

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy

2025–2027



Acknowledgement of Country

DHS acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations and recognises them as traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia.

Further, it acknowledges that the spiritual, social, cultural, and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.

The Cultural Maintenance illustration was created by Allan Sumner in 2017.



Closing the Gap Impact Statement

The needs and interests of Aboriginal people have been considered in the development of this policy.

Our vision for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DHS is committed to making our services and workplaces safe and inclusive for all people and ensuring the full diversity of the communities we serve are represented in our workforce, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and/or neurodivergence, young people, older people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse people.

We believe that creating a diverse, equitable workplace benefits all employees. When everyone is able to bring their authentic selves to work, we can hear, learn, and grow from a wide range of diverse lived experiences and perspectives which drive innovation, productivity, diversity of thought, diverse teams, and diverse leaders.



A message from our Chief Executive

Creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace at the Department of Human Services is an essential way we can truly reflect and understand the communities we serve, with the purpose of 'Making a difference so South Australia thrives'.

This purpose is driven by:

1. Increasing inclusion, independence and shared decision-making for all
2. Supporting our communities when it matters most
3. Delivering modern services for our communities.

Our new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2027 continues to build on our journey towards advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace for our employees and communities.

Ensuring that we put lived experience at the forefront of our approach, we strive to deliver further change in our processes throughout the employee life cycle, improving our facilities, greater career development opportunities, holding our leaders to account for creating change, and increasing workplace supports to ensure that regardless of background, we can all thrive and belong at DHS.



It is essential that we create a safe and inclusive working environment for our staff to be their authentic selves so that they can concentrate on producing great outcomes for the wider community.

I'm proud to lead a department where we work closely with the communities we serve, to deliver outcomes which make a positive impact for all.

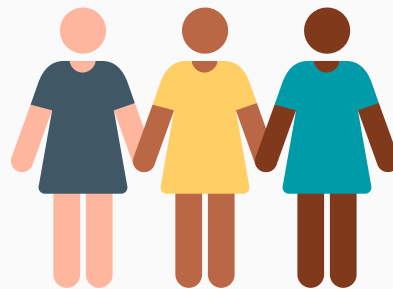
Sandy Pitcher (she/her)

Chief Executive
Department of Human Services

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
Closing the Gap Impact Statement	3
Our vision for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	3
A message from our Chief Executive	4
What we mean by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	6
Our Inclusion Areas of Focus	9
Our workforce composition	12
Achievements from our previous Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	16
Stakeholder engagement process	19
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at DHS	20
Our workplace champions for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	22
Strategic alignment	24
How we will measure our impact in the 2025–2027 strategy	26
Action Plan 2025–2027	28

What we mean by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Diversity

Diversity can take many forms and describes the unique traits and characteristics that make us different from one another. Workplace diversity acknowledges individual differences and the unique skills, perspectives and experiences all employees bring because of differences in gender, age, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, language, ability, thinking style, sexual orientation, and identity and life experiences.

Equity

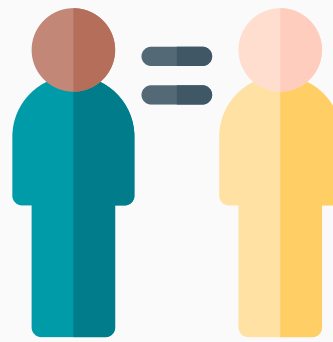
Equity is about recognising that people have different needs based on their differing, intersecting identities and experiences of privilege. Equity is about seeking to meet these needs, so that everyone experiences just and fair outcomes and participates fully in the workplace.



Inclusion

Inclusion is about every member of our workforce recognising, valuing and respecting our differences and reflecting this in the way we work and treat each other. Inclusion occurs when people feel connected, engaged and can contribute to success, regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstance. An inclusive workplace culture removes barriers to ensure all employees can participate fully and where they:

- have a sense of belonging
- feel connected to and accepted by their co-workers
- can fulfil their individual and combined potential
- have equal access to opportunities and resources to develop their career
- can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve DHS
- feel safe to freely talk about physical and mental health challenges.



Equality

Equality is about treating people the same to achieve fair outcomes. While well-intentioned, treating people the same without considering their differing identities or experiences of privilege, will continue to preserve the status quo.



Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the way that multiple aspects of diversity, like age, sexual orientation, care-giving responsibilities, disability status, ethnicity, and gender identity, come together or 'intersect' and form part of our identity – and, therefore, our experience of inclusion at work.¹

This overlap or combination of differences makes up a person's unique identity. Identities within an individual may come, go or converge, depending on the time or place (e.g. life stages). The point of understanding intersectionality is to acknowledge the variety of privileges and/or forms of discrimination or exclusion that one may experience simultaneously at any given time.

1 Diversity Council Australia definition

Our Inclusion Areas of Focus

At DHS, we recognise the breadth and richness of the diversity in the communities we serve.

We strive to deliver impact in the following inclusion areas:

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

AGE DIVERSITY

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE

CARERS

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

GENDER EQUITY

LGBTIQA+

NEURODIVERGENCE

We acknowledge that the diversity of people is not limited to specific diversity and inclusion dimensions, however it helps us to target specific actions to deliver equitable change and impact for our diverse workforce, while also creating an inclusive work culture for all staff through the actions we deliver.



Definitions

Every effort has been made to provide definitions which are reflective of our society at the time of publication, however we recognise that the language around diversity evolves overtime and will update accordingly.

Aboriginal people

For the purposes of this strategy, the term Aboriginal is used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within South Australia. This is not intended to exclude Torres Strait Islander people, or people who may identify as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

Age

An age diverse workplace provides benefits in terms of the unique backgrounds and perspectives that each generation brings. For the purposes of data collection, this strategy refers to people aged under 30 years old as young professionals, and people aged 55 and over as mature aged employees.

Culturally and linguistically diverse

Cultural diversity means having a mix of people from different cultural backgrounds – it can include difference in cultural/ethnic identity (how we identify ourselves and how others identify us), language, country of birth, religion, heritage/ancestry, national origin, and/or race. We recognise that there is no single term that is used by culturally diverse people and that there are certain terms that different groups or individuals prefer or feel most comfortable with.

Carers

Carers provide unpaid ongoing support to family or friends with disability, chronic illness or age-related frailty.

Carers can be partners, parents, children, friends, neighbours or colleagues who provide assistance with personal care, lifting, mobility, administering medication, banking, shopping or housework. They come from all walks of life, all cultures and all age groups. Caring is a role that can be both rewarding but also costly in terms of life opportunities, financial security and health.

Disability and long term health conditions

The social model of disability recognises that features of our society including natural and built environment, systems, attitudes, practices and structures are disabling and create barriers preventing people from being included and treated equally, and participating fully.

For the purpose of data collection, the department relies on employees self-identifying as having disability, as defined by the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018*. The term 'living with disability' includes long-term physical, psycho-social, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or sensory impairment, or a combination of any of these impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Gender

Gender is part of a person's personal and social identity. It refers to the way a person feels, presents and is recognised within the community. A person's gender may be reflected in outward social markers, including their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress. When we speak about gender in the context of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, we are referring to the creation of a workplace where people of all genders can participate. While addressing disparities that have

emerged between men and women as a function of society and culture is important, we must seek to do so using an intersectional lens and in a way that acknowledges and embraces gender diversity.

LGBTIQA+

LGBTIQA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/ gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual) refers to the diverse sex, sexual orientation and gender identities represented in the community. We recognise that there are many more terms that people identify with and LGBTIQA+ has been used in an effort to be as inclusive as possible.

Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence / Neurodivergent is a non-medical term describing various neurological variations from the dominant societal norm and people with these variations in their neurological development. Neurodivergent, in contrast to "neuro-typical", is used to describe people who may have one or more ways in which their brain functions differently to the "typical" way.

Neurodiversity is the idea all human brains are different and function uniquely. The idea that there is no single right way of thinking, learning, or behaving, rather there is a range of naturally different ways of thinking, learning or behaving.

Our workforce composition

As of 1 July 2024

Total headcount: 3247

Our workforce data has been drawn from CHRIS21, unless specified below. Where data is available, a comparison has been undertaken on our previous workforce composition from the previous Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which was taken from October 2020.



Executive diversity balance (SAES employees)

Total Executives: 29
Woman or female: 74% (↑4%)
Man or male: 26% (↓4%)
Gender diverse (transgender, non-binary, gender fluid): 0%
(other LGBTIQ+ data not available)

People with disability: 0%
Carers: 41%*
CALD: 11%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander: 7%

All DHS staff - Gender

Woman or female: 60% (↑1%)
Men or male: 40% (↓1%)

Gender diverse (transgender, non-binary, gender fluid): <1%* (↑1%)
Indeterminate/Unspecified: <1% (no change)



All DHS staff - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

Born overseas: 46% (↑2%)
Speak a language other than English: 36% (↑2%)





All DHS staff - LGBTIQA+ People

7.46%* (↑1.76%)



All DHS staff - People with Disability

CHRIS21 (identifiable
self-report data): 3.14% (↓0.99%)

PMES (anonymous self-report data): 10.1%*



All DHS staff - Aboriginal peoples

4.14% (↑0.76%)

All DHS staff - Neurodivergent people

7.5%*



All DHS staff - Employment type

Full time: 64.5% (↓10.5%)

Part time and casual: 34.5% (↑9.5%)



All DHS staff - Carers

Employees with caring
responsibilities: 64.5%** (↑4.9%)***



All DHS staff - Age

July 2024

Under 20: <1%	40–49: 28%
21–29: 9%	50–59: 22%
30–39: 25%	Over 60: 16%

October 2020

Under 30: 7%
30 to 54: 64%
55 and over: 29%

* Data drawn from the People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) 2024. 50% (1421) of DHS staff responded to this survey.

** Data drawn from DHS 2023 Diversity and Inclusion Survey, inclusionary of carers of their own children.

331 DHS staff responded to this survey.

*** Data drawn from the DHS 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Survey, inclusionary of carers of their own children.

307 DHS staff responded to this survey.

How our workforce compares across the South Australian Public Sector and South Australian Community

DHS (CHRIS21 and PMES) – As of July 2024		SA Public Sector 2024 data (State of the Sector)		South Australia Community (ABS, 2021)	
GENDER					
Woman or female	60%	Female	70%	Female	50.7%
Men or male	40%	Male	30%	Male	49.3%
Gender diverse (transgender, non-binary, gender fluid)	<1%	Other	<1%		
Indeterminate / Unspecified	<1%				
AGE					
Under 20	<1%			Under 20	22.9%
21–29	9%	Under 30	16%	21–30	12.9%
30–39	25%	30–40	24%	31–40	13.4%
40–49	28%	40–50	24%	41–50	12.2%
50–59	22%	50–60	22%	51–60	12.8%
Over 60	16%	Over 60	13%	61–70	11.9%
				71–80	8.9%
				Over 80	5.1%

How our workforce compares across the South Australian Public Sector and South Australian Community

DHS (CHRIS21 and PMES) – As of July 2024		SA Public Sector 2024 data (State of the Sector)		South Australia Community (ABS, 2021)	
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY					
3.14% (102 employees) [CHRIS21] 10.1% [PMES]		1.34%		19.4% (entire SA population with disability)	
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES					
4.14% (138 employees)		2.19%		2.4%	
CARERS					
64.5% [DHS D&I Survey]		N/A		10.7%	
BORN OVERSEAS					
46%		N/A		28.5%	
EMPLOYMENT TYPE					
Full time	64.5%	Full time	53.3%	Full time	38.2%
Part time and casual	34.5%	Part time	46.7%	Part time	53.5%
LGBTIQA+					
7.46%		5%		Up to 11 in 100 Australians*	

*The ABS only records the sexual orientation of people in Australia and does not record the number of LGBTIQA+ people in the community overall. An estimate of up to 11 in 100 Australians may be LGBTIQA+, according to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Achievements from our previous Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

In the DHS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020–2023, we delivered the following actions to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the Department.

Workforce Action Plans

- Launched the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2021–2023
- Launched the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2020–2023
- Launched the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2023
- Implemented a Workplace Gender Equality Action Plan.

Workplace accreditations and benchmarks

- Achieved White Ribbon Re-Accreditation in October 2021
- Made significant progress towards Rainbow Tick Accreditation.

Employment Programs

- Increased the employment of Graduates
- Achieved the employment target for DHS in the Skilling SA Public Sector Employment Project
- Increased the number of Aboriginal employees.

Employee initiatives

- Increased the communication of diverse employees' lived experiences, feature articles, and acknowledgements of days of significance on the Intranet and DHS news
- Implemented Wellbeing Rooms in Riverside Centre and Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre, for employees to use for caring, disability, cultural, and religious purposes
- Established Employee Led Networks for Culturally and Linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+, and Disability and Long-Term Health Conditions.

Training and Development

- Continued to deliver the DHS Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program
- Ensured high completion rates for mandatory Diversity and Inclusion courses, including Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training, Inclusive Communities Benefit Everyone, and Understanding, Preventing, and Responding to Men's Violence Against Women.



Other initiatives

- Developed a Social Procurement Action Plan
- Developed a Diversity and Inclusion style guide
- Established an across government LGBTIQ+ allies network
- Implemented two DHS Diversity and Inclusion Surveys to gauge diverse employees' experiences in our workplaces
- Implemented a campaign to improve diversity data of the workforce by encouraging employees to share their diversity information in HR21.

Areas to continue progress in:

While we achieved many of the actions we set out to do in the 2020 – 2023 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, there were a number of actions which we will continue the progress for in our new Strategy:

- Year on year improvement in the employment and retention of people with disability
- Embed the OCPSE Disability Employment Toolkit, ensuring it is reflected in our practices and policies
- Review the Gender-Neutral Recruitment Guideline and expand to include other forms of diversity, focusing on inclusive practices including blind-recruitment to minimise unconscious bias. This will be linked in recruitment and selection training and frameworks within the department
- Ensure forms and systems enable all people to be recognised in accordance with the gender they identify, and that choice is provided with recording of titles
- Develop resources and training focused on improving understanding of intersectionality, inclusive language and building inclusive leadership and workplaces.

Our next strategy builds on the previous DHS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020–2023, where we outlined four key diversity and inclusion principles to guide our impact, which were:

	Recruit	We reflect the diversity of the community we serve
	Include	We foster a culture of belonging that embeds access, inclusion and equal opportunity in all that we do
	Develop	We provide opportunity for every employee to reach their potential
	Lead	We prioritise diversity through inclusive leadership

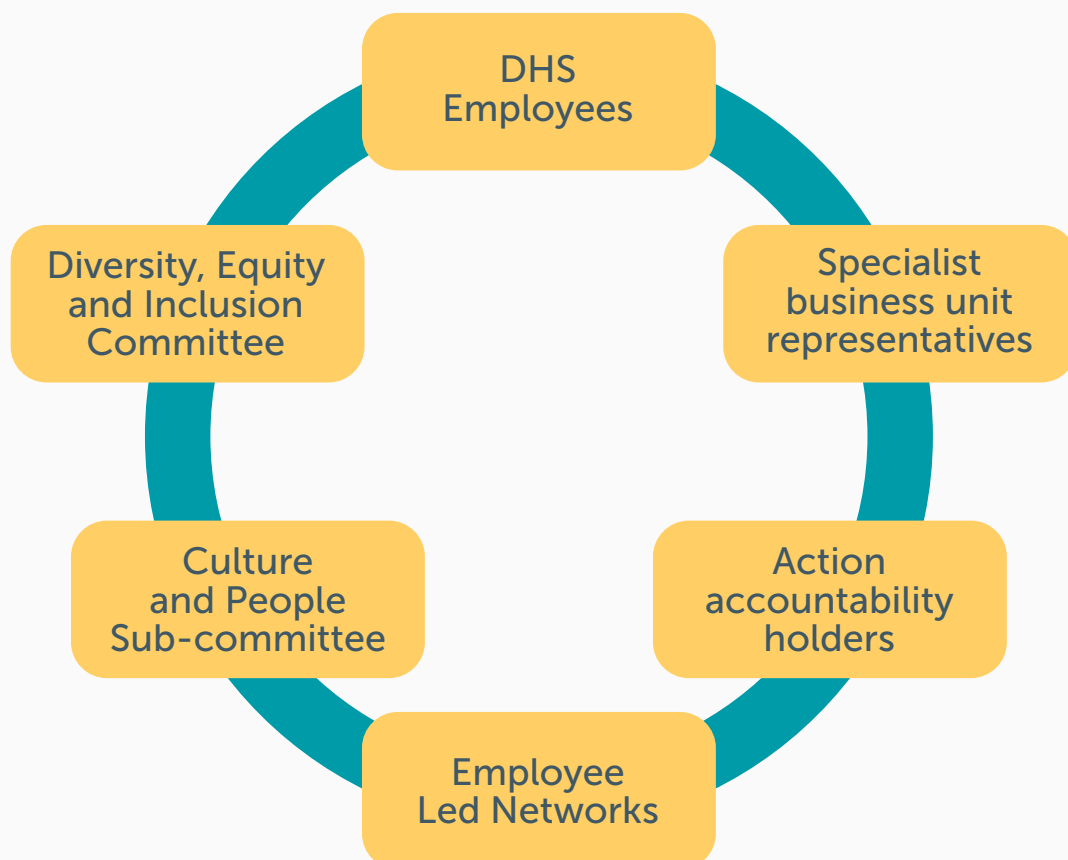
Stakeholder engagement process

Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy has been developed following a consultation process with staff to seek their feedback on how DHS is tracking on our inclusion journey. It also takes into account the everyday experiences of inclusion in the workplace among staff working in DHS.

Employee feedback was collected through one-on-one interviews, several targeted focus groups which were held throughout August 2023, and a whole of department staff survey which was open between 6 to 24 November 2023.

Internal stakeholders within the Department's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and relevant business areas also provided their valuable input and commitment into the strategy and action areas.

We engaged with the following workplace internal stakeholders:



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at DHS

DHS strives to have workplace initiatives, policies, practices, procedures and resources to ensure our people feel safe, supported, and belong in the workplace.

Our Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

- Respectful Treatment at Work Policy.
- Leave Guideline, documenting various types of paid, unpaid and special leave available for all employees.
- Diversity Recruitment Panel register to enable diverse selection panels.
- Recruitment and Selection Framework.
- DHS Diversity and Inclusion Style Guide for inclusive language use in communications.
- Significant process made towards Rainbow Tick accreditation.
- Social Procurement Action Plan.

Our Facilities

- Wellbeing Rooms located in our primary office at Riverside Centre and Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre, for caring responsibilities, disability, cultural and religious purposes, health, breastfeeding/pumping, and pregnancy.
- Accessible bathrooms and facilities in our workplaces.
- A dedicated quiet office space in the Objective Training Room.

Training and Education on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Inclusive Communities Benefit Everyone
- Aboriginal Cultural Footprint Program
- Say No to Racism
- Men's Violence Against Women
- Disability Awareness and Inclusion
- Interview Panel Training
- Unconscious Bias
- Mental Health First Aid
- Flexible Work Options at DHS.

Our Employee-led Initiatives

- Employee Led Networks for LGBTIQ+ employees, Culturally and Linguistically diverse employees, employees living with disability or long-term health conditions, and Aboriginal employees.
- Diversity email signature templates for employees to use to display their personal commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and pronouns.
- Regular acknowledgements and celebration of Diversity Days of Significance throughout the year.
- Diversity and Inclusion posters placed within workspaces and notice boards, to spread awareness and visibly show our commitment to creating safe workplaces for our employees and clients.

Our Workplace Accreditations

- White Ribbon Accredited workplace since October 2013. DHS was the first South Australian organisation to become a White Ribbon accredited workplace.
- Significant progress made towards achieving Rainbow Tick Accreditation.



Our workplace champions for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The role of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The DEI Committee provides a forum for consultation on the review and update of this Strategy, and other related strategies. It contains representation from each of the Department's Employee Led Networks, as well as allies and members with lived experience, representing each division in DHS.

Chaired by Nick Ashley, Executive Director of Finance and Business Services, the Committee meets 6-weekly to ensure progress on the Action Plan commitments, and supports the ongoing implementation of inclusive practices within the department.

A message from our Employee Led Network Leads, who champion diversity, equity and inclusion in DHS.

Disability Employee Led Network

Everyone benefits when an organisation prioritises diversity, equity, and inclusion at its heart and takes visible steps to put policies into action. The 2020–2023 DHS Disability and Inclusion Strategy led to the creation of employee led networks, including the Disability Employee-Led Network (DEN), and we continue to welcome employees across all divisions to join our supportive network. The 2025–2027 strategy renews the Department's commitment to creating an inclusive culture where people with disability, neurodivergence, and/or chronic health conditions are valued for their unique perspectives, experiences, and talents. The DEN fully supports the strategy and looks forward to working with leadership to bring it to life.

LGBTIQA+ Employee Led Network

DHS' LGBTIQA+ Employee Led Network welcomes the new DHS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. This Strategy follows on from the 2020–2023 Strategy and provides a framework for DHS to continue to improve as an inclusive employer for LGBTIQA+ people. Our Network looks forward to working with colleagues and leaders in DHS as we continue to work together to champion inclusion and to ensure that DHS is a workplace where all staff feel safe and welcome, no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity or bodily diversity.



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employee Led Network

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employee-led Network (CALD Network) welcomes all DHS employees who identify as having a diverse heritage, culture, religion, or speak languages other than English. It provides a safe, inclusive, and supportive working environment across all areas of the Department. Members are encouraged to connect with others, share experiences, stories, challenges, and make new friendships. The CALD Network aims to promote and raise awareness of issues affecting CALD employees. The network facilitates discussions on matters relevant to the workplace experiences of CALD employees, encouraging the exchange of information. Additionally, it plays an active role in providing input into departmental policies, strategies, and programs, while advocating for the rights and needs of CALD employees. The CALD Network endorses this Strategy.

Nunga Network for Aboriginal Employees

The DHS Nunga Network welcomes the new DHS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. This Strategy will improve and strengthen the wellbeing and cultural safety of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members and help make DHS an employer of choice for more people to join and improve our support services for clients and community.

Strategic alignment

In our strategy, we have aligned our guiding principles with the priority areas of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment's (OCPSE) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2026 to ensure that our actions align across the South Australian Public Sector.

OCPSE's priority areas are:

1. Diversity equity and inclusion is central to all we do (our policies and processes prioritise inclusiveness)
2. Empowering all voices (We are known for our inclusive culture with zero tolerance for all forms of discrimination and harassment)
3. Reflecting the community we serve (People from diverse backgrounds choose the public sector to achieve their career goals)
4. New targets to advance disability employment (A positive employee experience attracts and retains more people with disability to work in the sector).

The DHS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy is aligned to relevant South Australian Government inclusion strategies and major deliverables which the Department is responsible for actioning for our people and the communities which we serve.

Gender Equity

- White Ribbon accreditation
- SA Women's Equality Blueprint

Age

- SA's Plan for Ageing Well 2020–2025
- SA's Youth Action Plan

LGBTIQA+

- Rainbow Tick Accreditation

Neurodivergence

- SA Autism Charter
- SA Autism Strategy

People with Disability

- State Disability Inclusion Plan
- DHS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People

- *South Australian Multicultural Act 2021* and Charter
- OCPSE Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2028

Aboriginal Peoples

- DHS Reconciliation Action Plan
- DHS Aboriginal Workforce Strategy
- Closing the Gap Policy and Transformation

Carers

- *South Australian Carers Recognition Act 2005*
- South Australian Carers Charter

How we will measure our impact in the 2025–2027 strategy

The impact of our actions affects the everyday lives and workplace experiences of our employees. Using the following measures and metrics, we will measure the positive impact and success of this strategy and action plan for our employees with diverse backgrounds.

The below baseline metrics will be recorded at the beginning of the implementation of this strategy and used to measure the progress of our actions.



Workforce diversity targets

People Matter Employee Survey results, future DHS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey results, and Teamgage key employee experience metrics



Active engagement with internal diverse communities in DHS

Attraction and recruitment of diverse communities to work at DHS



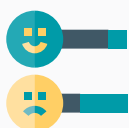
Retention and succession of employees with diverse backgrounds in DHS

Employee Led Networks staff membership and engagement



Accountability for leading Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Performance Development Plan (PDP) and role statement accountabilities



Evaluation on training and development programs

Gender pay equity and cross-representation in gender segregated roles





Action Plan 2025–2027

The following action plan has been developed to progress diversity, equity, and inclusion within DHS. As the state of inclusion is an ever-evolving area, the actions contained in this plan will be flexible where actions may be changed, removed, or added, depending on legislative, strategic, and evidence-based outcomes.

Throughout the development of the strategy and action plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in DHS, an intersectional approach to progressing inclusion has been adopted to design the actions we will progress.

1. Priority Area 1:

Diversity, equity and inclusion is central to all we do
(our policies and processes prioritise inclusiveness)

1.1.

DHS Action

Investigate the feasibility of the following Special Leave with Pay provisions, including:

- Menstrual and Menopause Leave
- Gender Affirmation Leave
- Volunteer Leave
- Updates to Cultural Leave
- Review of Disability Leave.

DHS deliverables

- A report of recommendations on the feasibility of additional Special Leave with Pay provisions is prepared
- The report to referred to OCPSE for consideration in The Commissioner's Determination 3.1: Employment Conditions: Hours of Work, Overtime and Leave.

Success measures

- A report on the feasibility of additional Special Leave with Pay provisions is developed, for consideration by People and Partnerships.
- DHS Leave Guideline to be updated, if any additional Special Leave with Pay provisions are progressed.

Key contributors

People and Partnerships (lead)

Organisational Development and Learning

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employee Led Network

LGBTIQA+ Employee Led Network

Disability Employee Led Network.

Timing

Q4 2025.

**Priority Area 1: Diversity, equity and inclusion is central to all we do
(our policies and processes prioritise inclusiveness)**

Our action plan, in line with the strategy, will focus on advancing the diversity and inclusion of our internal workforce, so we can continue to ensure we deliver inclusive services for our community.

1.2.

DHS Action

Conduct an audit on the facilities, accessibility, and usage of the Wellbeing Rooms in the Riverside building and Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre to ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

DHS deliverables

- A list of recommendations are put forward on improving the use and accessibility of Wellbeing Rooms
- Exploration of Wellbeing Rooms within other DHS workplace locations
- Improvements to the Wellbeing Rooms to be made on the basis of recommendations.

Success measures

- Recommendations to improve the wellbeing rooms are actioned, creating more dedicated spaces for diverse employees to access
- Increased positive scores regarding the use and accessibility of the Wellbeing Rooms in the next Diversity, Equity and Inclusion staff survey.

Key contributors

Infrastructure (lead)
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Disability Employee Led Network
LGBTIQA+ Employee Led Network
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employee Led Network.

Timing

Q4 2025.

**Priority Area 1: Diversity, equity and inclusion is central to all we do
(our policies and processes prioritise inclusiveness)**

1.3.

DHS Action

Conduct an audit of the Department's various sources of diversity HR data (CHRIS21, People Matter Employee Survey, DHS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey) to improve the quality and accuracy of tracking our diverse workforce.

DHS deliverables

- Consolidation of the Department's various sources of diversity information into a centralised report, to be used for tracking the diversity of our workforce.

Success measures

- An accurate and reliable dataset to be utilised for creating a diversity workforce composition report.

Key contributors

Business Improvement and Technology (lead).

Timing

Q1 2026.

1.4.

DHS Action

Continue to collaborate with OCPSE to support system enhancements to diversity, equity, and inclusion data fields across the SA Public Sector.

DHS deliverables

Continued provision of policy and terminology advice on system enhancements to OCPSE.

Success measures

Significant progress made towards system enhancements in HR21.

Key contributors

OCPSE (lead)

Organisational Development and Learning.

Timing

Q1 2027.

**Priority Area 1: Diversity, equity and inclusion is central to all we do
(our policies and processes prioritise inclusiveness)**

1.5.

DHS Action

Upskill managers on the types of Flexible Working Arrangements available for employees with diverse backgrounds.

DHS deliverables

- Consider making the 'Flexible Work Options at DHS' eLearning course mandatory for managers as part of an annual mandatory training review process
- Implementation of managing hybrid teams training, targeted at staff in managerial roles.

Success measures

- Increased uptake in employees with diverse backgrounds and/or caring responsibilities undertaking flexible working arrangements; pending availability of this data
- Increased positive scores regarding access and support for flexible working arrangements from staff from diverse backgrounds in the next Diversity, Equity and Inclusion survey and People Matter Employee Survey.

Key contributors

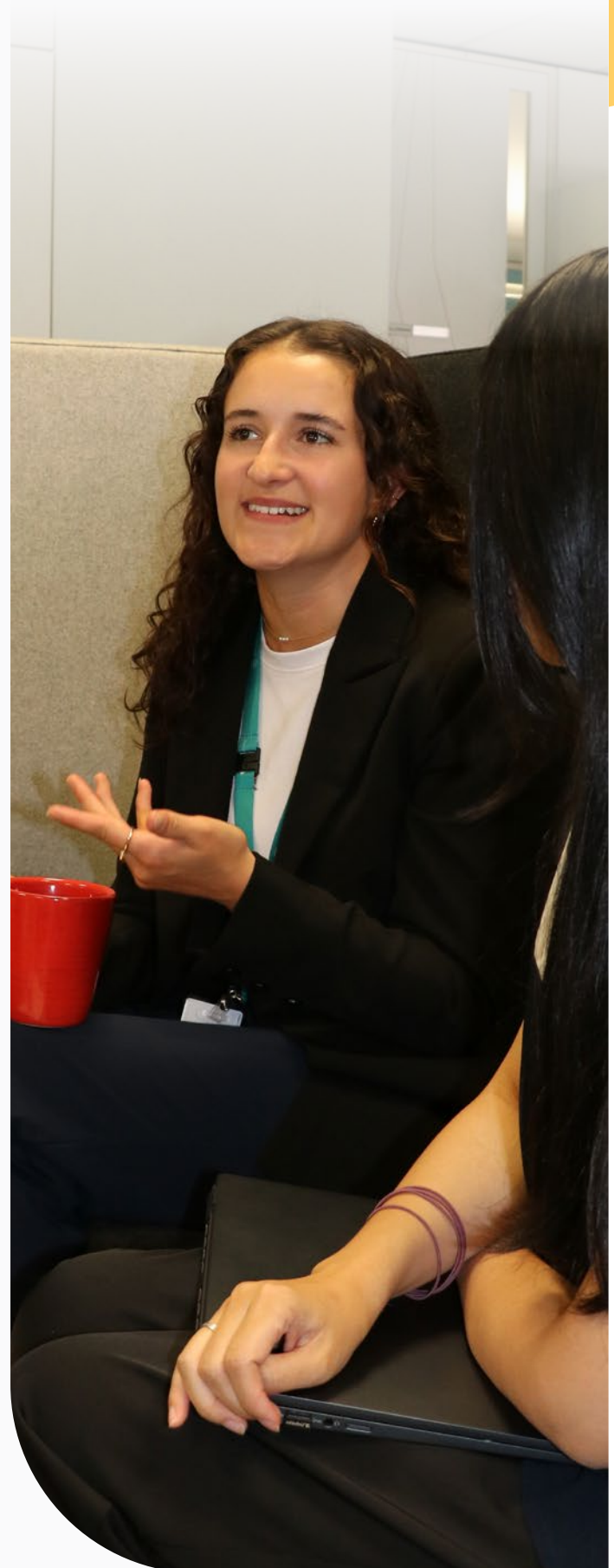
People and Partnerships (lead)

All managers

Organisational Development and Learning.

Timing

Q1 2026.



1.6.

DHS Action

Investigate further relevant workplace benchmarking, assessments, and accreditations, using lessons learnt from the Department's journey towards Rainbow Tick accreditation.

DHS deliverables

- A business case outlining recommendations for any further workplace benchmarking and accreditations
- Implementation of additional relevant workplace benchmarking and accreditations deemed achievable.

Success measures

Progress towards assessing the feasibility of additional workplace benchmarking and accreditations, such as:

- Family Friendly Workplaces
- Racism. It Stops with Me workplace assessment tool
- Australian Disability Network Access and Inclusion Index
- Australian Workplace Equality Index
- Diversity Council Australia workplace benchmarking.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

Inclusion Policy and Reform

Closing the Gap Transformation and Policy

Office for Women.

Timing

Q1 2026.

1.7.

DHS Action

Promote the purpose and availability of the Minister's Advisory Councils across DHS and to other Ministers and State Government departments, to further promote and support inclusive decision-making and practice more broadly.

DHS deliverables

- Internal Communications campaign to raise awareness of the Minister's Advisory Councils
- Promotional campaign aimed at other Ministers and State Government Departments to raise awareness on the purpose and availability of the MACs.

Priority Area 1: Diversity, equity and inclusion is central to all we do (our policies and processes prioritise inclusiveness)

Success measures

- SA Government policies and initiatives are informed by lived experience and subject-matter expertise in the community
- Agenda items at Advisory Council meetings regularly include policies and initiatives across SA Government agencies.

Key contributors

Inclusion Policy and Reform (co-lead)

Disability Policy and Reform (co-lead).

Timing

Q2 2025.

1.8.

DHS Action

Implement the WE'RE EQUAL campaign in DHS, in collaboration with Equal Opportunity SA. Include steps to manage complaints and grievances in line with WE'RE EQUAL guidelines.

DHS deliverables

- Increased accessibility of employee grievance portal
- Increased awareness of employee's rights at work
- WE'RE EQUAL signage across corporate offices and DHS worksites.

Success measures

- The Grievances and Review Resolution Portal is visible and accessible on the Intranet to all employees – Intranet page views
- Increased positive scores on the accessibility of the Grievances and Review Resolution Portal by employees from diverse backgrounds in the next Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey
- All Executive Leaders visibly support the WE'RE EQUAL campaign
- The WE'RE EQUAL logo and further information is displayed across the Riverside Centre and front service delivery work sites.

Key contributors

People and Partnerships (lead)

Organisational Development and Learning

Timing

Q2 2025.

1.9.

DHS Action

Participate in a pilot collaboration with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

DHS deliverables

- Active participation in the Pilot with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Success measures

- Effective findings for a wider gender equality program to be implemented within DHS and across the South Australian Public Sector.

Key contributors

OCPSE (lead)

Office for Women.

Timing

Q3 2025.

1.10.

DHS Action

Encourage all women in DHS to sign up to the Premier's Women's Directory to promote leadership and career development opportunities with the opportunity to be appointed as members of SA Government boards and committees.

DHS deliverables

- Internal Communications program to raise awareness and encourage women in DHS to sign up to the Directory.

Success measures

- Increased women in DHS represented on the Premier's Women's Directory.

Key contributors

Corporate Communications (lead)

Office for Women.

Timing

Q2 2025.

1.11.

DHS Action

Develop a checklist of accessible workplace considerations for new worksites.

DHS deliverables

- Inclusive physical workspace checklist.

Success measures

- Increased awareness about the factors affecting accessibility of physical workspaces
- Increase retention and attraction of staff living with disability, neurodivergence and long-term health conditions.

Key contributors

Infrastructure.

Timing

Q3 2026.

1.12.

DHS Action

Conduct a “deep dive” into the results of the People Matter Employee Survey and develop further strategies to address results for different diversity cohorts.

DHS deliverables

- Further actions related to the PMES, or refined actions from the DHS-wide Action Plan.

Success measures

- Increased understanding of factors affecting inclusion within diversity cohorts and the Employee Led Networks
- As a result of further actions, improved outcomes in the next PMES survey.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning.

Timing

Q2 2025.

2. Priority Area 2:

Empowering all voices (We are known for our inclusive culture with zero tolerance for all forms of discrimination and harassment)

2.1.

DHS Action

Ensure Executive Directors, Directors and other senior leaders are accountable for progressing diversity, equity and inclusion within the Department and their immediate teams.

DHS deliverables

- Include accountability for diversity, equity, and inclusion as a mandatory key priority in leaders' Performance Development Plans
- At least one Executive Director or Director is a champion for each diversity stream of focus at DHS
- Measured by participation and advocating for DEI events, supporting an inclusive workplace, creating career succession opportunities for diverse staff, and building diverse teams.

Success measures

Increased accountability, documentation, and oversight into how DHS leaders are progressing diversity, equity and inclusion within their teams and across the Department.

Key contributors

Office of the Chief Executive (lead)

Organisational Development and Learning

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Directors

Executive Directors

Chief Executive.

Timing

Q1 2027

Reviewed annually.

2.2.

DHS Action

Achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation within the Department and share the outcomes, lessons learned, and best practice examples with the Public Sector Disability, Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice.

DHS deliverables

- Rainbow Tick accreditation
- Summary report of outcomes, lessons learnt, and best practice examples of LGBTIQ+ inclusion and service delivery.

Success measures

- Part of the Department (Safer Family Services) is accredited as a Rainbow Tick organisation
- The Department develops a LGBTIQ+ Continuous Improve Plan to inform ongoing actions over the next three years.

Key contributors

Inclusion Policy and Reform (lead).

Timing

Q3 2025.

2.3.

DHS Action

Create a strategic approach to how the Department acknowledges and celebrates diversity days of significance for our employees and our communities.

DHS deliverables

- Internal Communications plan outlining DHS news articles and employee-led events
- A calendar of diversity, equity and inclusion events published on the Intranet
- External Communications plan outlining social media posts and community stories.

Success measures

- Diversity days of significance are acknowledged and celebrated across all diversity dimensions
- A communications plan implemented for both internal and external communications of diversity days of significance.

Key contributors

Corporate Communications (lead)

All Employee Led Networks

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Timing

Q2 2025.

2.4.

DHS Action

Build the visibility of the Department's network of Mental Health First Aid Officers, for employees with diverse backgrounds to feel safe and empowered to speak up about mental health and wellbeing matters in the workplace.

Key contributors

People and Partnerships (Lead)

Organisational Development and Learning.

Timing

Q1 2026.

DHS deliverables

- Opt-in list of the Mental Health First Aid Officers available in each division
- Regular Mental Health First Aid Officer training is made available to all employees who wish to become an accredited officer.

Success measures

- Increase in accredited Mental Health First Aid Officers
- The Mental Health First Aid Officers network provides a clear and visible avenue for employees from diverse backgrounds to access a first point of contact for mental health support
- Increase in positive responses regarding being able to identify workplace support for each diversity dimension of focus in the next Diversity, Equity and Inclusion survey.

2.5.

DHS Action

In partnership with DHS’s Employee Led Networks, conduct a review of the existing Employee Led Networks to investigate a further expansion of the Networks to include gender equity, carers, and neurodivergent employees.

DHS deliverables

- A review of the existing Employee Led Networks is conducted
- The expansion of the Employee Led Networks for Gender Equity, Carers, and Neurodivergent employees is considered.

Success measures

- The review identifies any improvements or additional supports to be implemented for the Employee Led Networks
- Staff in an Employee Led Network report a greater sense of inclusion and belonging at work
- Yearly increase of membership and engagement in the existing and newly established networks.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

All Employee Led Networks

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Timing

Q3 2025.

2.6.

DHS Action

Implement a series of diversity 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, featuring employees with diverse backgrounds and lived experience, for all employees to learn from and build connections with others in the Department.

DHS deliverables

- Schedule of Lunch and Learn sessions for each diversity dimension in focus at DHS
- External speakers for Lunch and Learn sessions
- Suite of video recordings for employees to access diversity and inclusion content and resources internally, published on the Intranet.

Success measures

- Increased awareness and capability of DHS employees when working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Increased visibility and representation of diverse identities at DHS
- Employees with diverse backgrounds report a greater sense of inclusion and belonging at work in the next Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey.

Key contributors

Corporate Communications (lead)
All Employee Led Networks
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Timing

Q1 2027
Reviewed annually.

2.7.

DHS Action

Evaluate the outcomes of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and design the Department's next Reconciliation Action Plan.

DHS deliverables

- Review of Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (April 2022–March 2024)
- Lessons learned and progress made
- Launch of new Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–27.

Success measures

- Implementation of New Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–27

Key contributors

Inclusion Policy and Reform (lead).

Timing

Q3 2025.

2.8.

DHS Action

Evaluate the outcomes of the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2021–2023 and design the Department's next Aboriginal Workforce Strategy.

DHS deliverables

- Review of Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2021–2023
- Lessons learned and progress made
- Launch of new Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2025–2030.

Success measures

A set of new measurable actions and impact for current and future Aboriginal employees of DHS are developed and implemented.

Key contributors

Principal Aboriginal Workforce Consultant, Organisational Development and Learning (lead).

Timing

Q2 2025.



2.9.

DHS Action

Refresh the Department's Induction eLearning module to include references to diversity, equity, and inclusion at DHS.

DHS deliverables

- Refreshed DHS Induction eLearning module.

Success measures

The refreshed module clearly communicates DHS's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Timing

Q2 2026.

2.10.

DHS Action

Refresh the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion suite of training modules on MyHub.

DHS deliverables

Review and update existing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training offerings on schedule:

- Diverse SA
- Say No to Racism
- Aboriginal Cultural Footprint Program
- Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training
- Inclusive Communities Benefit Everyone
- (Preventing Violence Against Women – White Ribbon program released 2024).

Success measures

- Pre and post training measures assessing employees' capability to create inclusive workplaces and work with diverse populations
- Pre and post training measures on manager capability to create inclusive teams
- Collaboration with other training and development leads across DHS to develop the suite of training modules.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Timing

Q2 2027.

2.11.

DHS Action

Achieve White Ribbon re-accreditation for the Department.

DHS deliverables

- White Ribbon re-accreditation for the Department.

Success measures

- DHS maintains its White Ribbon accredited workplace status.

Key contributors

Finance and Business Services (lead)

Office for Women.

Timing

Q1 2026.

2.12.

DHS Action

Using data from the DHS Diversity and Inclusion Survey and People Matter Employee Survey, explore the factors which contribute to employees who may feel uncomfortable disclosing their diversity information in the workplace and/or in CHRIS21.

DHS deliverables

- Engagement with DHS employees with lived experience to gain further depth of understanding about the contributing factors to disclosure of diversity information.
- Recommended actions to be created from engagement with DHS employees.

Success measures

A greater understanding of the factors which contribute to employees' comfort and ability to disclose their diversity information.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

All Employee Led Networks.

Timing

Q1 2026.

2.13.

DHS Action

Promote and publish the Autism Inclusion Charter and the SA Carers Charter via the Intranet and Internal Communications.

DHS deliverables

- Autism Inclusion Charter and SA Carers Charter on Intranet.

Success measures

- The Autism Inclusion Charter and SA Carers Charter are visible and easily accessible on the Intranet
- Increase in positive responses from employees regarding the inclusion of Autistic people and Autism communities, and carers in the workplace.

Key contributors

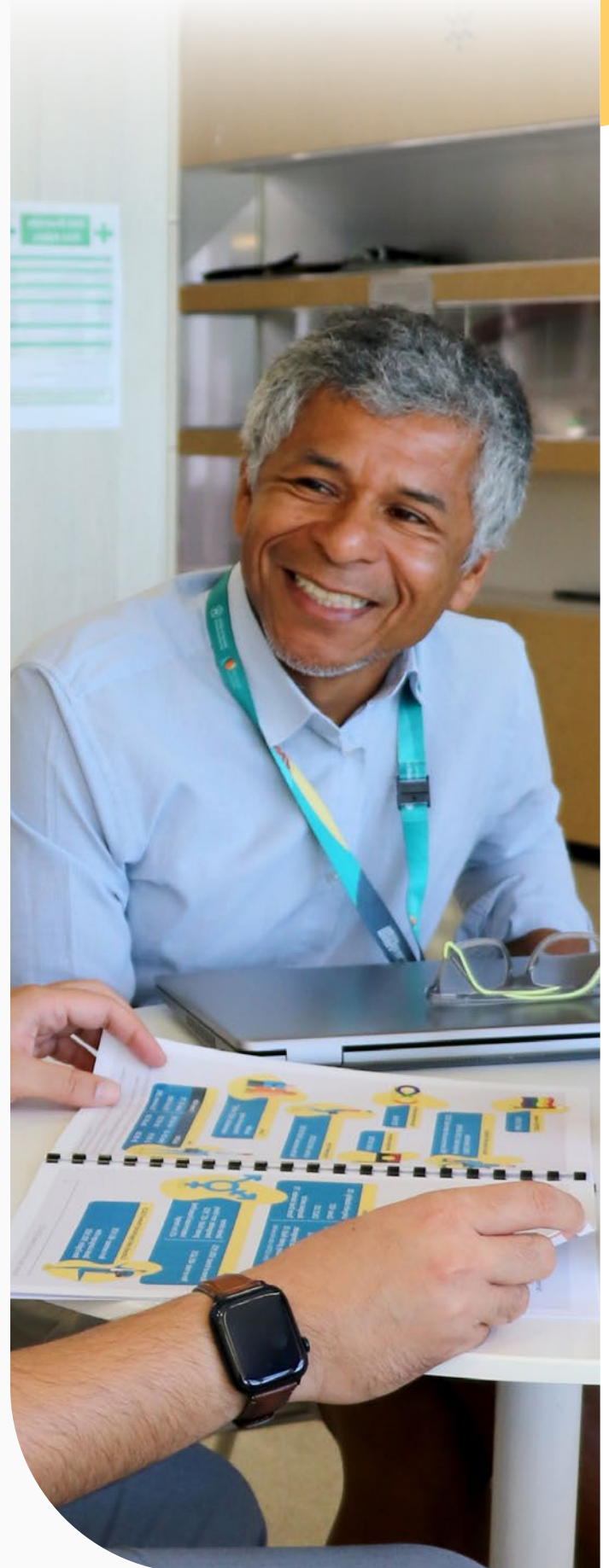
Corporate Communications (lead)

Inclusion Policy and Reform

Disability Policy and Reform.

Timing

Q2 2025.



3. Priority Area 3:

Reflecting the community we serve (People from diverse backgrounds choose the public sector to achieve their career goals)

3.1.

DHS Action

Develop an Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit for selection panels to employ inclusive practices when recruiting people with diverse backgrounds and lived experience.

DHS deliverables

A centralised guidelines and toolkit for all inclusion areas on:

- How to create inclusive selection panels
- How to write inclusive role statements
- Assessing job applications without bias
- How to apply different assessment methods for diverse persons
- Recognising and mitigating unconscious bias
- Inclusive onboarding checklist
- How to register and access the Diversity Recruitment Register for employees and selection panels.

Success measures

- Positive feedback and evaluation provided on the inclusiveness of the recruitment process from interviewed applicants and recruited employees

- Increased reputation of the Department as an inclusive employer, measured by feedback received from prospective applicants, newly employed staff, and exit interview surveys
- Increased selection panel member capability to hire people from diverse backgrounds
- Increased expressions of interest from employees to register for the diversity recruitment register
- Increased use of the diversity recruitment register by selection panels
- Increased completion of the online recruitment and selection training programs in MyHub.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

People and Partnerships

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

All Employee Led Networks

Office for Women

Inclusion Policy and Reform.

Timing

Q4 2026.

3.2.

DHS Action

Ensure all staff who will participate on selection panels complete the online recruitment and selection training programs to reduce unconscious bias.

DHS deliverables

- Making the online 'Recruitment and Selection Program' and 'Unconscious Bias' trainings mandatory prior to participating on selection panels
- Data collection on selection panel compositions.

Success measures

- Audit of staff completion of the two eLearning modules against staff who participate on selection panels
- A data source is established to determine the diversity of selection panels comprised for DHS roles.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

People and Partnerships.

Timing

Q1 2027

Reviewed annually.

3.3.

DHS Action

Implement regular intakes for entry-level employment pathways into DHS for greater employment opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds.

DHS deliverables

- Cadetships or Traineeships
- Student placement opportunities
- Graduate Program.

Success measures

- Intakes for entry-level employment pathways occur at least on an annual basis
- A diverse range of applicants apply and are recruited for the range of entry-level programs on offer
- Recruitment process conducted to recruit Aboriginal graduates.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

People and Partnerships.

Timing

Q1 2027

Reviewed annually.

3.4.

DHS Action

Refresh the Job Shadowing program to increase the uptake and awareness of the program for employees with a diverse background.

DHS deliverables

- Review of existing Job Shadowing program processes
- Consistent communications on the program.

Success measures

- Year on year increased uptake of the Job Shadowing program
- Positive learning outcomes from participants and hosts.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead).

Timing

Q2 2025.

3.5.

DHS Action

Re-launch the Mentoring program to provide mentoring opportunities for employees with a diverse background to connect with DHS leaders and senior level employees.

DHS deliverables

- Review of existing Mentoring program processes
- Allocated mentoring places in the program for employees with a diverse background.

Success measures

- Employees with a diverse background are provided with opportunities throughout the program to develop their leadership skills through the program
- Positive feedback and outcomes from mentors and mentees is received on the program.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead).

Timing

Q2 2026.

Priority Area 3: Reflecting the community we serve (People from diverse backgrounds choose the public sector to achieve their career goals)

3.6.

DHS Action

Maximise the participation of diverse employees in leadership development programs by prioritising diverse employees to undertake these programs, such as the South Australian Leadership Academy programs.

DHS deliverables

- Participation of DHS employees with diverse backgrounds in SA Leadership Academy programs
- Increased opportunities for leadership development for employees with a diverse background.

Success measures

- Career progression of employees from diverse backgrounds who complete leadership development programs, tracked by MyHub and position movements in CHRIS21.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

People and Partnerships.

Timing

Q1 2027

Reviewed annually.



3.7.

DHS Action

In line with community demographics in South Australia and OCPSE targets, ensure year on year improvement of at least 0.25% of the employment and retention of people living with disability and Aboriginal peoples.

Benchmark: workforce composition as of July 2024:

- 4.14% - Aboriginal employment
- 3.14% - Disability employment (CHRIS21)
- 10.1% Disability employment (People Matter Employee Survey).

DHS deliverables

- A roadmap will be developed to outline how each of the employment targets will be achieved
- Strategic and equitable actions taken towards employment opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds.

Success measures

- Achieving the set employment targets
- Year on year improvement of each respective rate of employment Aboriginal employees and employees with a disability.

Key contributors

Relevant business areas identified for increasing the number of Aboriginal peoples and people with a disability within their areas.

Timing

Q1 2027

Reviewed annually.

4. Priority Area 4:

New targets to advance disability employment (A positive employee experience attracts and retains more people with disability to work in the sector)

4.1.

DHS Action

In line with the development of the next State Disability Inclusion Plan, review the DHS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2023. As part of this review, include actions to address disability employment.

DHS deliverables

- New DHS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Success measures

- Employee testimonials from DHS staff with disability and/or clients published on the DHS Careers page.

Key contributors

Disability Policy and Reform (lead)

Disability Employee Led Network.

Timing

Six months after the State Disability Inclusion Plan is gazetted.

4.2.

DHS Action

Implement a contemporary disability awareness and inclusion training suite for employees and managers to effectively work with and include people with disability in their teams.

DHS deliverables

- Refreshed disability awareness and inclusion training offerings on MyHub.

Success measures

Improvement on employee capability on disability awareness and inclusion reported from employees undertaking the training (measured by pre and post training surveys).

Key contributors

- Organisational Development and Learning (lead)
- Disability Policy and Reform
- Disability Employee Led Network.

Timing

Q4 2025.

Priority Area 4: New targets to advance disability employment (A positive employee experience attracts and retains more people with disability to work in the sector)



4.3.

DHS Action

Develop partnerships with disability employment service providers which attract and retain employees with a disability.

DHS deliverables

- A partnership is established with at least one disability service provider and DHS.

Success measures

- Partnerships with disability employment service providers deliver effective attraction and retention outcomes, measured by CHRIS21 data.

Key contributors

Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

Disability Policy and Reform

People and Partnerships.

Timing

Q3 2025.

Priority Area 4: New targets to advance disability employment (A positive employee experience attracts and retains more people with disability to work in the sector)

4.4.

DHS Action

Develop a Workplace Adjustments procedure to enable managers to implement effective and inclusive adjustments for employees who require them.

DHS deliverables

- Updated Workplace adjustments procedure
- Awareness for managers on how to implement reasonable adjustments in the workplace to support employees.

Success measures

- Increased uptake and access to reasonable adjustments in the workplace, measured in the next Diversity and Inclusion survey
- Increased positive scores from employees reporting that they experienced an inclusive interview and/or selection process.

Key contributors

Policy and Governance, Organisational Development and Learning (lead)

Disability Employee Led Network.

Timing

Q2 2025.

4.5.

DHS Action

Create a Digital Service Standard to ensure that our communication and service delivery is accessible.

DHS deliverables

- DHS Digital Service Standard.

Success measures

- The digital service standard is used effectively when delivering IT desktop services, measured by internal customer feedback
- Digital content on DHS intranet and internet pages comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Key contributors

Business Improvement and Technology (lead).

Timing

Q1 2027.



Stock images may appear in this publication. These images are for illustrative purposes only, and people depicted in these images may not be associated with the publication's subject matter.