



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Taxation Office**

# Diversity and Inclusion Plan

2017 - 2019

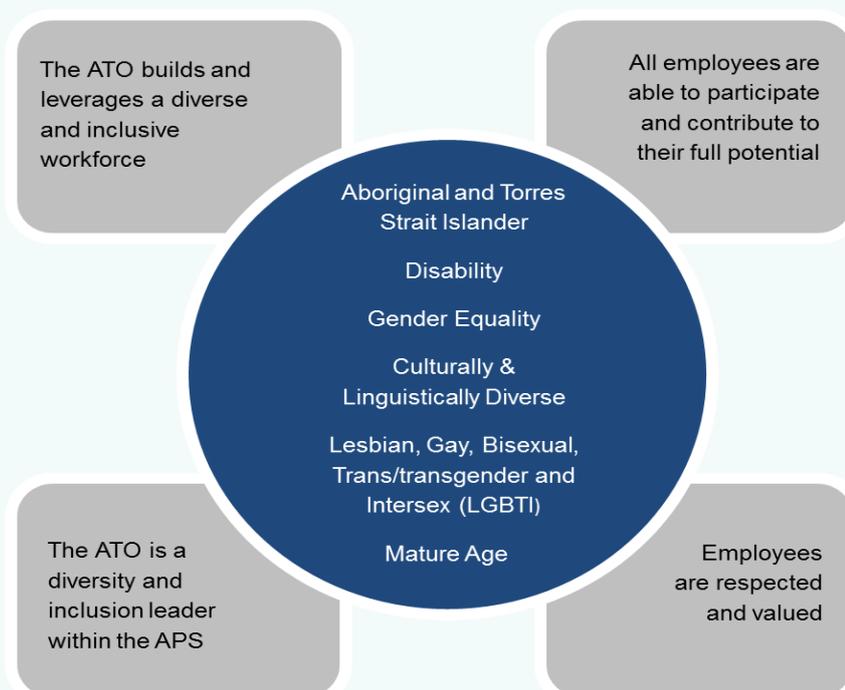
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# Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2017 – 2019

The ATO recognises that one of our greatest assets is the diversity our staff bring to the organisation. By embracing our differences we support everyone to realise their full potential. Building an inclusive workplace promotes improved productivity, greater creativity and innovation, higher employee well-being and engagement, and reduced employee turnover. It is also important that the ATO is reflective of the Australian community we serve.

At the core of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan are four principles that all employees are expected to uphold. The plan identifies six key priority groups which will form the basis of our ongoing diversity strategies and initiatives. Figure 1: Diversity and Inclusion Plan



The ATO recognises that while there are many parallels between the diversity groups, each faces unique barriers. Therefore we have tailored a flexible approach to each of our diversity groups, with a focus on the Australian Public Service (APS) wide priorities. The Diversity and Inclusion Plan aims to harness the potential of our workforce to drive effective teams, quality leadership, better decision making and streamlined business.

We recognise talent is not based on gender, cultural background, sexual orientation, age, disability or nationality. We acknowledge the need to remove conscious and unconscious biases and stereotyping from recruitment processes and the workplace.

We ensure we are early adopters to Information Technology, other equipment and changes in policy direction to support flexible work practices. We will recognise the significant diversity days to celebrate our diverse workforce.

We engage with our workforce to overcome barriers and ensure we understand their views to inform the development of future initiatives.

## Diversity and inclusion principles

To ensure the diversity and inclusion principles transition from rhetoric to reality, the ATO and all employees have a shared responsibility to ensure they come to life. The ATO has four underpinning diversity and inclusion principles:

### 1: ATO employees are respected and valued

We will promote an environment where the background and diverse skills of our employees are recognised. We understand the impact of conscious and unconscious biases ensuring our decisions are fair and equitable. We embrace the diversity of our workforce with inclusive leadership encouraging different perspectives from our employees.

The ATO's Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination – CEI outlines our commitment to providing a workplace that recognises and appreciates diversity, and is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination where everyone is treated with respect and courtesy.

### 2: The ATO builds and leverages a diverse and inclusive workplace

Our intent is to create a culture of inclusion where differences are recognised, valued and “different voices” are heard in decision making. Having people from diverse backgrounds feeling empowered and willing to raise differences will improve decision making, overall process design and our performance. Our culture of inclusion will attract, develop and retain talent that reflects all segments of the Australian community.

### 3: All employees are able to participate and contribute to their full potential

We champion an inclusive environment and the removal of barriers to ensure all employees are able to fully participate in the workplace. We provide a supportive and adaptable work environment encouraging all our employees to utilise flexible work to balance work, family and caring responsibilities.

### 4: The ATO strives to be a diversity and inclusion leader and an employer of choice within the APS and across the wider community

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is represented by all ATO employees who behave in an ethical and respectful manner and promote an inclusive work environment. This inclusive and respectful ethos extends to our dealings with the Australian community. We will conduct informal site-based events on nominated celebration / commemoration days to promote understanding, acceptance, and as a means of celebrating diversity in all its forms. We will partner with providers and suppliers who share a stated and similar commitment to diversity and inclusion.

## Understanding our progress

We will monitor our progress in supporting and embedding diversity and inclusion through these key measures:

Performance Measure	Current Performance (as at December 2016)	Target
Rate of employees identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1.8%	2.5% by 2018 (with an interim target of 2.1% by 2017)
Rate of female representation at EL and SES classifications	Approximately 48% and 40% at EL and SES classification (respectively)	Approximately 50/50 by 2019
Rate of employees identifying as having disability	3.0%	Trending to 5% by 2019
Rate of employees identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)	21.9%	Maintain current levels >20%
Rate of employees identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI+)	New measure (no historical benchmark)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish benchmark reporting by end 2017</li> <li>- Further increase rate of self-identification in 2019</li> </ul>
Assessment against the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI)	Rating improved from 2015 to 2016. Currently "bronze" status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rating continues to improve</li> <li>- Obtain Gold status by 2019</li> </ul>
ATO employees completing the 'An Inclusive & Diverse ATO' training package	Newly introduced training package.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% of employees within the HR job family by end 2017</li> <li>- 100% of employees with line management responsibilities by end 2018</li> <li>- 100% of new employees</li> </ul>

These measures provide a snapshot of our progress. We will monitor and assess these yearly, together with the detailed actions described in the Performance outcomes. We will modify our targets during the life of this Plan where objectives are achieved to enable further progress.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Improving the social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a priority for the Australian Government, the APS and the ATO. We are committed to reaching a 2.5% Indigenous employment by 2018. We are participating in the APS's Memorandum of Understanding for Indigenous employment, implementing our Indigenous Employment Strategy and continuing to implement our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Since the launch of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan, the ATO has successfully established a network of five Senior Executive Service (SES) Indigenous Champions. These Champions have assisted to promote and support Indigenous recruitment, retention and career development initiatives across the ATO.

The ATO will:

### Engage

- promote the ATO as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- implement our Indigenous Employment Strategy
  - implement and promote programs which support the recruitment of Indigenous Australians (e.g. Evergreen)
  - better use of special measures recruitment provisions to encourage Indigenous Australians to apply for jobs in the ATO at higher levels, rather than just entry level positions
  - develop links and relationships with Indigenous communities and across the APS to support our recruitment and retention strategies.

### Inform

- continue to use the SES Indigenous champions to provide support and visibility for Indigenous initiatives within the organisation
- revise and redesign a tailored face to face and online cultural awareness training program specific to the ATO
- increase the knowledge, understanding and cultural capability of the ATO
- acknowledge Indigenous days of significance as per the ATO Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples protocol guide.

### Support

- provide Indigenous employees with access to mentors to assist with career development
- continue the successful implementation of the Indigenous Employee Network to inform Indigenous employment strategies
- continue having our Indigenous Liaison Officer providing HR support and advice for Indigenous employees and their managers regarding cultural issues.

# Disability

Disability is part of human diversity. In Australia, one in three people have disability or are close to someone who does. A disability is any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions. It may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible. A disability may have minimal or substantial impact on a person's abilities. No two people with the same disability experience their disability in the same way.

The ATO is committed to meeting the objectives of the [As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19](#) which aims to improve employment outcomes, retention, development opportunities and career progression for people with disability. The ATO is committed to building a disability confident culture through developing the right attitudes, behaviours, systems and knowledge to support the inclusion of all current and prospective employees with disability.

The ATO will:

## Engage

- consult with our employees with disability to gain an understanding of their workplace experiences
- promote the ATO as an employer that provides a supportive and inclusive workplace for people with disability by:
  - implementing recruitment and marketing strategies
  - maintaining relationships with public and private sector networks to promote employment opportunities for people with disability.

## Inform

- provide support and visibility for disability initiatives within the ATO through the SES Disability Champions network
- increase disability awareness for employees and disability confidence for managers through the provision of learning products and support services, including the [‘Talking Disability’ and ‘My Story’ video series, Disability Awareness eLearning packages and disability fact sheets](#)
- champion and promote the contributions of people with disability in the workplace
- ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disability are taken into account in the design and delivery of products and services.

## Support

- support a National Disability Network to provide information exchange, peer support and stakeholder engagement
- maintain a Disability Advisers Network that provides advice and support to employees with disability, their managers and colleagues
- provide the option of having a Reasonable Adjustment Passport for all employees
- pursue updated technology, equipment and work practices to enable employees with disability to participate in and contribute to organisational goals and outcomes
- provide employees with disability access to mentors to assist with career development
- apply the RecruitAbility scheme to externally advertised vacancies.

## Gender Equality

Gender equality is a social imperative and a business asset. Women account for over half the ATO's workforce however there is gender disparity at the Executive and SES levels. For gender equality to be reached and sustainable, it must be part of our organisational culture – embedded in day-to-day operations.

We seek to make the most of the talents and skills of all employees as a contemporary and adaptable organisation. The ATO recognises the importance of attracting, retaining and advancing women at all levels.

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) released [Balancing the Future: Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19](#) which outlines the importance of increasing the representation of women in senior leadership positions across the APS. Since the launch of the plan the ATO has set ambitious gender equality targets and developed a Gender Equality Action Plan, outlining how we will reach our targets.

The ATO will:

### Engage

- promote the ATO as an employer of choice for women at all levels
- promote flexible work practices as the norm for both women and men, while still meeting business needs
- maintain and foster an environment in which women have every opportunity to succeed.

### Inform

- ensure the business case for gender equality is communicated and understood at all levels of the ATO
- acknowledge the achievements of women through the ATO's formal recognition program
- showcase examples where flexible workplace arrangements are meeting an individual's and business area's needs.

### Support

- implement the ATO's Gender Equality Action Plan
- actively challenge structural and cultural barriers to the career progression of women
- promote the availability of flexible work options to balance professional and personal commitments
- ensure managers support all employees (both women and men) with caring responsibilities
- maintain a commitment to developing, retaining and advancing women
- encourage internal and external women's networks and support groups.

## Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

The ATO's workforce comprises people from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, religious and national backgrounds reflecting the Australian population that was born overseas. We are committed to creating an inclusive work environment that recognises individual and cultural differences.

We leverage the diverse experience, views and talents of our workforce to deliver better outcomes for the community. The cultural diversity of our workforce enables the ATO to utilise a broad range of skills and contributions, varied experiences and perspectives. We recognise that diverse and inclusive teams are sources of innovation and productivity.

The ATO will:

### Engage

- recognise and embrace the diversity of our workforce and foster mutual respect for the unique skills of each employee
- leverage the assets of our geographic footprint and culturally and linguistically diverse employees to provide tailored and culturally targeted services to the Australian community
- promote the rich and diverse attributes of ATO employees.

### Inform

- celebrate cultural diversity and highlight how it contributes to business outcomes
- foster and encourage awareness of all cultures and religions.

### Support

- inclusive leadership driving a 'culture of inclusion'; where differences are recognised, valued, and different voices are heard in decision making
- an environment where "Different voices" improves discussion, leading to better process design and performance
- provide flexibility to accommodate cultural and religious commitments in the workplace where business needs permit
- create an inclusive environment to increase the representation of CALD employees in senior leadership.

## Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+)

The ATO is committed to fostering a culture where employees with diverse sexuality and/or gender feel respected, valued and empowered. The LGBTI+ acronym is intended to extend to all those who are part of the wider diversity of bodies, genders, sexualities, relationships and identities.

Since the launch of the plan, the ATO introduced the first LGBTI+ and Ally network, known as ATOMIC (ATO Making Inclusion Count) – The Power of Diversity. This highlights the role of the individuals building something bigger and better. Today ATOMIC has hundreds of active members, is supported by SES Champions and Sponsors and collectively they have supported enhancing LGBTI+ inclusion across the ATO and APS.

The ATO will:

### Engage

- increase the visibility of LGBTI+ inclusion in the ATO by:
  - profiling the ATO effectively to the LGBTI+ community
  - continuing to build relationships with external LGBTI+ networks, APS agencies, government departments and other organisations to increase LGBTI+ inclusion.

### Inform

- continue our partnership with Pride in Diversity, the national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion, to encourage knowledge exchange, networking opportunities and participate in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI)
- utilise our Champions and Sponsors to provide support and visibility for LGBTI+ initiatives
- scoping targeted LGBTI+ awareness and educational training
- establish reporting options for sexuality and gender diversity to support a complete organisational demographic profile and guide strategic initiatives.

### Support

- foster a culture where employees are supported, respected and feel safe to bring their authentic whole selves to work
- review HR policy / diversity practice and align it with Australian and international best practice for LGBTI+ inclusion
- continue the successful implementation of the ATOMIC network to support LGBTI+ initiatives
- support employees with their workplace gender transition and gender affirmation.

## Mature age

Mature age employees are recognised as individuals over the age of 50<sup>i</sup>. The number of ATO employees recognised as mature age will likely increase with the changing economic conditions and legislation meaning employees will on average, work to a higher age than at any other time in history.

The ATO values the unique skills, knowledge and experiences that all employees bring to the workplace. As an organisation we seek to attract and retain mature age workers and offer a working environment in which all employees can flourish professionally while balancing other priorities in their lives.

We value employees of all ages and recognise the benefits of having a workforce diverse in age. There are options available including flexible work arrangements in place to ensure workers of all ages are empowered and accommodated.

The ATO will:

### Engage

- promote an age inclusive culture
- position the ATO as an “ageless employer”, our workforce is based not on age, but on talent, skills, experience and willingness to work
- position the ATO as an employer of choice for mature-age workers
- consider the needs of an intergenerational workforce
- ensure the individual needs of employees are respected in regards to stages in their lives and careers.

### Inform

- ensure employees understand their responsibilities to maintain a workplace free from direct and indirect age discrimination and unrecognised biases
- encourage knowledge transfer through cross-generational mentoring relationships
- ensure managers harness the potential of all employees, regardless of age.

### Support

- enable continued participation in the workforce without age-related barriers
- explore ways to prevent career stagnation
- develop transition to retirement options for employees
- enable managers to actively encourage upskilling opportunities as they arise
- retain valued employees through developing alternative/flexible work arrangements for caring responsibilities, transition to retirement reduced working week, and job sharing as business needs permit
- provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities as processes and technology evolves
- provide support for aged workers to manage caring responsibilities and health related absences
- support talented professionals who are seeking to restart their careers after a longer term absence from the workplace.

## Legal framework

The legal framework applying to agencies that employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999* reflects the expectations of the Government and the community about a fair, inclusive and productive public service. The general legal framework is as follows:

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004* – makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age.
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* – provides an avenue of redress for those alleging discrimination and provides for the rights of these persons.
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* – makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability (including a disease).
- *Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987 (Commonwealth Authorities)* – includes the requirement to collect statistics for four target employment groups: women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and people with disability.
- *Fair Work Act 2009* – provides a safety net of minimum terms and conditions of employment through the National Employment Standards (NES).
- *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* – all employers and employees must maintain a secure, healthy and safe working environment. An employer must take practicable precautions to prevent harassment.
- *Public Service Act 1999, Public Service Regulations 1999 and Public Service Commissioner's Directions* – defines the scope and application of the APS Values, Code of Conduct and also, require Agency Heads to establish workplace diversity programs and report on these annually.
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* – makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origin.
- *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* – sets out the safety requirements for employers in respect of their employees and also provides for compensation and rehabilitation for employees injured in the workplace.
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* – relates to discrimination on the ground of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding or family responsibilities or involving sexual harassment.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Australian Public Service strategic workforce analysis and reporting guide*, Australian Public Service Commission (2012) recognises employees aged 50 years and over as “approaching retirement age”. This definition is used as an indicator for likely age retirement and potential loss of corporate knowledge, skills and experience.



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