide a snapshot only and represents a partial view of diversity across the sector. The data provides an interesting starting point for further discussion about how to become a more inclusive and diverse workplace.

Some quick workforce facts from March 2015:

- Queensland had 240,372 public service employees which equates to 201,409.61 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.
- More than two-thirds of the workforce (68.65%) are women.
- More than one quarter of the workforce (29.04%) works part-time. Most part-timers (nearly 90%) are women.

Of the total workforce:

- 2.02% or 4,862 indicate they are Indigenous
- 9.23% are from a non-English speaking background (NESB)
- 3.30% or 7,927 indicate they have a disability
- 68.21% of NESB employees are women
- 70.14% of Indigenous employees are women
- 61.02% of employees with a disability are women
- 19.99% of employees are aged over 55-years-old
- 5.37% of employees are aged under 25 years-old.



Greater detail regarding the make-up of the sector can be found in the *Inclusion and Diversity in the Queensland public sector: Agency Equality of Employment Opportunity (EEO) census data as at June 2014 report*, available via psc.qld.gov.au

Employee responses in the *2015 Working for Queensland* staff survey showed that:

- 74% agree gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation
- 74% agree cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation
- 73% agree sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation
- 71% agree age is not a barrier to success in my organisation
- 64% agree disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation.

In the same survey, in relation to a healthy work-life blend:

- 60% agree workplace culture supports people to achieve a good work-life balance
- 36% use flexible workplace options *(indicated one of six flexible work options)
- 62% have satisfaction with their work-life balance.

These results provide some insight into how aspects of diversity is viewed in the sector and demonstrate there is room for improvement when it comes to removing barriers to success.

The sector is well positioned to leverage this opportunity for improvement through the Queensland public sector values, and to harness the talent across the sector by deliberately pursuing inclusion and diversity as a strategic business priority.



6. Building a diverse workforce

The Queensland public sector enables inclusion and diversity through a number of activities. We combine to support agencies in designing an agile organisation, foster a diverse, savvy workforce and a better way of doing business.



The strategy is supported by a sector-wide plan for action which commits to an approach that will create a dynamic working environment and a workforce that better reflects the community we serve. The action plan focuses on three strategic themes:

1. **Accountability and leadership:** where diversity is a strategic asset and leadership is measured by an ability to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.
2. **Attract, develop and retain talent:** where difference is leveraged and the potential of diverse skills and knowledge is unleashed.
3. **Queensland public sector is an employer of choice:** where opportunities are available for all, and employees are included and engaged.

7. What agencies can do to drive inclusion and diversity and build a constructive culture

Not all diverse organisations are inclusive and not all inclusive organisations are diverse. Demographic data will shed some light on the diversity of an organisation, but not all. Similarly, employee surveys will give some indication of perceptions about inclusivity. A deliberate focus on inclusion and diversity will assist organisations to:

- be more in touch with customers and stakeholders
- help drive strategic directions
- foster more intrinsic benefits such as relationship building, trust, cultural security and credibility.

This manifests in good will, co-production, strengthened integrity, better equity of access, diversity of input, increased human capital, innovation and creativity.

There is no 'one size fits all' model that comprehensively describes what a high performing organisation looks like in the context of inclusion and diversity; however, an important element is culture and values. There is a strong correlation between constructive cultures and business success.¹⁹ **Constructive cultures excel in teamwork and cooperation, nurture talent, empower people and foster a supportive environment.** In this way, people feel connected to the business outcomes of the organisation and have a sense of purpose, mission and clarity of their role and contribution.



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There are already many activities happening across the sector that contribute to inclusive and diverse organisations. Examples of other approaches and initiatives agencies can actively pursue that reflect better practices in inclusion and diversity, include:

7.1 Accountability and leadership

- Integrate diversity into all aspects of the business and driven from the top so it is not a siloed activity.
- Promote a culture that supports the abilities of all employees.
- Engage champions across the organisation.
- Role model inclusive behaviours.
- Take the opportunity to speak to the importance of inclusion and diversity at internal and external events.
- Role model a healthy work-life integration and commitment to flexible working.
- Ensure staff, clients and suppliers understand the importance of inclusion and diversity to the organisation.
- Support managers to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required to lead diverse and virtual teams.
- Establish a practice of sharing authentic inclusion and diversity stories in team meetings and encourage inclusive recognition of diversity in the workplace e.g. Harmony Day.
- Start from a principle of 'we believe to get the best outcomes, or to be the most effective organisation we need diversity' and that 'high performing leaders actively champion and embed inclusion and diversity'.
- Actively challenge behaviours that are not inclusive.
- Utilise expertise through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) cohorts to design work based project proposals that relate to workforce challenges.
- Publish data and metrics that paint a picture of diversity in the organisation.

As they were leading me up, I looked up and around the galleries and I could feel the whole Aboriginal race, of those who had gone before, were all up there, and I could visualise, I could hear voices and amongst those voices was the voice of my grandfather saying, 'It's alright now boy, you are finally in the council with the Australian Elders. Everything is now going to be alright.'

Neville Bonner, the first Indigenous Australian Parliamentarian

7.2 Attracting, developing and retaining talent

- Incorporate inclusion and diversity planning as part of the annual strategic workforce planning exercise or create a stand-alone inclusion and diversity strategy.
- Build constructive cultures by encouraging experimentation, innovation and learning.
- Deliberately identify strategic partnerships within the wider Queensland community to engage and attract a diverse range of talent.
- Envision selection activities as a two-way process, where the interviewee is also appraising the panel and organisation, its culture and values, to weigh up the extent to which these are compatible with their own values.
- Maximise the potential of employees who mirror the client base.
- Establish recruitment and selection methods that block unconscious bias and target diverse voices.
- Conduct unconscious bias training across the organisation, particularly key decision makers.
- Guarantee an interview (or to the next stage of the process) for people from diverse groups who apply for a job and meet all minimum requirements.
- Seek to assess a candidate's commitment to inclusion and diversity through the selection process.
- Ensure there is a 'place' for people who want to work beyond traditional retirement age.
- Establish retirement transition options/phased retirement programs.
- Implement a keep in touch scheme for employees on extended leave (e.g. parental leave, career breaks).
- Establish an alumni program to keep in touch with previous employees that includes a planned program of communication about upcoming workplace opportunities.
- Introduce mentoring initiatives.
- Challenge views about required attributes and capabilities in recruitment processes.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing through internal policy and education opportunities such as partnering with the Queensland Mental Health Commission.
- Investigate opportunities to establish electronic employee networks for people from diverse groups.

Inequality and discrimination have not yet stopped. Wrongs and injustices still occur...to this day, including even for me, an office-holder under the nation's Constitution. So it is work in progress. It is as if we have not yet realised that, in our vast land, there is room for all of us—in all of our diversity—to share in full equality.

Justice Michael Kirby 2008

7.3 Queensland public sector is an employer of choice

- Promote and support flexible workspaces and age friendly employment practices.
- Ensure programs and strategies to balance work and personal responsibilities and/or family commitments are inclusive of all family structures.
- Educate managers and supervisors regarding the value of flexible work.
- Foster cross-generational knowledge transfer.
- Establish employee consultative networks.
- Actively challenge assumptions and perceptions.
- Ensure as much as possible that departmental web content is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA and accessible for people with disabilities.
- Acquire certifications and accreditations that appeal to a broad base of potential applicants, for example White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation.
- Become a member of the Australian Network on Disability and leverage the opportunity to educate and build resources.
- Become a member of Pride in Diversity (LGBTI Employer Equity program) and leverage the opportunity to educate and build resources.
- Ensure the workplace is a safe, inclusive environment where people who wish to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity do not feel inhibited, unsafe or at risk.
- Recognise, value and leverage the latent cultural capital and linguistic skills in the existing workforce.
- Introduce feedback mechanisms to gather candid honest appraisals of how the organisation is viewed.
- Critique the recruitment process to test whether advertisements are attracting a diverse range of candidates.
- Insert positive messaging into signature blocks about valuing inclusion and diversity.

We are a country with tremendous growth potential. We can still develop our culture the way we want to (and) can build a really liveable, cohesive, friendly, tolerant society.

**Lee Cunxin,
Queenslander of the Year 2014**

8. Governance, roles and responsibilities

The governance framework that drives inclusion and diversity places the Leadership Board (LB) as the key driving force for inclusion and diversity as well as establishes the expectation that members are visible and vocal advocates for inclusion and diversity. The Queensland public sector Inclusion Champions of Change (QPS ICC), chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, is the key group that leads sector-wide efforts to embed inclusion and diversity and acts as a key advisory group to the LB.

The presence of the LB and QPS ICC does not replace broader inclusion and diversity requirements for agencies such as Cabinet reports and annual reporting on EEO, but provides a public sector specific focus for sector-wide and agency specific activities.

LEADERSHIP BOARD

Whole of government leadership and active engagement with strategic issues and challenges relating to inclusion and diversity.

Actively champion inclusion and diversity and drive cooperative behaviours.

Role model inclusive and constructive behaviours.

Consider issues of strategic importance to whole of government.

Identify and resolve policy and interdepartmental issues and challenges.

Monitor the success of sector wide inclusion and diversity activities.

QPS INCLUSION CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

Build awareness, advocacy and strategy through the Leadership Board

Champion a change in workplace cultures and empower both women and men to achieve inclusion and diversity outcomes.

Support the progression of talent throughout departments and the public sector, especially in leadership pipelines.

Assess current agency employment policies or practices and ensure inclusion and diversity is supported in areas such as recruitment, retention, and promotion or development.

Encourage the use of flexible workplace arrangements which foster or support people to achieve an appropriate balance between work life and family life.

Share experiences and successful strategies to advance inclusion and diversity within the Queensland public sector and encourage peers to do the same.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Drive community-focussed workforce strategies to deliver better outcomes for Queensland.

Influence and drive inclusion and diversity across the public sector.

Co-design sector-wide activities with lead and key partner agencies.

Work with agencies to monitor and report on inclusion and diversity activities and outcomes.

Support agencies to integrate inclusion and diversity into strategic workforce planning processes.

Acquit legislative responsibilities.

ALL AGENCIES

Actively champion inclusion and diversity.

Incorporate real inclusion and diversity commitments into strategic and operational plans, including strategic workforce plans.

Develop and implement an action plan for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.

Develop and implement a disability service plan.

Co-design sector-wide activities with lead and key partner agencies.

Work with the Public Service Commission to report on inclusion and diversity activities and outcomes.

Acquit legislative responsibilities.

9. Future state

The ambitious and aspirational goals we set for ourselves will only be realised if inclusion and diversity is seen as everyone's responsibility, at every level, in every workplace, every day. Success will look like:

- progress in the workforce participation for people from diverse groups
- more staff report satisfaction with access to flexible work
- improvement in responses that relate to discrimination and barriers in the Working for Queensland staff survey
- improvement in responses that relate to work life balance in the Working for Queensland staff survey
- reduction in turnover of people from diverse groups
- greater number of applications for employment from people from diverse groups
- greater representation of diversity in senior executive positions.

Evidence in our culture and values will be seen as:



Customers first

Delivering citizen centred services by people who understand their needs



Ideas into action

Driving innovation and creativity through fresh and diverse perspectives



Unleash potential

Uncovering and optimising talent to inspire all to high performance



Be courageous

Questioning deeply held assumptions and challenging the status quo



Empower people

Recognising that the vast array of skills, knowledge and experience that people bring to work matter

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