



ABS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2018–2021





Further information

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The ABS Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2018–2021 can be found at www.abs.gov.au

Disclaimer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this document may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

Front cover right: ABS employee Jessie Bonson celebrating NAIDOC Week

Message from



I am pleased to present the first ABS Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. It sets out the ABS' intention to continue to create workplaces that are more inclusive, and recognises the importance of having a diverse workforce.

This strategy is a component of our overarching ABS Workforce Strategy that supports the ABS' core purpose *to inform Australia's important decisions by partnering and innovating to deliver relevant, trusted, objective data, statistics and insights*. The Strategy recognises our people are the key to successfully delivering this purpose.

The four goals contained in the Strategy make the case for an inclusive and diverse workforce and set out how we intend to achieve our aims.

I am committed to making the best use of the special skills and qualities of all our staff through strengthening an ABS workplace culture that fosters inclusiveness, builds respect and capitalises on diversity. In this way, our staff will be able to bring their best to the workplace and continue to contribute to increasing and sustained ABS success.

I encourage you to engage with the ABS Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, and personally take steps to ensure its success no matter your role because it is a responsibility for each one of us.

DAVID W. KALISCH

**AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN
MALE CHAMPION OF CHANGE**



Message from ABS Champions

We are pleased to champion the ABS Inclusion and Diversity Strategy which clearly states our commitment to an inclusive and representative workplace. We are striving to provide a positive and safe workplace that recognises the diverse capabilities, perspectives and experiences of our employees because the ABS will be stronger and more successful when our workforce reflects the communities we serve and harnesses this strength effectively.

We encourage our employee networks, and support the Australian Statistician in his work as a Male Champion of Change. We demonstrate our practical intent to continuously improve through membership of the Australian Network on Disability, Pride in Diversity and the Diversity Council of Australia.

We commit to a workplace culture that values inclusion and diversity, embrace this in our everyday work and will work hard to harness the efforts of staff to achieve this Strategy's outcomes.

Samantha Palmer, Lily Viertmann, Michael Meagher, Steve Hamilton, Bruce Hockman, Bill Allen, Denise Carlton, Bjorn Jarvis, Dean Bowley, Sybille McKeown, Paul Jelfs and Stephen Collett.

ABS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network

The ABS is proud to be a member of these diversity organisations





Introduction

The ABS is working to improve our workplaces so they better reflect our community, are more inclusive and benefit from the diverse skills, perspectives and experiences of our employees. We welcome diversity in all its forms in our workplaces where everyone can contribute fully, feel valued, and be themselves without fear. As we continue our transformation journey, being diverse and inclusive supports us to become a higher performing and infinitely stronger organisation.

What is Inclusion and Diversity?

Inclusion and diversity means recognising, respecting and valuing individual differences, and having an environment where people are empowered and can fully contribute their talents, skills, experiences, thoughts and energies to the workplace. It involves removing barriers to ensure everyone is able to participate and have equal access to opportunities. It enables new and innovative ways to work, solve problems and create efficiencies and quality outcomes for the benefit of the organisation.

Why Inclusion and Diversity matters

When inclusion and diversity are valued and embodied in the workplace, we see benefits such as better decision making, higher employee engagement, improved performance, greater innovation, retention of the people we need in the future, and improved employee wellbeing, as well as lower levels of unwanted behaviours such as bullying and harassment.

Inclusion and diversity are everyone’s responsibility and require a collective approach. Unless people are consciously inclusive, exclusion can occur unintentionally. People who feel they belong perform better, become more willing to challenge themselves and are more resilient. Inclusion leads to belonging, belonging leads to engagement, engagement leads to high performance and productivity. Inclusion allows individuals to bring their authentic selves to work.



Strategic Alignment

An inclusive and diverse workforce will provide the ABS with the experience, knowledge and capability to design and deliver services which meet the needs of the people making important decisions across Australia.

The Strategy brings together our inclusion and diversity goals, desired results, demonstrates our commitment to an inclusive and diverse organisation, and supports the delivery of the following:

ABS Corporate Plan 2017-2021

Strategy 2: Transform the ABS for the Future - the ABS builds the capability of employees, driving cultural change and improving performance.

ABS Workforce Strategy 2015-2019

Strategy 3: Build a high performing culture and improve our diversity.

ABS Transformation Goals

People: We have a diverse, expert, motivated and agile workforce.

Culture: We are high performing, aligned, engaged, innovative and accountable.

The strategy also supports the fostering of inclusion and diversity in the workplace set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*, as outlined in the APS Employment Principles and supported by the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

This strategy will be supported by relevant action plans which foster an inclusive working environment and diverse workforce, for example:

- ▶ Reconciliation Action Plan
- ▶ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex plus (LGBTI+)
- ▶ Gender Equity
- ▶ Disability, Carers, Neurodiversity
- ▶ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

Below left: A social media post of the ABS Pride Network celebrating the 40th Sydney Mardi Gras.

Below middle: A social media post of ABS staff celebrating International Women's Day.

Below right: ABS employee Justin Lokhorst winning the 2017 Individual Australian Public Service Diversity Award.



GOAL 1

Informing and including our workforce for an engaged diverse culture

We are committed to a culture that is inclusive, recognises the diversity of our employees' experiences, knowledge and skills, and capitalises on these diverse perspectives, views and attitudes. We are committed to ensuring that every employee has equitable access to opportunities to contribute to the organisation, and that our endeavours support a culture that provides equity and gives our employees what they need to be successful. We encourage an environment that supports ongoing communication and dialogue with staff to explore, understand and address diversity issues and inclusiveness.

Desired Results

- ▶ We have an inclusive culture where our employees:
 - respect, value and accept individual differences and experiences
 - treat each other with dignity, respect and fairness
 - recognise that the vast array of skills, knowledge and experiences people bring to work matter
 - drive innovation and creativity through different and diverse perspectives
 - capitalise on the breadth of knowledge and experiences of our diverse workforce
 - support an environment where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated.
- ▶ Our employees agree the ABS is an organisation committed to inclusion and diversity.
- ▶ We maintain or improve our APS Employee Census diversity and engagement results each year.
- ▶ Our HR Policies/Guidelines and Diversity Practices are inclusive of diverse groups and have removed barriers in processes, plans, practices or services.
- ▶ Our language/terminology/definitions/guidelines use inclusive forms of words and images.
- ▶ Our employees are encouraged and supported to participate in cultural events of significance.
- ▶ We create a safe and open environment of trust where staff are willing to voluntarily self-identify their diversity status, enabling the ABS to better understand and support our people with relevant and proportional diversity initiatives.

Below: ABS Manager and APS Diversity Award Winner Justin Lokhorst speaking at a NAIDOC function.



GOAL 2

Engaging and retaining a representative workforce

We strive to be a flexible, adaptable and inclusive organisation to attract, engage and retain talent in a competitive environment. Our recruitment and retention methods need to be innovative and inclusive to ensure we engage a diverse range of people with skills, perspectives and experiences critical to increasing our capability and productivity, and enabling the ABS to be more reflective of the communities in which we operate.

Desired Results

- ▶ We are seen as an attractive employer that provides a supportive and inclusive workplace.
- ▶ Our workforce profile reflects the Australian population including:
 - Gender equity
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - People with disability (Physical and Mental)
 - Neurodiversity
 - People with caring responsibilities
 - LGBTI+ people
 - Culturally and linguistically diverse people
 - Mature age.
- ▶ We capitalise on our geographic diversity across Australia to deliver business outcomes.
- ▶ Our internal recruitment methods are equitable and fair, and provide all staff with opportunities for development and career progression.
- ▶ Our external recruitment methods are inclusive, attract and engage a diverse range of people and experiences.
- ▶ Our employment policies, processes and practices provide opportunities for growth, identification and optimisation of talent.
- ▶ Our recruitment policies, processes and practices use inclusive language, encourage diversity and address stereotypes and myths.
- ▶ Our recruitment advertising (internal and external) promotes the ABS as an inclusive employer (for example, using inclusive language, advertising in relevant media, participating in recruitment events, Flex Works).
- ▶ We capitalise on the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our employees to enable us to provide customer centred services.

Below left: ABS General Manager, Lane Masterton with Chaplain Neale Roberts (BeyondBlue) recognising World Mental Health Day

Below right: ABS Deputy Australian Statistician and Inclusion and Diversity Champion, Sam Palmer with Graeme Innes, former Disability Discrimination Commissioner presenting to staff on International Day of People with Disability.



GOAL 3

Supporting and encouraging employee participation, capability development and wellbeing

We have the workplace structures, systems and procedures in place to assist our people to effectively develop and build their capabilities. Harnessing available talent and ensuring a mix of skills, perspectives and experience is important to increasing organisational capability. By supporting our employees through the challenges of everyday life, and providing them with opportunities to balance work with personal commitments and interests (for example personal development, community involvement, family commitments, carer responsibilities, and cultural obligations), the ABS will create an environment where staff feel included, safe and valued.

Desired Results

- ▶ We embody a high performing culture where everybody is valued.
- ▶ Our employees are supported and encouraged to undertake management and/or leadership opportunities (for example higher duties, acting opportunities).
- ▶ Our employees and managers are encouraged and supported to access resources regarding workplace inclusion and diversity that raise awareness, understanding and capability across the organisation (for example, Cultural Understanding/Awareness across a range of diverse areas eg LGBTI+).
- ▶ Our employees are provided with a safe and inclusive work environment which provides flexibility and support to balance work, personal/family responsibilities and other commitments which enables staff to bring their whole selves to work (for example, Flex Works).
- ▶ Our management and leadership development programs have inclusion and respectful behaviours as central components.
- ▶ Our capability development activities and resources are truly accessible for all employees.
- ▶ We provide workplace adjustments and support for employees with reasonable alternative workplace needs.
- ▶ We will continue to participate in and support diversity and inclusion programs run by the APS and our communities.
- ▶ We encourage and support our employees to participate in employee-run diversity networks and encourage our SES leaders to champion diversity in their areas of interest.

Below is the ABS receiving the Federal Government Flexible Working Day Award. This award recognises the ABS for proactively embracing flexible work.



GOAL 4

Driving improvements through inclusive and diverse leadership

Our leaders pave the way and integrate diversity into all aspects of the business so it is not seen as a separate activity, by role modeling and promoting a culture that supports the abilities and experiences of our employees. Our leaders challenge accepted practices, are curious and open about new and different perspectives, and support managers to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required to lead diverse teams.

Desired Results

- ▶ Our leaders foster, promote and drive inclusion and diversity within the workplace.
- ▶ Our leaders are from varied cultures, backgrounds and diversity groups.
- ▶ Our SES demonstrate inclusion and ensure they build and lead diverse work teams with respectful supportive behaviours.
- ▶ Our leaders model inclusive behaviours and actively challenge the behaviours of others that do not reflect these values.
- ▶ Our leaders model healthy work/life balance and support flexible working.
- ▶ Our leaders have participated in developing their inclusive leadership capability and are applying the knowledge.

Below is Disability and Carers Champion Bill Allen (foreground left) and Pride Champion, Michael Meagher (far right) listening to staff views on inclusion and diversity.





Performance Monitoring and Reporting

We will monitor our progress against the *Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2018-2021* and relevant *Action Plans* via various means, for example APS Employee Census, Transformation Survey, HR Indicators and report outcomes annually through the ABS People Committee.

“ Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day ”

Author Unknown

Below are members of the ABS Youmpla Network with the ABS Reconciliation Champions.





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