

ACT AUDITOR–GENERAL'S **PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**Diversity, equity and inclusion
in the ACT Public Service**

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The ACT Audit Office acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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PA 24/11

The Speaker
ACT Legislative Assembly
Civic Square, London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Speaker

I am pleased to forward to you a Performance Audit Report titled 'Diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACT Public Service' for tabling in the Legislative Assembly pursuant to Subsection 17(5) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* and relevant professional standards including *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*.

Yours sincerely



Michael Harris
Auditor-General
14 January 2026

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Summary

The ACT Government has expressed a commitment to implementing the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS). The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion seek to recognise and include the unique differences, contributions and needs of staff in the workplace in a way that is fair and equitable and allows them to participate in decision-making.

The audit considered ACT Government agencies' activities to implement the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion across the ACTPS. The audit considered:

- the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's activities to develop whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion and support ACT Government agencies to implement them; and
- the activities of a selection of ACT Government agencies to recognise and implement relevant diversity, equity and inclusion principles at key stages of the employment lifecycle.

The ACT Government agencies considered for the purpose of the audit were the Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Emergency Services Agency.¹



Conclusions

Whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

There are a number of different whole-of-government strategies and policies relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. The whole-of-government strategies and policies are also supported by various frameworks, strategies and plans, both at a whole-of-government level and directorate-level. The lack of a 'single source of truth' or 'roadmap' makes it difficult for managers and staff to identify the frameworks, strategies and plans and understand and implement the relevant diversity, equity and inclusion obligations.

The overarching *ACT Public Service Respect Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework), which was first implemented in 2010, is out-of-date. It does not refer to current responsibilities and legislation or frameworks, strategies and plans developed since 2015.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has recognised the need for a more cohesive approach and an overarching strategy to diversity, equity and inclusion in the

¹ In July 2025, following the conduct of audit fieldwork, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate was amalgamated with the former Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to become the City and Environment Directorate. The findings in the audit report are made with reference to the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, while future activities and/or recommendations are made with reference to the City and Environment Directorate.

ACTPS and an intention to work 'towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy'. This needs to be progressed as a matter of priority.

Implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

More effective performance and accountability arrangements are needed to ensure the principles and practices of diversity, equity and inclusion are implemented across the ACTPS.

There is variability in how the numerous whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion identify and articulate:

- strategic objectives and outcomes;
- actions with timeframes for implementation; and
- performance measures with targets.

Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans do this well, either in the document itself, or in a supporting action plan(s). Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans identify high-level concepts and identify that specific details on actions and timeframes for implementation are to be found in directorate-specific documents. Such an approach weakens whole-of-government performance and accountability arrangements.

The ACTPS has two whole-of-government employment targets, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (3 percent by 2026) and people with disability (9 percent). The ACTPS does not have employment targets for other diversity groups, such as LGBTIQ+ employees or culturally and linguistically diverse employees. The current percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS is 2.0 percent, which is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory (2.0 percent). The current reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS is 3.0 percent, which is lower than the percentages of the ACT population living with a disability (women: 22.1 percent; men: 18.9 percent). Considerable effort is needed across the ACTPS to meet these employment targets.

Annual ACTPS State of the Service Reports are a key mechanism for reporting on diversity, equity and inclusion matters in the ACTPS. However, reporting on such matters is dispersed throughout the reports, and this makes it difficult to quickly obtain a snapshot of diversity, equity and inclusion activity and progress across the ACTPS. State of the Service Reports also do not consistently present multi-year trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data. Collating and tracking data across multiple years would facilitate more meaningful trend analysis and performance reporting.

The ACTPS Employee Survey is held once every two years. The survey is voluntary and anonymous and reported data is de-identified. There are known challenges with the accuracy of data on diversity groups as collected through the ACT Government's HR21 system, which the Employee Survey offers an opportunity to address.

Agency practices (strategy and monitoring)

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through the development of overarching strategies or plans. The way in which the agencies have developed and demonstrated this commitment has varied.

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have also undertaken a significant range of activities in support of diversity, equity and inclusion. The size, scale and expected impact of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

Throughout the chapter are examples of how the agencies have considered, recognised and sought to support diversity, equity and inclusion practices.

Agency practices (employee lifecycle)

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to attract, retain and develop employees from diversity groups. The way the agencies have sought to do so has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

Throughout the chapter are examples of how the agencies have considered, recognised and sought to support diversity, equity and inclusion practices.



Key findings

Whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

Paragraph

Whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

There are eight separate frameworks, strategies or policies relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. Five relate specifically to the ACTPS, while the others have a broader focus but are also relevant and applicable to the ACTPS. The *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*, the *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* and the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029* reflect a contemporary understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. Several others do not, including the overarching *ACT Public Service Respect Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework). The RED Framework has not been updated since 2015 and does not refer to the current responsibilities and legislation or frameworks, strategies and plans developed since 2015.

2.26

There are many frameworks, strategies and plans and other requirements relevant to the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. There is no 'single source of truth' or 'roadmap' provided by CMTEDD that sets out the relevant legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans. The lack of a 'single source of truth' or roadmap makes it difficult for managers and staff to identify the relevant frameworks, strategies and plans and understand and implement the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. 2.33

Inclusion of people with lived experience in policy and practice development and decision-making is central to better practice diversity and inclusion. A participatory approach to community engagement, which involves diverse populations in decision-making, ensures that policies reflect the lived experiences of individuals and community perspectives, strengthening their effectiveness and relevance. A review of consultation processes for the development of frameworks, strategies and plans shows consultation within the ACTPS and with the community has been generally effective, but that consultation has been less effective with community organisations and the private sector. The development of the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* demonstrated strong and extensive engagement with ACTPS and community stakeholders. 2.43

There are dedicated frameworks, strategies or plans for the majority of identified diverse groups in society, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability and women. However, there is no ACTPS-specific framework, strategy or plan to support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, younger workers, older workers, neurodivergent workers or individuals from low socio-economic status. 2.51

Building effective diversity, equity and inclusion requires managers and leaders to recognise the importance of belonging and intersectionality and cultivate an environment in which individuals feel authentically accepted and their distinct perspectives and contributions are actively sought and acknowledged. This involves building a sense of belonging and celebrating individual uniqueness to create meaningful and sustainable inclusion. The RED Framework does not specifically acknowledge the importance of building a sense of belonging. It does not identify how belonging will be specifically fostered nor does it identify specific processes to monitor employees' sense of belonging, which could be used to directly inform improvements and adjustments to frameworks, strategies and plans. 2.59

In 2021, the ACT Government conducted a research project to review the RED Framework. The outcomes of the research project are summarised in the December 2021 report: *Beyond RED: Respect, Equity and Diversity* (the *Beyond RED* report). The report identified a systemic challenge related to a 'revealing and alarming' number of diversity and inclusion commitments and actions across directorates and that there were 'almost 1000 D&I commitments and associated actions in our stock take across the ACTPS'. The report recommended that all directorates pause, review their existing actions and prioritise their activities to reflect desired outcomes. The report indicated that this review 'could take part in the first half of 2022', with a renewed strategic direction set in the second half of 2022. 2.69

CMTEDD has recognised the need for a more cohesive approach and an overarching strategy to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS and an intention to work ‘towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy’. The development of the strategy has been delayed. CMTEDD’s Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has developed an *Inclusion and Belonging Team Plan 2024-2025* which refers to pre-planning for an Inclusion and Belonging Strategy in May-June 2025.

2.73

Implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

Guidance and support for agencies

CMTEDD seeks to provide guidance and support to directorates and agencies in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans by providing information via the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub, the ACTPS Employment Portal and the ACTPS Rehabilitation Management System. The ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub provides useful advice on support services available to ACTPS employees. The ACTPS Employment Portal provides information and resources for key audiences including ACTPS employees, managers and supervisors, executives and HR practitioners, but is also accessible to people outside the ACTPS. The Rehabilitation Management System outlines the policies, procedures, guidelines and tools used to manage the work rehabilitation and return to work of an employee following an injury or illness. In doing so it includes, more broadly, policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability. This is not ideal because it suggests that disability is equated with an injury or illness.

3.16

Gathering, tracking and analysing diversity, equity and inclusion employment data is important for the purpose of measuring whether frameworks, strategies and plans are successful and facilitating planning for future initiatives. There are currently three mechanisms to gather data and information on new and existing staff: when people apply for a position through ACT Jobs; through new employees’ completion of the New Employee Personal Information Pack; and by allowing employees to update their diversity information. These processes do not reflect all diversity groups or the current terminology used to describe them.

3.31

At any point after their commencement as an ACTPS employee, an employee can update their diversity information via an HR21 employee portal. Updates to name, gender and title must be manually inputted via the employee submitting a separate form to Shared Service HR. This dual-step process may be impeding updates being made by staff as well as the accuracy of the data that is maintained.

3.32

Regular learning and development reinforces the importance, and continuing and growing consciousness of, diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the workplace. It is better practice for there to be mandatory training requirements for staff (including managers/executives) and recruitment panels. There are no mandatory workplace diversity training requirements for staff at a whole-of-government level, nor are

3.38

there mandatory training requirements for recruiters and selection panels. Training requirements are set by directorates and this has resulted in inconsistency in practice across the ACTPS.

The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has coordinated a range of cross-directorate programs to recognise and support diversity and inclusion across the ACTPS. These include the ACTPS Vocational Employment Program (a 12 to 18-month entry-level employment pathway for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and close family of serving or former members of the Australian Defence Force). Other programs have also been offered (e.g. the Veterans’ Peer Network and Neurodiversity Pilot Program) but there is no indication they will be offered again. 3.52

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers short term counselling and wellbeing support for ACTPS employees and their immediate families. In November 2024, the utilisation rate of the Program across the ACTPS was 12.4 percent (four percent higher than the industry rate of 8.4 percent). The Program had 30,830 engagements in the contract year prior to November 2024, of which 3,496 remained active clients. In April 2022, a workshop was conducted by CMTEDD with several directorates and agencies to discuss the purpose of the Program and its utilisation. Issues raised in that workshop were low utilisation rates of the Manager Support and Career Assist services and confusion about the extent of the services that are available. 3.60

Performance and accountability arrangements

A review of cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion shows there is variability in how they identify and articulate: strategic objectives and outcomes; actions with timeframes for implementation; and performance measures with targets. Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans do this well, either in the document itself, or in a supporting action plan(s). Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans identify high-level concepts and identify that specific details on actions and timeframes for implementation are to be found in directorate-specific documents. Such an approach weakens whole-of-government performance and accountability arrangements. 3.81

Employment targets are measurable objectives with timeframes for increased numbers of people in roles. The ACTPS has two whole-of-government employment targets, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (3 percent by 2026) and people with disability (9 percent). The current percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS is 2.0 percent. This is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory (2.0 percent). The current reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS is 3.0 percent. This is lower than the percentages of the ACT population living with a disability (women: 22.1 percent; men: 18.9 percent). 3.91

The ACTPS does not have employment targets for LGBTIQ+ employees. On 30 June 2024, the ACTPS is tracking slightly above other jurisdictions in the employment of LGBTIQ+ employees. Seven percent of respondents identified as LGBTIQ+ in the 3.96

2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, compared with 5.9 percent in the Australian Public Service in 2021, 6.0 percent in the Queensland Public Service in 2024 and 5.6 percent in the Victorian public sector in 2021.

The ACTPS does not have employment targets for culturally and linguistically diverse employees. The proportion of ACTPS employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (24.4 percent) is less than the population of culturally and linguistically diverse people in the ACT (27.1 percent). Culturally and linguistically diverse employees are under-represented in SES roles. In response to a 2022 Legislative Assembly resolution the ACT Government committed to implementing ‘a mentorship program for aspiring SES who are from a CALD background’. A pilot mentoring program that was due to be launched in February 2024 was launched in May 2025.

3.102

The proportion of ACTPS employees who are women (65.0 percent) exceeds the proportion of women in the ACT (50.6 percent) as well as the Australian Public Service (60.4 percent), the Queensland Public Service (57.7 percent) and the Victorian public sector (59.6 percent). Women are also represented in 58.0 percent of ACTPS leadership roles. This is a higher proportion than other jurisdictions.

3.105

Whole-of-government monitoring and reporting

Annual ACTPS *State of the Service Reports* are a key mechanism for reporting on diversity, equity and inclusion matters in the ACTPS. Reporting on such matters is dispersed throughout the reports. This makes it difficult to quickly obtain a snapshot of diversity, equity and inclusion activity and progress across the ACTPS. *State of the Service Reports* also do not consistently present multi-year trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data. Collating and tracking data across multiple years would facilitate more meaningful trend analysis.

3.117

State of the Service Reports published between 2019-20 and 2024-25 show:

3.121

- the employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees has not changed between 2019-20 and 2024-25 (2.0 percent). Without growth the target of 3 percent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people employed in the ACTPS by 2026 is at risk; and
- the employment of people with disability has remained relatively static (minor increase from 2.8 percent in 2019-20 to 3.0 percent in 2024-25). This is well below the target of 9 percent. The report relies on human resources data. Alternative data, however, obtained through the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, indicates that 7.0 percent of ACTPS employees identified as a person with disability.

The *State of the Service Reports* include data and information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS. *State of the Service* reporting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment in the ACTPS has become less comprehensive and thorough over time. The *State of the Service Reports* do not present multi-year analysis of data and there is little or no analysis of whether the

3.126

results are above or below expectations, the reasons for the results, or the likelihood of achieving targets.

The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the ACTPS median salary and median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse employees. A review of the median salary for these employees between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows: 3.131

- the median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently lower than the ACTPS median salary since 2019-20; and
- the median salary for people with disability was marginally lower than the ACTPS median salary between 2019-20 and 2022-23 but exceeded it in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse employees. A review of the median salary for these employees between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows: 3.137

- the gender pay gap in the ACTPS has generally been within 1.0 percent (with women earning less than men over this period). An exception was 2022-23 and 2024-25, when the gender pay gap was marginally in favour of women;
- the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women has been in favour of women in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2024-25, but in favour of men in 2022-23 and 2023-24;
- the gender pay gap for people with disability has been consistently in favour of women and better than the ACTPS average since 2021-22; and
- the gender pay gap for culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently in favour of men and worse than the ACTPS average.

The *State of the Service Reports* typically include some discussion and analysis of the gender pay gap. For example, the *2024-25 State of the Service Report* includes three pages of analysis of the gender pay gap in the ACTPS compared to the Australian and ACT labour forces, the proportion of women in the ACTPS and executive roles, and the gender pay gap by directorate and diversity group. However, the *State of the Service Reports* typically do not provide any analysis or explanation of the gender pay gap differences for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or culturally and linguistically diverse employees. 3.138

The ACTPS Employee Survey is held once every two years. The survey is anonymous and reported data is de-identified. There are known challenges with the accuracy of data on diversity groups as collected through the ACT Government's HR21 system, which the Employee Survey offers an opportunity to address. For example: 3.146

- on 30 June 2024, 2.9 percent of employees identified as people living with disability according to self-reporting in the HR/payroll systems but 7 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as people with disability; and
- on 30 June 2024, 2.4 percent of employees identified as LGBTIQ+ in the HR/payroll system but 6 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as LGBTIQ+.

In April 2022 the ACT Public Service Strategic Board agreed to an 'ACTPS Workforce Inclusion target of 80% positive responses, to be measured by the 2025 ACTPS Staff Survey'. In setting the target as 80 percent it was recognised that the ACTPS was 'currently 10 percentage points behind the APS inclusion ratings. Therefore, an ACTPS KPI of 80% would align us with the APS, being our primary workforce competition'. The Strategic Board was advised that 'inclusion scores from different ACTPS diversity groups were generally lower than the 70% ACTPS average' and that the lower scores for diversity groups were identified as 'both a strategic risk and an opportunity to understand where our efforts can be focussed to achieve the most traction on workforce inclusion'.

3.155

One means by which an organisation's maturity in diversity and inclusion practices can be measured is through a self-assessment process against a relevant diversity and inclusion maturity model. In 2021 CMTEDD assessed the maturity of the ACTPS against the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model. CMTEDD assessed the ACTPS as Level 2 (mid-level) maturity overall with some variation across the service. A Level 2 organisation is identified as moving beyond a tick-in-the-box approach and has gained leadership buy-in to drive greater diversity management. It has established diversity and inclusion programs, unconscious bias training and actively promotes diverse events.

3.165

The AHRI model has strategic advantages because it is aligned with Australia's legislation and workplace culture policies and enables organisations to assess the impact of their engagement strategies and leadership commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. There are also other better practice tools by which organisations can assess and improve their diversity, equity and inclusion policies, such as the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) framework. The AHRI model and GDEIB framework may be used in combination, as the AHRI model can provide guidance on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the Australian workplace and legislative context, while the GDEIB would align the ACTPS with global better practices.

3.166

Agency practices (strategy and monitoring)

Strategies and plans

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through the development of overarching strategies or plans. The way in which the agencies have developed and demonstrated this commitment has varied.

4.15

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a specific commitment to supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff: 4.25

- the Education Directorate promulgated its *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity* in July 2024 and developed an *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027* ‘brings together and promotes career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and enhances the development of our existing workforce’;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate promulgated a *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026*, which comprised 16 action areas and 104 deliverables. The Plan was further supported by the *Cultural Integrity Framework 2024-2025 Action Plan*, which identified specific actions to be undertaken in 2024-25; and
- the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has developed a *Reconciliation Action Plan April 2023 – March 2025* as well as a one-page *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022*. The Action Plan describes ten actions to attract, develop and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. Both the Action Plan and guidelines had an identified end-date of June 2022. They have not been updated, but are still being used.

The requirement for ‘larger public service entities to have gender action plans’ was a requirement of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (Tenth Legislative Assembly). The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate developed gender action plans. The Education Directorate has drafted a *Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29*, but the plan has not yet been finalised. Not having a finalised gender action plan is recognised as a strategic risk for the Education Directorate. 4.36

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have expressed commitment and support for other diversity groups in different ways: 4.45

- the Education Directorate has drafted an *Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27*, which is intended to ‘[detail] practical and measurable actions that will improve the experience of Directorate staff with a disability’. A Statement of Commitment for other diversity groups (LGBTIQ+, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women, veterans and carers) is identified as a deliverable in the Education Directorate’s *People and Performance 2024 Branch Work Plan*;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has developed a *Veterans Network Action Plan 2024* and *Pride Network Action Plan 2024*. The Directorate’s *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (Extended to 2025)* indicates that a further six action plans are under development: LGBTIQ+ inclusion, women, people with disability, veterans, gender equality and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds; and

- the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has an ‘*Our abilities’ Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24*. The strategy aims to eliminate barriers to employment, improve the experience of work and achieve positive employment outcomes for people with disability within the directorate. The Strategy came to term in June 2024 and has not been updated since then.

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have sought to engage and consult with representatives from diverse groups for the purpose of developing and informing the agency’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The way in which the agencies have done this has varied:

4.60

- the Education Directorate has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network and Disability Advocacy Network, which have been consulted for the purpose of developing various initiatives, as well as a Pride Network and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Staff Network;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had a Women’s Network, Disability and Carers Network, Pride Network, Veterans Network and a RAP Committee; and
- the Emergency Services Agency has consulted with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds for the purpose of planning two initiatives: a Pilot ACT Emergency Services Agency Work Experience Program for ACT School Year 10-12 First Nations Students; and two ESA Guest Experience Officer roles as designated positions for people with disability.

Monitoring and reporting

Reports from Converge, the Employee Assistance Program provider, can provide useful information on the effectiveness of an agency’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and employees’ overall sense of wellbeing. *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* produced by Converge provide a variety of quantitative and qualitative information related to staff members’ access to the Program. The three agencies considered as part of the audit do not incorporate Employee Assistance Program data or information from *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* into their annual reports.

4.70

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a significant range of activities in support of diversity, equity and inclusion. The size, scale and expected impact of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency’s staffing cohort, focus and priorities. Only on a few occasions have the agencies sought to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the specific activities.

4.80

The RED Framework provides for the identification of Respect Equity and Diversity Contact Officers (REDCOs) across directorates and agencies. The role of REDCOs is to ‘model and promote the ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours to develop positive work cultures across the ACTPS. REDCOs provide information to staff seeking a solution to improve or resolve a workplace issue or situation, which may relate to

4.103

inappropriate behaviour or misconduct’. The three agencies considered as part of the audit have identified and established REDCOs. Each of the agencies has established regular meetings and forums for its REDCOs, but these are not always well-attended. REDCOs are required to submit a RED Contact Report for every contact they have related to RED Framework matters. Across all agencies it was noted that REDCOs sometimes have informal contacts with staff members, which are not recorded as a contact for reporting and monitoring purposes.

Exit surveys of departing staff are an opportunity to obtain information and insights into potential workplace issues and/or dissatisfaction of staff. These may include insights into staff members’ feeling of belonging and inclusion. The Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have developed and implemented exit surveys of departing staff. The Education Directorate has systematically reviewed and evaluated exit survey responses with a view to identifying significant factors and trends. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had only begun to prepare quarterly reports on exit survey results as of 2024. Neither the Emergency Services Agency nor the Justice and Community Safety Directorate more broadly have conducted exit surveys of staff. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate advised that it is developing a ‘Leaving the JACS Directorate Survey’ which it plans to implement in 2025.

4.114

The ACTPS Employee Survey is conducted every two years. The Survey provides useful information on employees and their overall sense of wellbeing. Across the three agencies the proportion of employees who identified as belonging to a diversity group was reported as higher through the ACTPS Employee Survey than through HR21 data. This means that employees from diversity groups are under-represented in the HR21 data and more likely to self-identify in the anonymous ACTPS Employee Survey. For the Education Directorate, the annual School Satisfaction and Climate Survey (School Survey) also collects relevant feedback from school staff as well as parents, carers and students. The ACTPS Employee Survey (and School Survey) provide useful information on employees’ wellbeing and inclusion.

4.135

Agency practices (employee lifecycle)

Attraction

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to attract potential employees from different diversity groups. The nature of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency’s staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

5.20

Recruitment

Better practice recruitment involves systematically replacing subjective decision-making in recruitment processes with objective decision-making by developing objective criteria and standards to reduce bias. Better practice recruitment approaches also include training for recruiters/selection panels in diversity, accessibility, cultural awareness, reasonable adjustments and unconscious bias. All three agencies considered as part of the audit have developed policy and procedural

5.36

guidance in relation to the conduct of recruitment and selection processes, with a view to ensuring that recruitment processes are fair and free of bias. The Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have developed and implemented mandatory training for members of recruitment and selection panels. The mandatory training addresses the key principles of merit, equity, diversity and fairness; conflicts of interest; and unconscious bias.

Onboarding

Onboarding refers to the process by which new employees come to understand the expectations of their workplace and receive appropriate training. The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to onboard employees from different diversity groups. The nature of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities. In two specific instances the Education Directorate's Diversity and Inclusion team has made efforts to improve the onboarding experience for specific groups, namely people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women/new parents.

5.47

Retention and development

Targeted training and career development pathways equip employees with the skills and opportunities needed to grow within an organisation. This approach fosters engagement, satisfaction and loyalty and creates a cohesive employee experience that promotes retention. The three agencies considered as part of the audit provide a variety of training and development opportunities to their employees. The nature of the training and development opportunities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

5.73



Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Whole-of-government diversity, equity and inclusion strategy

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, in progressing the development of an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, ensure that the Strategy specifically recognises and reflects:

- a) key contemporary concepts, such as belonging and intersectionality; and
- b) the broad range of the different diversity groups represented in the ACTPS and their specific needs.

Recommendation 2 Provision of information

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:

- a) enhance the information provided through the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub by providing an accessible and identifiable roadmap of relevant legislation, frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion relevant to the ACTPS; and
- b) provide ACTPS policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability through an alternative forum to the Rehabilitation Management System.

Recommendation 3 Collection of diversity, equity and inclusion employment data

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:

- a) collect employment data for people who identify as neurodivergent; and
- b) develop systems and processes for ACTPS employees to directly update key personal information.

Recommendation 4 Learning and development requirements

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should establish mandatory:

- a) workplace diversity training requirements for all staff and refresher courses for staff every two to three years;
- b) diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for managers and supervisors; and
- c) diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for ACTPS staff involved in recruitment.

Recommendation 5 Performance and accountability arrangements for cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans

When developing future frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, ACT Government agencies should clearly identify:

- a) strategic objectives and outcomes;
- b) actions with timeframes for implementation; and
- c) performance measures with targets.

Recommendation 6 Employment targets

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should establish employment targets for diversity groups, including LGBTIQ+, people with disability, older workers, veterans and people who are neurodiverse.

Recommendation 7 State of the Service reporting

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should improve annual State of the Service reporting by:

- a) including multi-year tracking and trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data;
- b) incorporating analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data from the ACTPS Employee Survey; and
- c) including analysis of relevant and appropriate data from the Employee Assistance Program.

Recommendation 8 Assessing diversity, equity and inclusion maturity

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:

- a) undertake regular review of ACTPS maturity in diversity, equity and inclusion practices through self-assessment process against a relevant maturity model; and
- b) consider using multiple better practice tools or approaches, such as the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model and Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB).

Agencies' response

In accordance with subsection 18(2) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, City and Environment Directorate, Education Directorate and Justice and Community Safety Directorate were provided with a draft proposed report for comment. All comments in response to the draft proposed report were considered and changes were reflected in a final proposed report.

The directorates were provided with the final proposed report for comment. All comments in response to the final proposed report were considered and changes reflected in a final report. As part of the final proposed report process, agencies were invited to provide comments for inclusion in the Summary chapter of the final report.

The following comments were provided for inclusion in the Summary chapter.

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) is committed to being an employer of choice, delivering the Government's vision of a progressive, inclusive and sustainable Canberra for all Canberrans.

The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy (OIRWS) within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), works to support the whole ACTPS to build workplaces that are inclusive, culturally safe, and reflective of the community we serve.

The Cultural Transformation Branch within OIRWS supports this commitment via three key dimensions: driving progressive workforce strategy and improving organisational systems; embedding Cultural Capability and Safety; and building strong career pathways and inclusive employee experience.

Examples of where this work has achieved transformational outcomes for the ACTPS and its staff include:

- *Supported passage of nation leading legislation to give effect to the Closing the Gap principle as part of the core accountability and performance frameworks for members of the ACTPS Senior Executive Service and statutory officeholders.*
- *Delivered executive level interactive workshops on unconscious bias, cultural safety and capability.*
- *Established new cultural advisor roles in specific ACTPS directorates.*
- *Developed and delivered whole of Government capability-building resources.*
 - *This included specific guidance for employees and managers on how to identify and manage Cultural Load, Neurodiversity and Inclusive Recruitment in the workplace. It also included guidance on recruitment for identified positions, published with the support of and endorsement of the ACT Elected Body.*
- *Heard from over 300 staff across the ACTPS through a deep listening exercise aimed at enhancing employment experiences for people with disability, enabling insights to inform design and development of whole of service strategies and tools.*
- *Commencement of the first stage of a diversity data reform project, updating the ACTPS HR system (HR21) to enhance inclusive terminology and data collection within a primary user-interface.*
- *Launching a six-month dedicated leadership mentoring program for mid-career Senior Officers who are people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds with the aim of supporting career pathways into the Senior Executive Service.*
- *Piloting cultural care safety plans has been undertaken in partnership with ACTPS Directorates and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.*

1 Introduction

Diversity, equity and inclusion

- 1.1 The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) delivers a range of services to the ACT community. A diverse and inclusive ACTPS is best placed to deliver these services effectively and in a way that reflects, and connects with, the ACT community.
- 1.2 A diverse and inclusive ACTPS benefits the community, government and employees in several ways:
 - the community is better served by diverse teams who bring a variety of perspectives to the delivery of services and functions;
 - government policy design and implementation is enhanced by an inclusive approach that is grounded in lived experience; and
 - employees who are treated equitably and with respect feel safer and are more engaged and more productive.
- 1.3 The ACT Government's *Beyond RED* report of 2021 acknowledges that the ACTPS 'strives to be an inclusive employer by fostering a positive workplace culture and diverse employment opportunities'.

Definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion

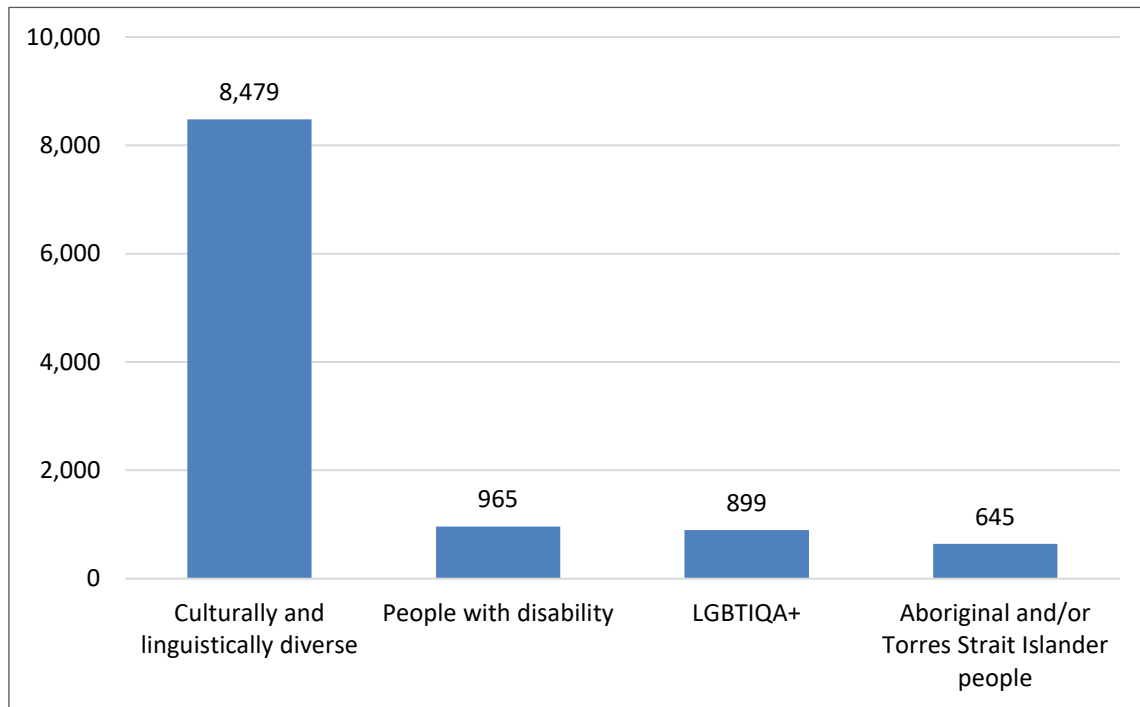
- 1.4 The *ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework) is the overarching diversity, equity and inclusion strategy for the ACTPS. The RED Framework was implemented in 2010.
- 1.5 The RED Framework defines **diversity** as 'recognising the value of individual differences and integrating these into the workplace'.
- 1.6 The RED Framework defines **equity** as 'ensuring that everyone is treated in a fair manner, according to their individual needs and circumstances in the workplace and includes the concept of equal employment opportunity'.
- 1.7 The RED Framework did not explicitly discuss **inclusion**, but the *Beyond RED* report of 2021 defines it as 'the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organisational processes such as access to information and resources, involvement in work groups, and ability to influence the decision-making process'.

- 1.8 The report uses the current ACT Government nomenclature for diversity groups (refer to the Glossary at Appendix A):
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people;
 - people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - LGBTIQ+;
 - neurodivergent people;
 - older workers;
 - people with disability;
 - veterans;
 - women; and
 - younger workers.
- 1.9 The nomenclature used by the ACT Government for some diversity groups has changed over time. The report notes instances where a different nomenclature has been used.

Snapshot of diversity groups in the ACT Public Service

- 1.10 In June 2025, the ACTPS was reported to have a headcount of 31,825 employees, including permanent, temporary and casual employees. Collectively, the ACTPS makes up approximately 11.6 percent of the ACT workforce. The average age in the ACTPS is 42 years and the average length of service is eight years.
- 1.11 The ACT Government's annual *State of the Service Report* (discussed further in Chapter 3) provides data on the number of ACTPS employees who have identified as belonging to a diversity group. In June 2025, close to one-third of ACTPS employees (10,988 employees) identified as belonging to a diversity group.
- 1.12 Figure 1-1 shows the number of ACTPS employees identified as belonging to diversity groups in the *2024-25 State of the Service Report* (reflecting the nomenclature used in that report). Although the ACTPS recognises a wide range of diversity groups, data is only available for some of those groups.

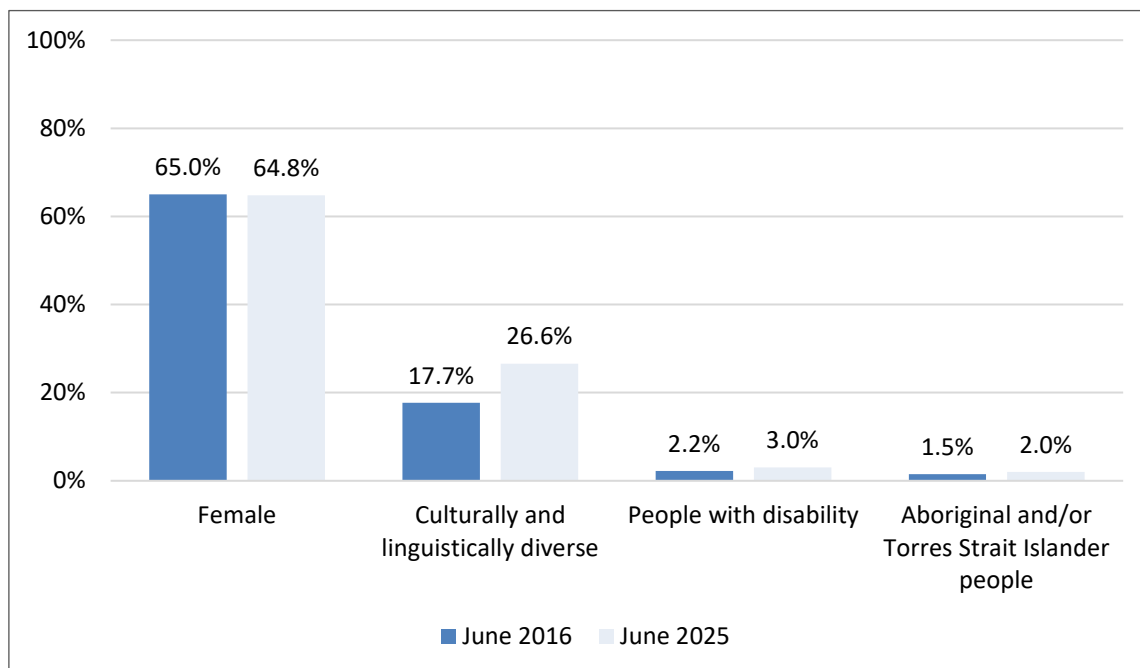
Figure 1-1 Diversity groups in the ACTPS workforce (June 2025)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on 2024-25 State of the Service Report, pp.35, 36, 39, 55.

1.13 A comparison of the percentage of diversity groups (for which data is available) in the ACTPS in June 2016 and June 2025 is shown in Figure 1-2 (noting that *State of the Service Reports* use the descriptive term ‘female’).

Figure 1-2 Change in percentage of diversity groups in the ACTPS workforce (June 2016 and June 2025)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on 2015-16 State of the Service Report, p.41; 2024-25 State of the Service Report, pp.6, 35, 36, 39.

1.14 In the nine-year period between June 2016 and June 2025:

- the number of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the ACTPS increased from 17.7 percent to 26.6 percent;
- the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees increased from 1.5 percent to 2.0 percent;
- the number of people with disability increased from 2.2 percent to 3.0 percent; and
- the percentage of 'females' in the ACTPS has remained the same at 65 percent.

Relevant legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans

1.15 Diversity, equity and inclusion requirements and commitments for the ACTPS are set out in both legislation and policy documents. There are:

- eight Territory acts;
- the *ACT Public Service Code of Conduct*;
- five strategies or policies that relate specifically to the ACTPS; and
- three that have a broader focus but also include ACTPS-specific commitments.

1.16 In addition to whole-of-government commitments, each directorate typically has its own directorate-level strategies and plans for separate diversity groups.

1.17 Table 1-1 shows the ACT legislation, frameworks, codes, strategies and plans that were considered for this audit.

Table 1-1 Legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans considered for the audit

ACT legislation
<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>
<i>Discrimination Act 1991</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 2004</i>
<i>Multiculturalism Act 2023</i>
<i>Disability Inclusion Act 2024</i>
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>
<i>Workplace Privacy Act 2011</i>
<i>Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act 1989</i>
ACTPS Code of Conduct
<i>ACT Public Sector Code of Conduct 2022</i>
Frameworks, strategies and plans that relate specifically to the ACTPS
<i>ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework</i>
<i>ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029</i>
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020</i>
<i>People with Disability Employment Framework 2020</i>
<i>Veterans' Employment Strategy 2020</i>
Broader frameworks, strategies and plans that include ACTPS-specific commitments
<i>ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033</i>
<i>ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026</i>
<i>Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029</i>

Source: ACT Audit Office

Note: The ACT Audit Office also recognises the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* and the obligations that arise from this Agreement. This was the subject of a separate 2023 performance audit: *Implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement* (Report No.6/2023).

1.18 Table 1-2 shows the Directorate-specific frameworks, codes, strategies and plans that were considered for this audit.

Table 1-2 Directorate-specific legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans considered for the audit

Directorate-specific frameworks, strategies and plans considered in this report		
Education Directorate	Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate	Emergency Services Agency (Justice and Community Safety Directorate)
<i>The Future of Education - an ACT education strategy for the next ten years 2018-2028</i> <i>Education Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Our People</i> <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027</i> <i>Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29 (draft)</i> <i>Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27 (draft)</i> <i>Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity</i>	<i>TCCS Code of Conduct</i> <i>People Strategy</i> <i>Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</i> <i>Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy</i> <i>Veterans Network Action Plan</i> <i>Pride Network Action Plan</i> <i>Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan</i> <i>Gender Action Plan</i>	<i>JACS Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025</i> <i>JACS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022</i> <i>JACS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022 How can I contribute?</i> <i>JACS Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24</i> <i>ESA 'Our Abilities' Reporting Tool</i> <i>JACS Workforce Inclusion and Diversity Statement of Commitment</i> <i>JACS Gender Action Plan 2024-2028</i>

Source: ACT Audit Office

Employee lifecycle

1.19 The employee lifecycle describes the different stages of the relationship between an employee and the organisation they work for. The stages in the employee lifecycle include:

- strategy;
- attraction;
- recruitment;
- onboarding;
- learning and development;
- reward, recognition and benefits;
- progression and performance; and
- retention/exit.

1.20 A diagram illustrating these stages is presented in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1-3 Employee lifecycle



Source: Cox, S. (2024). *Equity, diversity and inclusion: The employee life cycle*, Retrieved 28 October 2024, from <https://www.stevenajcox.com/diversity-and-inclusion-employee-lifecycle/>

- 1.21 Understanding the employee lifecycle helps organisations to understand employee needs at different stages and tailor strategies to meet those needs. Importantly, although the lifecycle stages are presented as distinct and sequential, they are in fact interconnected and interdependent. For example, using an employee value proposition to attract a diversity group in the second stage will also require support for that diversity group in the form of mentorship and career development in the fifth stage.
- 1.22 The audit recognises that there are better practice approaches to diversity, equity and inclusion that can be incorporated at each stage of the employee lifecycle.

Roles and responsibilities

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- 1.23 The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) provides strategic direction for the ACTPS. The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy (the Office) is responsible for leading the ACTPS in the development and implementation of whole-of-government policies relating to working conditions, workforce productivity and wellbeing. This means it has an important role in guiding and supporting ACT Government agencies with respect to core foundational skills relating to diversity, equity and inclusion across the ACTPS workforce, and responsibility for effective implementation is shared with Directorates.

1.24 The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy is organised into three groups, one of which is the Capability, Culture and Governance Group. Within this Group, there is a Cultural Transformation Branch that has two teams:

- an ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Team; and
- an ACTPS Culture and Pathways Team.

1.25 The role of the ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Team is to ‘lead and foster inclusive work practices that support employees across the Service’.

Public Sector Standards Commissioner

1.26 The Public Sector Standards Commissioner is independent of the ACTPS and the ACT Government. The Commissioner manages complaints and conducts investigations and can inspect or enquire into the operations of any part of the ACTPS.

Stakeholders

1.27 In addition to ACTPS staff, senior executives and ministers, there are numerous stakeholders who have a role in diversity, equity and inclusion matters in the ACTPS. These include:

- ACT Ombudsman;
- ACT Human Rights Commission;
- WorkSafe ACT;
- relevant community-based organisations; and
- unions.

1.28 There are also relevant stakeholders at the Commonwealth level. These include:

- Australian Human Rights Commission; and
- Fair Work Commission.

Audit objective and scope

Audit objective

1.29 The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of ACT Government agencies’ implementation of the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Audit scope

- 1.30 The audit considered a selection of ACT Government agencies' implementation of relevant diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans. The ACT Government agencies considered were the Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Emergency Services Agency. These agencies vary in size and diversity, equity and inclusion maturity and are considered to be representative of the diversity of the ACTPS more broadly.
- 1.31 CMTEDD was also considered with respect to its role in developing and overseeing the implementation of whole-of-government strategies. The audit considered the directorate's activities to:
- develop whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans that recognise the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
 - support ACT Government agencies to implement the whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans.
- 1.32 The audit recognised that the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion can be most effectively demonstrated at key stages of the employment lifecycle. The audit specifically focussed on agencies' implementation of the principles in:
- processes for the attraction, recruitment and onboarding of employees; and
 - practices for the retention and development of employees.

Out of scope

- 1.33 The audit did not consider the merits of the policy underpinning the whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans.
- 1.34 The audit focused on systemic issues and practices across the ACTPS and the selected ACT Government agencies. The audit did not attempt to audit and report on all matters affecting diversity groups across the ACTPS and matters outside the examined agencies.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 1.35 In July 2025, following the conduct of audit fieldwork, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate was amalgamated with the former Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to become the City and Environment Directorate. The findings in the audit report are made with reference to the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, while future activities and/or recommendations are made with reference to the City and Environment Directorate.

Audit criteria, approach and method

- 1.36 The audit was performed in accordance with *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*. The audit adopted the policy and practice statements outlined in the Audit Office’s *Performance Audit Methods and Practices (PAMPr)* which is designed to comply with the requirements of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* and *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*.
- 1.37 In the conduct of this performance audit the ACT Audit Office complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements.

Audit criteria

- 1.38 To form a conclusion against the objective, the following criteria and sub criteria were used:
- Has CMTEDD effectively identified and articulated the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans?
 - Do whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans reflect better practice principles of diversity, equity and inclusion?
 - Are whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans current and up to date?
 - Does CMTEDD effectively support agencies to implement whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans?
 - Does CMTEDD provide effective guidance and instruction to agencies on the implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans?
 - Has CMTEDD established effective mechanisms to engage with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds?
 - Does CMTEDD effectively monitor agencies’ implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans?
 - Are ACT Government agencies effectively implementing principles of diversity, equity and inclusion at key stages of the employment lifecycle?
 - Are ACT Government agencies effectively engaging with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds for the planning, implementation and monitoring of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in the agency?
 - Are the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion reflected in processes for the attraction, recruitment and onboarding of employees?
 - Are the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion reflected in practices for the retention and development of employees?
 - Are ACT Government agencies effectively monitoring and reporting on their activities to implement the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion?

Audit approach and method

1.39 The audit approach and method consisted of:

- researching, reviewing and examining:
 - legislation, codes of conduct, whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans that relate to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS, and relevant directorate-level strategies and plans for Education, TCCS and ESA.
 - reports, publications, and reviews of diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans undertaken by CMTEDD, Education, TCCS and ESA.
 - documents provided by CMTEDD in response to audit criteria;
 - documents provided by Education, TCCS and ESA in response to audit criteria.
- identifying and assessing:
 - processes undertaken by CMTEDD to develop whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans;
 - procedures in place to support ACT Government agencies to implement whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans;
 - processes used by Education, TCCS and ESA to engage with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds;
 - processes and procedures within Education, TCCS and ESA that relate to attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention and development;
 - ACT Government data (from the last five years) on workforce profiles, training completions, staff surveys, complaints and exit surveys;
 - complaints data (from the last five years) from the ACT Ombudsman, ACT Integrity Commission, ACT Human Rights Commission, WorkSafe ACT and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

1.40 The audit also involved conducting interviews with:

- staff from CMTEDD (Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy, Office of LGBTIQ+, and Public Sector Standards Commissioner);
- staff from the office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner;
- staff from Education (People and Performance Branch);
- staff from TCCS (People and Capability Branch); and
- staff from ESA (Workforce Coordination) and JACS (Workforce Inclusion).

1.41 The audit also involved consulting with:

- representatives of the ACT Inclusion Council; and
- representatives of the CPSU (ACT Branch).

Assistance with the conduct of the audit

1.42 The ACT Audit Office engaged a diverse team of subject matter experts from Griffith University's Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing (Professor Kate Hutchings, Dr Carys Chan, Dr Maria Khan and Dr Matthew Xerri) to assist with the audit. The team provided subject matter advice specifically with respect to the first criterion, that is, whether the whole-of-ACT Government frameworks, strategies and plans reflect better practice principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and whether the whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans are current and up to date.

2 Whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

2.1 This chapter discusses CMTEDD's activities to identify and articulate the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans for the ACTPS.

Summary



Conclusions

There are a number of different whole-of-government strategies and policies relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. The whole-of-government strategies and policies are also supported by various frameworks, strategies and plans, both at a whole-of-government level and directorate-level. The lack of a 'single source of truth' or 'roadmap' makes it difficult for managers and staff to identify the frameworks, strategies and plans and understand and implement the relevant diversity, equity and inclusion obligations.

The overarching *ACT Public Service Respect Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework), which was first implemented in 2010, is out-of-date. It does not refer to current responsibilities and legislation or frameworks, strategies and plans developed since 2015.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has recognised the need for a more cohesive approach and an overarching strategy to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS and an intention to work 'towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy'. This needs to be progressed as a matter of priority.



Key findings

Whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

Paragraph

There are eight separate frameworks, strategies or policies relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. Five relate specifically to the ACTPS, while the others have a broader focus but are also relevant and applicable to the ACTPS. The *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*, the *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* and the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029* reflect a contemporary understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. Several others do not, including the overarching *ACT Public Service Respect Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework). The RED Framework has not been updated since 2015 and does not refer to the current responsibilities and legislation or frameworks, strategies and plans developed since 2015.

2.26

There are many frameworks, strategies and plans and other requirements relevant to the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. There is no 'single source of truth' or 'roadmap' provided by CMTEEDD that sets out the relevant legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans. The lack of a 'single source of truth' or roadmap makes it difficult for managers and staff to identify the relevant frameworks, strategies and plans and understand and implement the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.

2.33

Inclusion of people with lived experience in policy and practice development and decision-making is central to better practice diversity and inclusion. A participatory approach to community engagement, which involves diverse populations in decision-making, ensures that policies reflect the lived experiences of individuals and community perspectives, strengthening their effectiveness and relevance. A review of consultation processes for the development of frameworks, strategies and plans shows consultation within the ACTPS and with the community has been generally effective, but that consultation has been less effective with community organisations and the private sector. The development of the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* demonstrated strong and extensive engagement with ACTPS and community stakeholders.

2.43

There are dedicated frameworks, strategies or plans for the majority of identified diverse groups in society, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability and women. However, there is no ACTPS-specific framework, strategy or plan to support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, younger workers, older workers, neurodivergent workers or individuals from low socio-economic status.

2.51

Building effective diversity, equity and inclusion requires managers and leaders to recognise the importance of belonging and intersectionality and cultivate an environment in which individuals feel authentically accepted and their distinct perspectives and contributions are actively sought and acknowledged. This involves building a sense of belonging and celebrating individual uniqueness to create meaningful and sustainable inclusion. The RED Framework does not specifically acknowledge the importance of building a sense of belonging. It does not identify how belonging will be specifically fostered nor does it identify specific processes to monitor employees' sense of belonging, which could be used to directly inform improvements and adjustments to frameworks, strategies and plans.

2.59

In 2021, the ACT Government conducted a research project to review the RED Framework. The outcomes of the research project are summarised in the December 2021 report: *Beyond RED: Respect, Equity and Diversity* (the *Beyond RED* report). The report identified a systemic challenge related to a 'revealing and alarming' number of diversity and inclusion commitments and actions across directorates and that there were 'almost 1000 D&I commitments and associated actions in our stock take across the ACTPS'. The report recommended that all directorates pause, review their existing actions and prioritise their activities to reflect desired outcomes. The report indicated that this review 'could take part in the first half of 2022', with a renewed strategic direction set in the second half of 2022.

2.69

CMTEDD has recognised the need for a more cohesive approach and an overarching strategy to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS and an intention to work ‘towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy’. The development of the strategy has been delayed. CMTEDD’s Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has developed an *Inclusion and Belonging Team Plan 2024-2025* which refers to pre-planning for an Inclusion and Belonging Strategy in May-June 2025.

2.73

ACTPS commitment to principles of diversity, equity and inclusion

RED Framework

2.2 The *ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework) is the overarching diversity, equity and inclusion strategy for the ACTPS. It defines ‘respect’, ‘equity’ and ‘diversity’ and sets out respect, equity and diversity principles to which the ACTPS is committed:

Leaders value and promote Respect, Equity and Diversity;

Strategic and operational plans incorporate respect, equity and diversity strategies;

Attracting and retaining a diverse ACT Public Service;

Improving the capability of our workforce;

Respect and courtesy in the workplace is practised;

Promoting Equity in our employment practices; and

Work/life balance is promoted and supported.

2.3 The RED Framework was implemented in 2010.

Cultural Transformation Branch Service Blueprint

2.4 The Cultural Transformation Branch within the Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy is responsible for developing and overseeing strategies and plans to implement the ACTPS’ commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. This means it has an important role in guiding and supporting ACT Government agencies with respect to core foundational skills relating to diversity, equity and inclusion across the ACTPS workforce, and responsibility for effective implementation is shared with Directorates. The Cultural Transformation Branch was established in August 2023 with the purpose of leading the strategic workforce agenda for diversity and inclusion in the ACTPS. The *Cultural Transformation Branch Service Blueprint* August 2024 (the Blueprint) states:

With Canberra becoming an accredited Advanced Welcoming City in 2023, the ACT Government has cemented its long-standing commitment to role-model a modern Australian city where everyone can belong and participate.

This success reflects the ACT community's high expectations on matters of social justice and government accountability for inclusion. It is a core expectation of Government, and the wider ACT community, that the ACTPS is as diverse and inclusive as the community we serve.

2.5 While recognising the importance of a diverse and inclusive ACTPS, the Blueprint also recognises that 'not all people in the ACTPS have an inclusive experience at work'. The Blueprint acknowledges the findings of the 2021 Beyond RED review, which found that:

... barriers such as systemic racism, occupational gender segregation, intersectional disadvantage and experiences of discrimination are still present in our ACTPS workforce. Disproportionately, these barriers negatively affect:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people,
- People with disability,
- Neurodivergent people,
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds,
- Veterans and their families;
- Younger and older workers; and
- LGBTQIA+ people.

2.6 In response to the question 'what outcomes will we see if cultural transformation is successful?' the Blueprint states:

ACTPS workplaces are welcoming and psychologically safe for all staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff feel Culturally Safe.

Our people policies, systems and practices are accessible and transparent, and they are designed in a way meets the needs of all staff.

Career pathways actively correct systemic disadvantage so that our leadership and workforce reflects the diversity of the ACT community.

2.7 The Blueprint identifies three core focus areas for cultural transformation across the ACTPS:

- strategy and systems – 'examine existing systems, policies and processes' and 'refresh and replace inclusion strategies and systems that are no longer serving the Government's transformative agenda';
- workforce capability – 'develop, source and promote tools and materials that will grow people's capability to manage and participate in inclusive teams'; and

- experience and careers – ‘[transform] ACTPS career trajectories and experiences where there is evidence of systemic disadvantage or barriers’. In doing so the Blueprint notes ‘targeted interventions, specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural support, evidence-based employment programs and centrally funded development opportunities are our important tools’.

Whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

Better practice for frameworks, strategies and plans

2.8 To achieve meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS, whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans need to demonstrate:

- a contemporary understanding of the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion;
- a cohesive and integrated approach across the ACTPS;
- a comprehensive and current understanding of the needs of recognised diversity groups, supported by authentic consideration of their views; and
- consideration of intersectionality and belonging.

ACTPS frameworks, strategies and plans

2.9 Currently there are eight separate whole-of-government strategies or policies relating to diversity, equity and inclusion. Five of these relate specifically to the ACTPS workforce:

- *ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework*;
- *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029*;
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020*;
- *People with Disability Employment Framework 2020*; and
- *Veterans’ Employment Strategy 2020*.

2.10 A further three policies have a broader focus but also include ACTPS-specific workforce commitments. These are the:

- *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*;
- *ACT Women’s Plan 2016-2026*; and
- *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029*.

2.11 The audit considered the ACTPS frameworks, strategies and plans against the better practice principles described in paragraph 2.8.

Currency of frameworks, strategies and plans

Better practice

- 2.12 Better practice diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans should demonstrate an awareness of contemporary better practice, emerging needs across the public sector and current issues related to diverse individuals to ensure meaningful inclusion.
- 2.13 Diversity, equity and inclusion is a multi-layered, complex and constantly evolving area which means it is important for frameworks, strategies and plans to be regularly updated and kept current. Outdated policies not only fail to address contemporary diversity, equity and inclusion challenges (such as intergenerational workforce dynamics or technological advancements) but can also expose organisations to compliance risks and reputational damage.

Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework

- 2.14 The *ACT Public Service Respect Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework) is the key, overarching diversity, equity and inclusion policy in the ACTPS. It was developed and implemented in 2010.
- 2.15 The RED Framework has not been updated since 2015. It contains outdated references to legislative and administrative requirements and does not reflect:
- employment frameworks, strategies or plans developed after 2015;
 - the role of the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, which was established in 2016 and is empowered to manage complaints, conduct investigations and inspect or enquire into the operations of any part of the ACTPS; or
 - the requirement for each directorate or agency to appoint an individual as the Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity Risk (SERBIR), most recently specified in the *ACT Public Service Integrity Governance Policy 2022*.
- 2.16 The RED Framework does not refer to the current version of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, the *Multiculturalism Act 2023 (ACT)* or *Disability Inclusion Act 2024 (ACT)*.
- 2.17 Monitoring and reporting processes described in the RED Framework also do not reflect current practice. This is further discussed in paragraphs 3.108 to 109.

Other frameworks, strategies and plans

2.18 The audit considered other frameworks, strategies and plans from the perspective of contemporary diversity, equity and inclusion understanding and issues. This includes consideration of:

- ACTPS-specific frameworks, strategies and plans; and
- broader frameworks, strategies and plans that apply across the ACT community, but which are also relevant and applicable to the ACTPS.

2.19 An example of an ACTPS-specific strategy is the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029*. This was developed specifically for the ACTPS and ACT Government directorates and agencies.

2.20 An example of a broader strategy is the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*. This applies to the ACTPS and ACT Government directorates and agencies, as well as non-ACT Government employers. Because these frameworks, strategies and plans also apply to the ACTPS, the efforts and activities of ACT Government directorates and agencies to recognise their obligations under these initiatives was considered for the purpose of the audit.

2.21 For the purpose of the audit, Griffith University identified that three recently released strategies (the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*, *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* and *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029*) reflect a high level of understanding of current diversity, equity and inclusion issues, needs and principles. Positive aspects of these strategies are:

- the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* demonstrates a contemporary rights-based approach through its strong alignment with modern social and human rights models of disability, shifting focus from individual deficits to highlighting systemic barriers and requirements for institutional change. The strategy emphasises universal design principles and focuses on removing systemic barriers rather than requiring individual adaptation. Such an approach aligns with current international best practices.² The strategy also demonstrates currency through its comprehensive consultation process and incorporation of lived experience perspectives in policy development;
- the *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* reflects a contemporary understanding of gender and sexuality diversity. This is evidenced by its expanded terminology to include asexual, aromantic and agender identities, its approach to intersectionality (particularly regarding cultural diversity and disability) and its emphasis on peer-led service delivery. The strategy's focus on data collection and digital inclusion demonstrates awareness of emerging needs in the diverse genders, bodies and sexualities community; and

² Beatty, J.E., Hennekam, S., Kulkarni, M. (2023). *De Gruyter handbook of disability and management*. doi: 10.1515/9783110743647.

- the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029* strongly aligns with contemporary workplace practices. It addresses emerging issues such as gender pay gap reporting, targets for women in leadership and support for women from diverse backgrounds. The strategy's consideration of flexible work arrangements and career progression particularly reflects post-pandemic workplace evolution and aligns with current research on gender equity.³

2.22 Several other whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans are not current and up to date including:

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020*;
- *People with Disability Employment Framework 2020*; and
- *Veterans' Employment Strategy 2020*.

2.23 The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020* has not been updated since 2020 and includes out-of-date references. It refers to 'whole-of-government initiatives led by the Workforce Capability and Governance Division' in CMTEDD. It does not refer to whole-of-government initiatives led by the ACTPS Culture and Pathways team, which is located within the Cultural Transformation Branch in the Office for Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy (OIRWS) in CMTEDD. This team was established in 2023.

2.24 The *People with Disability Employment Framework 2020* does not refer to the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* or the *Disability Inclusion Act 2024* which came into effect in March 2025 and requires directorates to establish Disability Inclusion Plans.⁴

2.25 The *Veterans' Employment Strategy 2020* states that it 'articulates the Government's focus for the next 12 months'. It does not set out any actions or areas of focus beyond 2020-21.



2.26 There are eight separate frameworks, strategies or policies relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. Five relate specifically to the ACTPS, while the others have a broader focus but are also relevant and applicable to the ACTPS. The *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*, the *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* and the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029* reflect a contemporary understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. Several others do not, including the overarching *ACT Public Service Respect Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework). The RED Framework has not been updated since 2015 and does not refer to the current responsibilities and legislation or frameworks, strategies and plans developed since 2015.

³ Hoobler, J.M., Masterson, C.R., Nkomo, S.M., Michel, E.J. (2018). *The business case for women leaders: Meta-analysis, research critique, and path forward*. *Journal of Management*, 44(6), pp. 2473–2499. doi: 10.1177/0149206316628643.

⁴ *Disability Inclusion Act 2024* (ACT), Part 4.

Cohesion of frameworks, strategies and plans

Better practice

- 2.27 Better practice frameworks, strategies and plans should be integrated so that:
- diversity, equity and inclusion objectives and aims are cohesive and complementary;
 - frameworks, strategies and plans can be easily navigated, understood and implemented by employees and managers; and
 - diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are integrated.

Volume of DEI frameworks, strategies and plans

- 2.28 There are many frameworks, strategies and plans and other requirements for the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. In addition to the frameworks, strategies and plans described in paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10, each directorate has its own strategies and plans relevant to specific diversity groups (discussed in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.45).
- 2.29 Additional requirements relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion are also set out in eight Commonwealth acts, eight Territory acts and the *ACT Public Service Code of Conduct*.
- 2.30 The existence of the different frameworks, strategies and plans that apply across the ACTPS, as well as additional strategies and plans within each directorate, means there is greater potential for inconsistency in practice and different experiences for diversity groups.

Navigation of frameworks, strategies and plans

- 2.31 Griffith University analysed the frameworks, strategies and plans across the ACTPS and identified risks with integration and alignment:

While the individual strategies are comprehensive, there could be more explicit integration and alignment across the different DEI frameworks to ensure a cohesive whole-of-government approach. This could be done through improving the RED framework and linking its values more clearly in all the reports. This also supports the suggestion of having one overarching document and then only one document per diversity area.

- 2.32 There is no 'single source of truth' or roadmap that sets out the relevant legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans. The lack of a 'single source of truth' or roadmap makes it difficult for managers and staff to identify the relevant frameworks, strategies and plans. To understand the expectations that exist both at a whole-of-government and directorate level, managers and staff need to 'read across' multiple frameworks, strategies and plans. Griffith University noted the proliferation of frameworks, strategies and plans and the potential benefit of consolidation:

There are currently a large number of documents which can be difficult for employees to navigate. Consideration could be given to having one document that includes an overview of the ACTPS's commitment to DEI, all definitions, the Code of Conduct, and a summary of objectives and targets for each area of diversity. In addition, there could be one document for each area of diversity which would include both a strategy and a plan.



- 2.33 There are many frameworks, strategies and plans and other requirements relevant to the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. There is no 'single source of truth' or 'roadmap' provided by CMTEDD that sets out the relevant legislation, codes, frameworks, strategies and plans. The lack of a 'single source of truth' or roadmap makes it difficult for managers and staff to identify the relevant frameworks, strategies and plans and understand and implement the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Consultation and engagement on frameworks, strategies and plans

Better practice

- 2.34 Inclusion of people with lived experience in policy and practice development and decision-making is central to better practice diversity, equity and inclusion activity. A participatory approach to community engagement, which involves diverse populations in decision-making, ensures that policies reflect the lived experiences of individuals and community perspectives, thereby strengthening their relevance and effectiveness.⁵

- 2.35 The ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub recognises that understanding lived experience is necessary to support inclusion. The ACT Government's *Strengthening Performance and Accountability: A Framework for the ACT Government* (the Performance and Accountability Framework) also recognises the importance of obtaining the views of the community:

The views of the community – the recipients of government services, and the ultimate beneficiary of government activity – matter a great deal in reviewing, refining, and reprioritising government services.

- 2.36 The ACT Government's *Performance and Accountability Framework* also recognises that the private sector is an influential stakeholder with the potential to impact materially on targeted outcomes.

Consultation with stakeholders

- 2.37 Table 2-1 shows what consultation was conducted and with whom (as described in the framework, strategy or plan) for the frameworks, strategies and plans that apply across the ACTPS.

⁵ Shore, L.M., Cleveland, J.N., Sanchez, D. (2018). *Inclusive workplaces: A review and model*. Human Resource Management Review, 28(2), pp. 176–189. doi: 10.1016/j.hrmmr.2017.07.003.

Table 2-1 Evidence of consultation and engagement in frameworks, strategies and plans

Consultation groups	ACT Public Service	Community	Community organisations	Private sector
<i>RED Framework</i>	✓	✗	✗	✗
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>People with Disability Employment Framework 2020</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Veterans' Employment Strategy 2020</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033</i>	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029</i>	✓	✗	✗	✗
<i>ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026</i>	✓	✓	✗	✗
<i>Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029</i>	✓	✓	✗	✗

Source: ACT Audit Office analysis.

Note: Boxes marked with a '-' indicate that the framework, strategy or plan does not describe the consultation process.

RED Framework

2.38 It is apparent that the overarching RED Framework was developed through consultation with ACTPS stakeholders including agencies, the Whole-of-Government Management Council (which included ACT Public Service Agency Chief Executives and the Commissioner for Public Administration) and the Whole-of-Government Human Resources Council (comprised of representatives from each ACT Public Service agency). The involvement of the community and private sector was not apparent.

ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033

2.39 The *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* demonstrated strong stakeholder engagement through comprehensive consultation processes and feedback integration. The Strategy was co-designed with the ACT Government's ACT Disability Reference Group (an advisory body representing people with disability in the ACT) and approximately 1,000 people were consulted via workshops, an online survey, a student voice competition, written submissions and the ACT Disability Expo. Specific workshops were held for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, women, young people, people who are ageing, carers, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTIQ+. People with disability facilitated thirty-one of these events.

ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029

2.40 Consultation for the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029* was conducted with different groups including:

- select branches and teams in the then Workforce Capability and Governance (WCAG) division in CMTEDD, diversity and inclusion practitioners in ACTPS directorates as well as experts from the Office for Women, the ACT Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Office for Disability, Office for LGBTIQ+ and Office for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Veterans; and
- ACT unions and ACTPS People Forum members.

ACT Women's Plan 2016-26

2.41 The *ACT Women's Plan 2016-26* built on consultation with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women and Office for Women, which conducted a community forum in 2014 and an online survey of women in the ACT in 2015.

Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029

2.42 It is apparent that *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* involved consultation with the LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council as well as LGBTIQ+ community members.



2.43 Inclusion of people with lived experience in policy and practice development and decision-making is central to better practice diversity and inclusion. A participatory approach to community engagement, which involves diverse populations in decision-making, ensures that policies reflect the lived experiences of individuals and community perspectives, strengthening their effectiveness and relevance. A review of consultation processes for the development of frameworks, strategies and plans shows consultation within the ACTPS and with the community has been generally effective, but that consultation has been less effective with community organisations and the private sector. The development of the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* demonstrated strong and extensive engagement with ACTPS and community stakeholders.

Coverage of frameworks, strategies and plans

Better practice

2.44 There are various forms of diversity, including race, gender, age, ability and disability, appearance, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion and social class. To develop effective frameworks, strategies and plans that will encourage diverse and inclusive workplaces, it is better practice to consider all diversity groups, not just the major identified diversity groups in society.

Diversity groups addressed by ACTPS frameworks, strategies and plans

- 2.45 There are dedicated frameworks, strategies or plans for the majority of identified diverse groups in society, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability and women.

Diversity groups not addressed by ACTPS frameworks, strategies and plans

- 2.46 Although the current frameworks, strategies and plans cover a wide range of diversity groups there is scope to explicitly address other diversity groups. For example, there is no ACTPS-specific framework, strategy or plan for younger workers, older workers, neurodivergent workers, workers of lower socio-economic status or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Younger and older workers

- 2.47 Although younger workers and older workers are both mentioned in the *Beyond RED* report as diversity groups, there is no specific document or action plan for them. This is even though age discrimination is a legally recognised and important issue. Some agencies have a high percentage of older workers (such as the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate with over 29 percent of staff aged 55 or over) and effective collaboration across age groups is an important aspect of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

Neurodivergent people

- 2.48 There is no specific framework, strategy or plan for neurodivergent workers. Neurodivergence includes a wide range of categories, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia. Although there is a view that neurodivergence is another form of diversity and a different way of thinking and behaving, in many countries it is classified as a disability and there is legislation requiring organisations to provide reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent people in their workplaces.⁶ Neurodivergence is not currently incorporated into the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033* or treated as a separate focus area.

Socio-economic status

- 2.49 Although lower socio-economic status is mentioned in some frameworks and strategies, there is no specific strategy that aims to attract and retain this segment of the workforce. Some researchers have discussed socio-economic status as part of identity and it has been

⁶ Chan, X.W., Hutchings, K. (2024). *Exploring the careers of women with disabilities: A systematic review and implications for human resource management*. Personnel Review. doi: 10.1108/PR-01-2024-0086.

noted that it affects life trajectories, including education and work opportunities. It can also affect people from developing or lesser developed countries to a greater extent.⁷

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

2.50 There is also no specific framework, strategy or plan for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Previously, there was the *ACT Multicultural Framework 2015-2020* (a five-year framework that was supported by a *First Action Plan (2015-2018)* and a *Second Action Plan (2018-2020)*) but this Framework is no longer current.



2.51 There are dedicated frameworks, strategies or plans for the majority of identified diverse groups in society, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability and women. However, there is no ACTPS-specific framework, strategy or plan to support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, younger workers, older workers, neurodivergent workers or individuals from low socio-economic status.

Recognition of belonging and intersectionality

Better practice

2.52 Academic research indicates that building effective diversity, equity and inclusion requires managers and leaders to cultivate an environment in which individuals feel authentically accepted and their distinct perspectives and contributions are actively sought and acknowledged. Managers can do this by building a sense of belonging and celebrating individual uniqueness to create meaningful and sustainable inclusion.

2.53 **Belonging** refers to an individual's sense of being accepted and included in the organisation, while uniqueness refers to recognising and appreciating an individual's distinct perspectives and contributions. Recent research indicates that organisations that balance the principles of belonging and uniqueness allow individuals to feel valued and included.⁸

2.54 **Intersectionality** recognises that diverse groups have different experiences in the workplace that are associated with their identity. People have multiple, intersecting

⁷ Riaz, S. (2023). *Gender identity and socio-economic status*. In Baikady, R., Gal, J., Nadesan, V., Sajid, S.M., Jianguo, G., (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of poverty in the global south*. doi: 10.4324/9781032632391.

⁸ Shore, L.M., Chung, B.G. (2022). *Inclusive leadership: How leaders sustain or discourage work group inclusion*. *Group & Organization Management*, 47(4), pp.723–754. doi: 10.1177/1059601121999580.

Veli Korkmaz, A., van Engen, M.L., Knappert, L., Schalk, R. (2022). *About and beyond leading uniqueness and belongingness: A systematic review of inclusive leadership research*. *Human Resource Management Review*, 32(4). doi: 10.1016/j.hrmmr.2022.100894.

identities⁹ and may identify with more than one area of diversity – e.g. age, class/socio-economic status, culture/ethnicity/religion (including Indigenous), disability and diverse genders, bodies and sexualities. The advantages and disadvantages that people experience in workplaces are often affected by having multiple, intersecting identities.¹⁰

Consideration of belonging and intersectionality

- 2.55 Building a sense of belonging is not specifically acknowledged in the RED Framework. The Framework does not identify how belonging will be fostered while also celebrating the uniqueness of diverse communities. The Framework does not identify specific processes to monitor employees' sense of belonging (such as regular pulse surveys or focus groups) which could be used to directly inform improvements and adjustments to frameworks, strategies and plans. While there is an emphasis on respect in the RED Framework, a focus on improving a sense of belonging for employees and ACT diverse communities would align with contemporary better practice. This could also assist with improving performance against the ACTPS target for 80 percent of staff to feel their workplace is inclusive, as measured by the biennial ACTPS Staff Survey.
- 2.56 The *Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029* reflects a sophisticated approach to intersectionality because it recognises that any work on diversity must consider the unique challenges and contributions that arise from intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, culture, religion and socio-economic background. It focuses on specific groups experiencing challenges related to intersectional needs, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including those on temporary visas or without access to Medicare), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (including brotherboys and sistergirls), people with disability or chronic conditions, young people and seniors.
- 2.57 The *ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026* acknowledges intersectionality conceptually and aims to consider how different aspects of identity intersect to create unique experiences and challenges. It recognises, for example, the need to focus on women who face multiple forms of discrimination. There is, however, an opportunity to take a more in-depth approach to intersectionality. For example, women who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may have cultural expectations around caregiving that may intensify their caring responsibilities, and women with disabilities may be simultaneously managing their own healthcare needs while caring for family members.

⁹ Crenshaw, K. (1991). *Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of colour*. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), pp. 1241–1299.

¹⁰ Acker, J. (2006). *Class questions: Feminist answers*. Rowman & Littlefield.

2.58 The *Veterans' Employment Strategy 2020* does not consider intersectionality. It could benefit from doing so, especially in considering how the overlap of different identities affects employment and quality of life.



2.59 Building effective diversity, equity and inclusion requires managers and leaders to recognise the importance of belonging and intersectionality and cultivate an environment in which individuals feel authentically accepted and their distinct perspectives and contributions are actively sought and acknowledged. This involves building a sense of belonging and celebrating individual uniqueness to create meaningful and sustainable inclusion. The RED Framework does not specifically acknowledge the importance of building a sense of belonging. It does not identify how belonging will be specifically fostered nor does it identify specific processes to monitor employees' sense of belonging, which could be used to directly inform improvements and adjustments to frameworks, strategies and plans.

Future direction for whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

Beyond RED review (2021)

2.60 In 2021, the ACT Government conducted a research project to review the RED Framework. The project aimed to:

Understand the current state of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging across the ACTPS, 10 years on from the implementation of the RED Framework;

Understand the experience of employees, helping identify any critical gaps holding the service back from making progress in these areas; and

Make recommendations for opportunities to contemporise and drive commitments into the future.

2.61 The outcomes of the research project are summarised in the December 2021 report: *Beyond RED: Respect, Equity and Diversity* (the *Beyond Red* report). The report identified that:

- growth in diversity employment outpaced average workforce growth in the period between 2011 and 2021, but people with disability were significantly under-represented in the ACTPS;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were the most under-represented group in senior executive service roles;
- separation rates for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees remained higher than the ACTPS workforce average; and
- salaries for people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people were lower than average in 2010-11 and remained so in 2021.

2.62 Key findings were that:

- setting diversity employment targets for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability had been effective in increasing diversity numbers; and
- across the ACTPS, 70 percent of people agreed that the ACTPS was inclusive, but for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, and people with disability, this percentage was lower. Survey results indicated that these groups were more likely to experience discrimination and bullying, particularly in the form of incivility or exclusion.

2.63 The *Beyond RED* report identified a systemic challenge related to a ‘revealing and alarming’ number of diversity and inclusion commitments and actions across directorates. The report states that there were ‘almost 1000 D&I commitments and associated actions in our stock take across the ACTPS’. Analysis of those actions revealed that:

- 29 percent of the 987 actions were from Reconciliation Action Plans;
- 35 percent of respondents to the 2021 ACTPS Employee Survey believed that ‘too many competing priorities’ was a significant performance barrier for them; and
- there was little, if any, evaluation of the effectiveness of the actions.

2.64 An agenda paper prepared for the ACT Public Service Strategic Board reiterated that ‘the sheer volume of activity underway across the ACTPS under the umbrella of Diversity and Inclusion – conservatively counting almost 1,000 actions ... is largely activity based, often conceived and designed under reactionary circumstances and rarely evaluated against outcomes’.

2.65 The *Beyond RED* report captured staff views about the focus on activity rather than outcomes and their difficulty understanding what directorates were trying to achieve. Staff also reported ‘diversity fatigue’, which is ‘a kind of exhaustion that arises from diversity and inclusion conversation and activity’.

2.66 The *Beyond RED* report recommended that all directorates pause, review their existing actions and prioritise their activities to reflect desired outcomes. The report indicated that this review ‘could take part in the first half of 2022’, with a renewed strategic direction set in the second half of 2022.

2.67 The *Beyond RED* report made additional short-term recommendations as follows:

Continue what works

- 1) Reflect the ACT community and update our employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to 3% by 2026; an increase from 2.0% currently.

2) Adopt an diversity employment target for People with Disability to 5% by 2026. Noting that we will examine the data discrepancy between HR21 and the ACTPS staff survey, and the ACT workforce for People with Disability.

3) Introduce an Inclusion KPI as a target for inclusion across the ACTPS.

Improve our data capture and analysis

1) Undertake deeper analysis of the ACTPS Staff Survey results through the lens of diversity groups.

2) Develop an ACTPS Diversity and Inclusion workforce data terminology policy which specifies consistent diversity terms to be used in ACTPS workforce data collection (such as Shared Services processes, HRIMS and employee survey).

3) Publicise the definitions we use of diversity groups to allow staff to consider whether they wish to identify.

Simplify information and share it

1) Create a refreshed whole-of-government Diversity and Inclusion SharePoint site

2) Progressively develop a small number of fact sheets, bite-sized learnings or micro-case studies which respond to common themes raised in the review that are simple, clear and easily digestible and promote them on the site.

3) Use human-centred design principles and tested with the target audience to ensure they are fit for purpose and easy to use.

2.68 ACT Government agencies' actions in response to these recommendations are discussed as necessary throughout the report.



2.69 In 2021, the ACT Government conducted a research project to review the RED Framework. The outcomes of the research project are summarised in the December 2021 report: *Beyond RED: Respect, Equity and Diversity* (the *Beyond RED* report). The report identified a systemic challenge related to a 'revealing and alarming' number of diversity and inclusion commitments and actions across directorates and that there were 'almost 1000 D&I commitments and associated actions in our stock take across the ACTPS'. The report recommended that all directorates pause, review their existing actions and prioritise their activities to reflect desired outcomes. The report indicated that this review 'could take part in the first half of 2022', with a renewed strategic direction set in the second half of 2022.

Development of an ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy

2.70 CMTEDD has recognised the need for a more cohesive approach and an overarching strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS. The *2022-23 State of the Service Report* identified an intention to develop an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy:

... we are working towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. The strategy will provide a renewed commitment to strengthen diversity, inclusion and belonging

across the ACTPS. This will be through a targeted approach to support gender equity, along with tailored employment programs to continue to increase the diversity of our workforce and articulate our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

- 2.71 The *Cultural Transformation Branch Service Blueprint* (August 2024) expressed an intention to focus on ‘strategy and systems’ and stated:

This work will examine existing systems, policies and processes and ask: are they designed to support inclusive outcomes, remove inclusion barriers, and are they safe for all users? Where we can add value, we will refresh and replace inclusion strategies and systems that are no longer serving the Government’s transformative agenda.

- 2.72 The development of an ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy has been delayed. CMTEDD’s Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has an *Inclusion and Belonging Team Plan 2024-2025* which refers to pre-planning for an Inclusion and Belonging Strategy in May-June 2025.



- 2.73 CMTEDD has recognised the need for a more cohesive approach and an overarching strategy to diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACTPS and an intention to work ‘towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy’. The development of the strategy has been delayed. CMTEDD’s Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has developed an *Inclusion and Belonging Team Plan 2024-2025* which refers to pre-planning for an Inclusion and Belonging Strategy in May-June 2025.



Recommendation 1

Whole-of-government diversity, equity and inclusion strategy

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, in progressing the development of an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, ensure that the Strategy specifically recognises and reflects:

- a) key contemporary concepts, such as belonging and intersectionality; and
- b) the broad range of the different diversity groups represented in the ACTPS and their specific needs.

3 Implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans

- 3.1 This chapter discusses CMTEDD’s activities to facilitate the implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans across the ACTPS. The chapter considers CMTEDD’s role in providing guidance and support to agencies and monitoring and reporting on whole-of-government implementation.

Summary



Conclusions

More effective performance and accountability arrangements are needed to ensure the principles and practices of diversity, equity and inclusion are implemented across the ACTPS.

There is variability in how the numerous whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion identify and articulate:

- strategic objectives and outcomes;
- actions with timeframes for implementation; and
- performance measures with targets.

Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans do this well, either in the document itself, or in a supporting action plan(s). Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans identify high-level concepts and identify that specific details on actions and timeframes for implementation are to be found in directorate-specific documents. Such an approach weakens whole-of-government performance and accountability arrangements.

The ACTPS has two whole-of-government employment targets, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (3 percent by 2026) and people with disability (9 percent). The ACTPS does not have employment targets for other diversity groups, such as LGBTIQ+ employees or culturally and linguistically diverse employees. The current percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS is 2.0 percent, which is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory (2.0 percent). The current reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS is 3.0 percent, which is lower than the percentages of the ACT population living with a disability (women: 22.1 percent; men: 18.9 percent). Considerable effort is needed across the ACTPS to meet these employment targets.

Annual ACTPS State of the Service Reports are a key mechanism for reporting on diversity, equity and inclusion matters in the ACTPS. However, reporting on such matters is dispersed throughout

the reports, and this makes it difficult to quickly obtain a snapshot of diversity, equity and inclusion activity and progress across the ACTPS. State of the Service Reports also do not consistently present multi-year trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data. Collating and tracking data across multiple years would facilitate more meaningful trend analysis and performance reporting.

The ACTPS Employee Survey is held once every two years. The survey is voluntary and anonymous and reported data is de-identified. There are known challenges with the accuracy of data on diversity groups as collected through the ACT Government's HR21 system, which the Employee Survey offers an opportunity to address.



Key findings

Guidance and support for agencies	Paragraph
<p>CMTEDD seeks to provide guidance and support to directorates and agencies in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans by providing information via the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub, the ACTPS Employment Portal and the ACTPS Rehabilitation Management System. The ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub provides useful advice on support services available to ACTPS employees. The ACTPS Employment Portal provides information and resources for key audiences including ACTPS employees, managers and supervisors, executives and HR practitioners, but is also accessible to people outside the ACTPS. The Rehabilitation Management System outlines the policies, procedures, guidelines and tools used to manage the work rehabilitation and return to work of an employee following an injury or illness. In doing so it includes, more broadly, policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability. This is not ideal because it suggests that disability is equated with an injury or illness.</p>	3.16
<p>Gathering, tracking and analysing diversity, equity and inclusion employment data is important for the purpose of measuring whether frameworks, strategies and plans are successful and facilitating planning for future initiatives. There are currently three mechanisms to gather data and information on new and existing staff: when people apply for a position through ACT Jobs; through new employees' completion of the New Employee Personal Information Pack; and by allowing employees to update their diversity information. These processes do not reflect all diversity groups or the current terminology used to describe them.</p>	3.31
<p>At any point after their commencement as an ACTPS employee, an employee can update their diversity information via an HR21 employee portal. Updates to name, gender and title must be manually inputted via the employee submitting a separate form to Shared Service HR. This dual-step process may be impeding updates being made by staff as well as the accuracy of the data that is maintained.</p>	3.32
<p>Regular learning and development reinforces the importance, and continuing and growing consciousness of, diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the workplace. It is better practice for there to be mandatory training requirements for staff (including</p>	3.38

managers/executives) and recruitment panels. There are no mandatory workplace diversity training requirements for staff at a whole-of-government level, nor are there mandatory training requirements for recruiters and selection panels. Training requirements are set by directorates and this has resulted in inconsistency in practice across the ACTPS.

The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has coordinated a range of cross-directorate programs to recognise and support diversity and inclusion across the ACTPS. These include the ACTPS Vocational Employment Program (a 12 to 18-month entry-level employment pathway for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and close family of serving or former members of the Australian Defence Force). Other programs have also been offered (e.g. the Veterans' Peer Network and Neurodiversity Pilot Program) but there is no indication they will be offered again

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers short term counselling and wellbeing support for ACTPS employees and their immediate families. In November 2024, the utilisation rate of the Program across the ACTPS was 12.4 percent (four percent higher than the industry rate of 8.4 percent). The Program had 30,830 engagements in the contract year prior to November 2024, of which 3,496 remained active clients. In April 2022, a workshop was conducted by CMTEDD with several directorates and agencies to discuss the purpose of the Program and its utilisation. Issues raised in that workshop were low utilisation rates of the Manager Support and Career Assist services and confusion about the extent of the services that are available.

Performance and accountability arrangements

A review of cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion shows there is variability in how they identify and articulate: strategic objectives and outcomes; actions with timeframes for implementation; and performance measures with targets. Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans do this well, either in the document itself, or in a supporting action plan(s). Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans identify high-level concepts and identify that specific details on actions and timeframes for implementation are to be found in directorate-specific documents. Such an approach weakens whole-of-government performance and accountability arrangements.

Employment targets are measurable objectives with timeframes for increased numbers of people in roles. The ACTPS has two whole-of-government employment targets, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (3 percent by 2026) and people with disability (9 percent). The current percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS is 2.0 percent. This is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory (2.0 percent). The current reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS is 3.0 percent. This is lower than the percentages of the ACT population living with a disability (women: 22.1 percent; men: 18.9 percent).

The ACTPS does not have employment targets for LGBTIQ+ employees. On 30 June 2024, the ACTPS is tracking slightly above other jurisdictions in the employment of LGBTIQ+ employees. Seven percent of respondents identified as LGBTIQ+ in the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, compared with 5.9 percent in the Australian Public Service in 2021, 6.0 percent in the Queensland Public Service in 2024 and 5.6 percent in the Victorian public sector in 2021.

3.96

The ACTPS does not have employment targets for culturally and linguistically diverse employees. The proportion of ACTPS employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (24.4 percent) is less than the population of culturally and linguistically diverse people in the ACT (27.1 percent). Culturally and linguistically diverse employees are under-represented in SES roles. In response to a 2022 Legislative Assembly resolution the ACT Government committed to implementing 'a mentorship program for aspiring SES who are from a CALD background'. A pilot mentoring program that was due to be launched in February 2024 was launched in May 2025.

3.102

The proportion of ACTPS employees who are women (65.0 percent) exceeds the proportion of women in the ACT (50.6 percent) as well as the Australian Public Service (60.4 percent), the Queensland Public Service (57.7 percent) and the Victorian public sector (59.6 percent). Women are also represented in 58.0 percent of ACTPS leadership roles. This is a higher proportion than other jurisdictions.

3.105

Whole-of-government monitoring and reporting

Annual ACTPS *State of the Service Reports* are a key mechanism for reporting on diversity, equity and inclusion matters in the ACTPS. Reporting on such matters is dispersed throughout the reports. This makes it difficult to quickly obtain a snapshot of diversity, equity and inclusion activity and progress across the ACTPS. *State of the Service Reports* also do not consistently present multi-year trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data. Collating and tracking data across multiple years would facilitate more meaningful trend analysis.

3.117

State of the Service Reports published between 2019-20 and 2024-25 show:

3.121

- the employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees has not changed between 2019-20 and 2024-25 (2.0 percent). Without growth the target of 3 percent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people employed in the ACTPS by 2026 is at risk; and
- the employment of people with disability has remained relatively static (minor increase from 2.8 percent in 2019-20 to 3.0 percent in 2024-25). This is well below the target of 9 percent. The report relies on human resources data. Alternative data, however, obtained through the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, indicates that 7.0 percent of ACTPS employees identified as a person with disability.

The *State of the Service Reports* include data and information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS. *State of the Service* reporting on

3.126

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment in the ACTPS has become less comprehensive and thorough over time. The *State of the Service Reports* do not present multi-year analysis of data and there is little or no analysis of whether the results are above or below expectations, the reasons for the results, or the likelihood of achieving targets.

The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the ACTPS median salary and median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse employees. A review of the median salary for these employees between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows: 3.131

- the median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently lower than the ACTPS median salary since 2019-20; and
- the median salary for people with disability was marginally lower than the ACTPS median salary between 2019-20 and 2022-23 but exceeded it in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse employees. A review of the median salary for these employees between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows: 3.137

- the gender pay gap in the ACTPS has generally been within 1.0 percent (with women earning less than men over this period). An exception was 2022-23 and 2024-25, when the gender pay gap was marginally in favour of women;
- the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women has been in favour of women in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2024-25, but in favour of men in 2022-23 and 2023-24;
- the gender pay gap for people with disability has been consistently in favour of women and better than the ACTPS average since 2021-22; and
- the gender pay gap for culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently in favour of men and worse than the ACTPS average.

The *State of the Service Reports* typically include some discussion and analysis of the gender pay gap. For example, the *2024-25 State of the Service Report* includes three pages of analysis of the gender pay gap in the ACTPS compared to the Australian and ACT labour forces, the proportion of women in the ACTPS and executive roles, and the gender pay gap by directorate and diversity group. However, the *State of the Service Reports* typically do not provide any analysis or explanation of the gender pay gap differences for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or culturally and linguistically diverse employees. 3.138

The ACTPS Employee Survey is held once every two years. The survey is anonymous and reported data is de-identified. There are known challenges with the accuracy of 3.146

data on diversity groups as collected through the ACT Government's HR21 system, which the Employee Survey offers an opportunity to address. For example:

- on 30 June 2024, 2.9 percent of employees identified as people living with disability according to self-reporting in the HR/payroll systems but 7 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as people with disability; and
- on 30 June 2024, 2.4 percent of employees identified as LGBTIQ+ in the HR/payroll system but 6 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as LGBTIQ+.

In April 2022 the ACT Public Service Strategic Board agreed to an 'ACTPS Workforce Inclusion target of 80% positive responses, to be measured by the 2025 ACTPS Staff Survey'. In setting the target as 80 percent it was recognised that the ACTPS was 'currently 10 percentage points behind the APS inclusion ratings. Therefore, an ACTPS KPI of 80% would align us with the APS, being our primary workforce competition'. The Strategic Board was advised that 'inclusion scores from different ACTPS diversity groups were generally lower than the 70% ACTPS average' and that the lower scores for diversity groups were identified as 'both a strategic risk and an opportunity to understand where our efforts can be focussed to achieve the most traction on workforce inclusion'. 3.155

One means by which an organisation's maturity in diversity and inclusion practices can be measured is through a self-assessment process against a relevant diversity and inclusion maturity model. In 2021 CMTEDD assessed the maturity of the ACTPS against the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model. CMTEDD assessed the ACTPS as Level 2 (mid-level) maturity overall with some variation across the service. A Level 2 organisation is identified as moving beyond a tick-in-the-box approach and has gained leadership buy-in to drive greater diversity management. It has established diversity and inclusion programs, unconscious bias training and actively promotes diverse events. 3.165

The AHRI model has strategic advantages because it is aligned with Australia's legislation and workplace culture policies and enables organisations to assess the impact of their engagement strategies and leadership commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. There are also other better practice tools by which organisations can assess and improve their diversity, equity and inclusion policies, such as the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) framework. The AHRI model and GDEIB framework may be used in combination, as the AHRI model can provide guidance on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the Australian workplace and legislative context, while the GDEIB would align the ACTPS with global better practices. 3.166

Guidance and support for agencies

- 3.2 As the central agency responsible for providing strategic direction for the ACTPS, CMTEDD seeks to provide guidance and support to agencies to implement frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to the ACTPS. The CMTEDD website states:

As a central agency, CMTEDD provides strategic advice and support to the Chief Minister, the Directorate's Ministers and the Cabinet on policy, economic and financial matters, service delivery, whole of government issues and intergovernmental relations. The Directorate facilitates the implementation of government priorities, drives initiatives as well as leads the strategic direction for the ACT Public Service (ACTPS), to ensure that it is well positioned to perform its role.

- 3.3 CMTEDD seeks to provide guidance and support for directorates and agencies in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans by:

- providing centralised information via the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub, the ACTPS Employment Portal and the ACTPS Rehabilitation Management System;
- collecting diversity, equity and inclusion data on ACTPS employees;
- facilitating diversity, equity and inclusion whole-of-government learning and development; and
- coordinating specific cross-directorate programs.

Provision of centralised information

ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub

- 3.4 The ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub (the Hub) is a collection of resources located on the ACT Government SharePoint platform. The Hub provides:

- resources and guidance relevant to specific diversity groups; and
- links to ACTPS employment frameworks, as well as some action plans and strategies.

- 3.5 The Hub also provides information about the Cultural Transformation Branch and diversity and inclusion contacts within each directorate.

- 3.6 The Hub was established following the 2021 *Beyond RED* report, which found that:

There is significant information across the ACTPS regarding D&I education, policies and procedures across the service. Much of our information is duplicated across directorates, and some processes need reconsideration. Any changes will need to be properly designed and effectively evaluated for maximum benefit.

Streamlining and effectively sharing information and having a "single source of truth" will allow easy and timely access to information.

- 3.7 The *Beyond RED* report identified that CMTEDD would:
- ... create a refreshed whole-of-government Diversity and Inclusion SharePoint site.
- 3.8 The Hub was soft launched on 27 February 2023 and has been progressively developed since. It is only accessible to ACTPS employees.
- 3.9 The 'Getting Help' tab on the Hub provides useful advice on support services available to employees, including the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Contact Officers, RED Executive Sponsors and the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.
- 3.10 The Hub does not provide a roadmap of the relevant legislation, frameworks, strategies and plans such that an ACTPS employee can quickly and easily understand their obligations and opportunities or which diversity groups they relate to or how they interrelate.

ACTPS Employment Portal

- 3.11 The ACTPS Employment Portal seeks to provide a resource for the ACTPS that:
- ... brings together information about the ACTPS Employment Framework. The portal contains enterprise agreements, awards, links to Commonwealth and ACT legislation, policies and other supporting materials.
- 3.12 Like the Hub, the portal seeks to provide information and resources for key audiences including ACTPS employees, managers and supervisors, executives and HR practitioners.
- 3.13 There is some overlap in content between the Hub and the ACTPS Employment Portal. The main difference is that the portal is accessible to the public and is therefore the main resource for people outside the ACTPS to learn about diversity, equity and inclusion principles in the ACTPS.

Rehabilitation Management System

- 3.14 The Rehabilitation Management System outlines the policies, procedures, guidelines and tools used to manage the work rehabilitation and return to work of an employee following an injury or illness.
- 3.15 ACTPS policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability is currently located within the Rehabilitation Management System. This is not ideal because it suggests that disability is equated with an injury or illness. Whilst disability does include temporary or permanent injury or illness, it is more encompassing than that and not all forms of disability can (or should) be subject to rehabilitation. It would be better for policy on workplace adjustments for people with disability to be found within human resource management functions relating to attraction and retention.



- 3.16 CMTEDD seeks to provide guidance and support to directorates and agencies in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion frameworks, strategies and plans by providing information via the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub, the ACTPS Employment Portal and the ACTPS Rehabilitation Management System. The ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub provides useful advice on support services available to ACTPS employees. The ACTPS Employment Portal provides information and resources for key audiences including ACTPS employees, managers and supervisors, executives and HR practitioners, but is also accessible to people outside the ACTPS. The Rehabilitation Management System outlines the policies, procedures, guidelines and tools used to manage the work rehabilitation and return to work of an employee following an injury or illness. In doing so it includes, more broadly, policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability. This is not ideal because it suggests that disability is equated with an injury or illness.

**Recommendation 2****Provision of information**

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:

- a) enhance the information provided through the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub by providing an accessible and identifiable roadmap of relevant legislation, frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion relevant to the ACTPS; and
- b) provide ACTPS policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability through an alternative forum to the Rehabilitation Management System.

Collection of diversity, equity and inclusion employment data

- 3.17 Gathering, tracking and analysing diversity, equity and inclusion employment data is important for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and facilitating planning for future initiatives. Without accurate data, CMTEDD is not in a position to know:

- what proportion of the ACTPS workforce currently belongs to a diversity group; and
- whether the ACTPS is meeting, or is likely to meet, ACTPS employment targets and performance indicators.

- 3.18 There are some deficiencies with data about diversity groups in the ACTPS. In 2021 the *Beyond RED* report observed that:

The ACTPS has several sources of data for diversity and inclusion information. Our research showed that we need improved data capture, categorisation and dissemination of information to take an evidence-based approach to diversity and inclusion into the future.

3.19 Accordingly, improving data capture and analysis was one of the short-term priority actions identified in the 2021 *Beyond RED* report:

Improve our data capture and analysis

- 4) Undertake deeper analysis of the ACTPS Staff Survey results through the lens of diversity groups.
- 5) Develop an ACTPS Diversity and Inclusion workforce data terminology policy which specifies consistent diversity terms to be used in ACTPS workforce data collection (such as Shared Services processes, HRIMS and employee survey).
- 6) Publicise the definitions we use of diversity groups to allow staff to consider whether they wish to identify.

3.20 There are currently three mechanisms to gather diversity, equity and inclusion employment data:

- when people apply for a position through ACT Jobs;
- through new employees' completion of the New Employee Personal Information Pack; and
- by allowing employees to update their personal details.

ACT Jobs

3.21 The ACT Jobs website is managed centrally by Shared Services HR. Standard diversity questions are posed via the ACT Jobs website when an applicant submits an application for a job in the ACTPS. A screenshot of these questions is provided in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 Diversity questions on ACT Jobs website

Do you have any special consideration/reasonable adjustments that need to be part of this selection process? E.g. Disability - either physical or psychological (such as anxiety), health condition or need for an interpreter. *

Yes

No

Do you identify with any of these diversity/inclusion groups?

This is an optional question. We [strongly encourage and support](#) diversity, inclusion and equality in our workforce with a range of tailored programs. We [value having staff with diverse backgrounds](#) and are committed to having a respectful and inclusive culture where all individuals have equal opportunities in the workplace.

Diversity/Inclusion groups

English is my second language

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Person with disability

LGBTQIA+

Source: ACT Government, Careers and Employment website, accessed 04/03/2025.

- 3.22 The ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub notes ‘the language we use sends powerful messages about diversity, inclusion, and belonging. It can help people feel seen, heard, valued, and respected, and plays a key role in creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment’. However, the diversity groups identified in the ACT Jobs website form are not comprehensive. There is no opportunity to identify as a neurodivergent person (noting that a neurodivergent person may not identify as having a disability).
- 3.23 The category ‘English is my second language’ is outdated and out of step with current terminology used by the ACT Government (which refers to ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’) as is the acronym ‘LGBTQIA+’ (the ACT Government uses the acronym LGBTQIA+).

New Employee Personal Information Pack

- 3.24 The ‘personal details’ section of the New Employee Personal Information Pack requests information on a person’s title and gender. Answering the questions is optional. Stakeholders have indicated that the questions that are asked can signal a lack of workplace sensitivity towards people who may not feel comfortable specifying a title that relates to gender (e.g. Mr or Mrs).
- 3.25 The *Equity and Diversity Details* section of the New Employee Personal Information Pack is shown in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2 Extract from New Employee Personal Information Pack

Equity and Diversity Details (Optional)	
<small>The ACT Public Service collects information on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups for statistical purposes only. This information is used for reporting purposes and for the development of equity and diversity programs. All reporting is in the form of aggregate tables from which individual detail cannot be identified. Personal and sensitive information collected in this section will not be used for future employment or selection processes, and is collected on an 'opt-in' or voluntary basis.</small>	
Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Were you born in Australia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If you were not born in Australia, in what year did you arrive?	x
Was English the first language you spoke?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What was the first language you spoke?	x
Was English the first language spoken by your Mother?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Was English the first language spoken by your Father?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you a person with a disability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<small>The term person with disability is used to describe a wide range of people with different impairments that may or may not affect how they do their job. A disability includes any limitation, restriction or impairment which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months, and affects a person's capacity in some way. If Reasonable Adjustment would aid you in the workplace, please consider speaking to your supervisor or HR team.</small>	
Are you a former Australian Defence Force (ADF) member?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you personally identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Source: ACT Government, Shared Services, New Employee Personal Information Pack, accessed 04/03/2025.

3.26 There is no opportunity for a person to identify as neurodivergent. This can have implications for subsequent recognition of neurodivergence in the workplace and the appropriate provision of reasonable adjustments.

Updating diversity status

3.27 At any point after their commencement as an ACTPS employee, an employee can update some of their diversity information via the HR21 employee portal. In March 2025 the page was updated to:

- include information about why the data is collected and who can access it;
- reflect current terminology used to describe diversity groups; and
- add a new field for LGBTIQ+ identification.

3.28 A screenshot of the currently available fields is shown in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3 Diversity-related personal questions on HR21

① This information is collected on an 'opt-in' or voluntary basis. It isn't used for selection processes and isn't visible to your manager or colleagues. This data informs Whole of Government policies and services and all reporting is in aggregate tables from which individual detail cannot be identified. More information about how your personal information is handled can be found on the [CMTEDD Information Privacy page](#) and note you can click on **HELP** below, then ? for some field specific definitions.

REFRESH
SUBMIT
DELETE
PRINT
HELP

Do you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person? Yes No Prefer not to answer

Were you born in Australia? Yes No Prefer not to answer
If you were not born in Australia, in what year did you arrive?

Was English the first language you spoke? Yes No Prefer not to answer
If it was not English, what was your first language?

Was English the first language spoken by your Mother? Yes No Prefer not to answer

Was English the first language spoken by your Father? Yes No Prefer not to answer

Are you a person with a disability? Yes No Prefer not to answer
If [Workplace adjustment](#) would aid you in the workplace, please consider speaking with your supervisor or HR team

Are you a current or former member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) including reservists? Yes No Prefer not to answer

Do you identify as LGBTQIA+? Yes No Prefer not to answer

Source: ACT Government, Shared Services, HR21, Update Diversity Status, accessed 02/04/2025.

3.29 Updates to name, gender and title must be manually inputted via the employee submitting a separate form to Shared Services HR. This dual-step process may be impeding updates being made by staff as well as the accuracy of the data that is maintained.

3.30 The 2021 *Beyond Red* report identified a specific action to ‘develop an ACTPS Diversity and Inclusion workforce data terminology policy which specifies consistent diversity terms to be used in ACTPS workforce data collection’. In July 2024, the Cultural Transformation Branch released the *Beyond Respect, Equity and Diversity: Inclusive Terminology Guide* as a reference point for inclusive language within the ACTPS. The guide helps to define some workforce groups, such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, and it explains why the ACTPS seeks data and information about these groups. The guide does not cover older workers, younger workers or neurodivergent people.



3.31 Gathering, tracking and analysing diversity, equity and inclusion employment data is important for the purpose of measuring whether frameworks, strategies and plans are successful and facilitating planning for future initiatives. There are currently three mechanisms to gather data and information on new and existing staff: when people apply for a position through ACT Jobs; through new employees’ completion of the New Employee Personal Information Pack; and by allowing employees to update their diversity information. These processes do not reflect all diversity groups or the current terminology used to describe them.



3.32 At any point after their commencement as an ACTPS employee, an employee can update their diversity information via an HR21 employee portal. Updates to name, gender and title must be manually inputted via the employee submitting a separate form to Shared Service HR. This dual-step process may be impeding updates being made by staff as well as the accuracy of the data that is maintained.



Recommendation 3 Collection of diversity, equity and inclusion employment data

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:

- a) collect employment data for people who identify as neurodivergent; and
- b) develop systems and processes for ACTPS employees to directly update key personal information.

Provision of learning and development opportunities

3.33 Regular learning and development reinforces the importance, and continuing and growing consciousness, of diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the workplace. Griffith University advised it would be better practice for enhanced awareness, recognition and respect for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, age, culture/ethnicity/religion, diverse genders, bodies and sexualities, people with disability and women, to be included as part of mandatory induction training for all new employees and as refresher courses for employees every two to three years.

3.34 The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy promotes ACTPS-wide learning and development opportunities relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion through the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub. The Office has also procured SBS diversity and inclusion learning modules, which directorates can choose to make required learning for their staff.

3.35 There are no mandatory, whole-of-government workplace diversity learning and development requirements for ACTPS employees. Rather, learning and development requirements are set by directorates. This results in inconsistency in practice across the ACTPS.

Recruitment and selection

3.36 It is better practice to have additional diversity, equity and inclusion learning and development requirements for people involved in recruitment and selection. This is one means to counter unconscious bias and ensure that staff involved in recruitment have appropriate knowledge and skills. Although there is a whole-of-government recruitment

policy (the *ACTPS Recruitment Policy and Guidelines*) it does not specify mandatory or minimum learning and development requirements for people involved in recruitment and selection. The policy notes that most directorates deliver their own specific training and advises ACTPS employees to check their own directorate's policies.

3.37 There is inconsistency in practice across ACTPS directorates with respect to learning and development requirements for people involved in recruitment and selection. Although the three agencies considered for the purpose of the audit all had mandatory training for selection panels, only two had mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for staff, and only one had mandatory training for managers and supervisors (further information is provided in Table B-1 in Appendix B).



3.38 Regular learning and development reinforces the importance, and continuing and growing consciousness of, diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the workplace. It is better practice for there to be mandatory training requirements for staff (including managers/executives) and recruitment panels. There are no mandatory workplace diversity training requirements for staff at a whole-of-government level, nor are there mandatory training requirements for recruiters and selection panels. Training requirements are set by directorates and this has resulted in inconsistency in practice across the ACTPS.



Recommendation 4

Learning and development requirements

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should establish mandatory:

- a) workplace diversity training requirements for all staff and refresher courses for staff every two to three years;
- b) diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for managers and supervisors; and
- c) diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for ACTPS staff involved in recruitment.

Coordination of whole-of-government programs

3.39 The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has coordinated various cross-directorate programs including the ACTPS Vocational Employment Program, the Veterans' Peer Network and the Neurodiversity Pilot Program. A fourth program, the Employee Assistance Program, offers counselling and wellbeing support for employees and is delivered by a contracted service provider.

ACTPS Vocational Employment Program

- 3.40 The ACTPS Vocational Employment Program is a 12 to 18-month entry-level employment pathway for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and close family of serving or former members of the Australian Defence Force. The program has been running every one to two years since 2015.
- 3.41 Participants are initially engaged as permanent officers on probation at an entry classification (ASO1-ASO3) in a directorate. As part of the Program, participants are required to complete an Australian Qualifications Framework accredited qualification or personal development plan as well as probation requirements. On successful completion, participants are promoted under section 106 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* to the next classification level and confirmed as a permanently appointed officer of the ACTPS.
- 3.42 The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy funds the cost of advertisement and recruitment, while directorates fund the cost of study, the structured learning and development program and payroll costs for participants. The estimated total cost to the ACTPS of one Vocational Employment Program Cycle (based on a program lasting 18 months with 15 participants) is \$649,120.
- 3.43 The Vocational Employment Program seeks to achieve an 85 percent successful completion rate. Between 2015 and 2022, 28 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants and 19 people with disability undertook the program. The completion rate for the program between 2015 and 2022 was 82 percent for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants and 95 percent for people with disability. The 2023-24 program cohort had 14 participants. The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy advised that ten of those participants completed the program, which represents a 71 percent completion rate. CMTEDD advised in its response to the draft proposed report that four participants did not finish the program because they left the ACTPS for personal reasons (including securing a promotion).
- 3.44 The Vocational Employment Program was evaluated by CMTEDD in June 2022. The evaluation found that the program contributes to increased workforce diversity, and it recommended that such programs ‘continue in the ACTPS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and people with disability into the future’. CMTEDD advised in its response to the draft proposed report that a review of the 2023-24 Vocational Employment Program was completed internally in January 2025. On 28 April 2025, the Program was paused due to a recruitment freeze in the ACTPS.

Veterans’ Peer Network

- 3.45 The Veterans’ Peer Network facilitates a series of informal conversations within and with the veteran community in the ACTPS.

- 3.46 A pilot version of the Program was evaluated in 2023. Seventeen veterans had indicated interest in the program and 15 remained at the end of the program. Seventy-five percent of respondents agreed that the program had positively influenced their health and wellbeing and 88 percent of respondents said they would like to see the program return permanently.
- 3.47 CMTEDD advised in its response to the draft proposed report that the 2023-24 Veterans' Peer Network concluded in mid-2024 and that satisfaction data collected from participants (pre-, mid- and post-program) showed that some participants found the program valuable. CMTEDD advised 'no further determination has been made about the program's continuation or frequency'.

Neurodiversity Pilot Program

- 3.48 A Neurodiversity Pilot Program was undertaken in 2021-22. A specialist neurodiversity recruitment provider was engaged to source candidates on behalf of the ACTPS. This resulted in one participant at the ASO5 level.
- 3.49 An evaluation of the program in early 2023 identified that the pilot was financially and human resource intensive, but the participant went on to thrive in the workplace and added value to the team. In this sense, the program achieved an important objective which was 'to provide the right work environment for a neurodiverse individual to thrive and contribute'.
- 3.50 The evaluation observed that while the specialist recruitment provider had met the agreed terms of the contract, the training and 'post placement support' provided to the participant and the workplace could have been improved. Recommendations for future programs related to better contract management practice, clearer guidance and neurodiversity training for host business areas.
- 3.51 Although the Cultural Transformation Branch launched a whole-of-government website about 'Neurodiversity in the Workplace' in March 2025, there is no indication that the Neurodiversity Pilot Program will be offered again.



- 3.52 The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy has coordinated a range of cross-directorate programs to recognise and support diversity and inclusion across the ACTPS. These include the ACTPS Vocational Employment Program (a 12 to 18-month entry-level employment pathway for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and close family of serving or former members of the Australian Defence Force). Other programs have also been offered (e.g. the Veterans' Peer Network and Neurodiversity Pilot Program) but there is no indication they will be offered again.

Employee Assistance Program and Critical Incident Support Services

- 3.53 The ACT Government has an agreement with Converge to deliver the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Critical Incident Support Services.¹¹
- 3.54 The Employee Assistance Program offers short term counselling and wellbeing support for ACTPS employees and their immediate families. It is available to employees, volunteer staff and individuals engaged on periodic arrangements for specific functions (e.g. jurors). It is not available to consultants or contractors. The Employee Assistance Program also offers targeted Manager Support for employees that have managerial or supervisory responsibilities and Career Assist services.
- 3.55 In November 2024, the utilisation rate of the Employee Assistance Program across the ACTPS was 12.4 percent (four percent higher than the industry rate of 8.4 percent). The Program had 30,830 engagements in the contract year prior to November 2024, of which 3,496 remained active clients. In September 2023, the utilisation rate by women was more than twice that of men. The customer satisfaction rate was 88 percent based on 796 responses in the twelve months prior to November 2024.
- 3.56 Bullying was the psychosocial hazard that was most highly reported (31.5 percent of work issues) across the ACTPS in 2023-24, compared to the industry average of 29.4 percent. This was followed by issues with workplace relationships at 22.2 percent. In the period between October 2023 and September 2024, Employee Assistance Program data indicates that both incidents of perceived bullying or harassment and incidents of perceived discrimination in the workplace increased across the ACTPS. In the same period, 1.4 percent of ACTPS employees who accessed Employee Assistance Program counselling were identified as high risk and 24.0 percent presented as medium risk (which was 5.57 percentage points higher than industry).
- 3.57 In April 2022, a workshop was conducted by CMTEDD with several directorates and agencies to discuss the purpose of the Employee Assistance Program and its use. Issues raised in that workshop were low utilisation rates of the Manager Support and Career Assist services and confusion about the extent of the services that are available.
- 3.58 The 'Getting help' tab on the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub provides key information about accessing the Employee Assistance Program. CMTEDD advised in its response to the draft proposed report that the ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging team has also promoted Employee Assistance Program support lines for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff experiencing high cultural load at specific times (for example, during the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum).

¹¹ Critical Incident Support Services provides targeted support for employees who have been impacted by a major event including, but not limited to, critical incidents, organisational change, workplace violence and grief and loss.

3.59 A review of all news announcements on the ACTPS Intranet between 1 July 2024 and 1 July 2025 shows that there were no explicit announcements to promote or enhance awareness of the Employee Assistance Program in that twelve-month period.



3.60 The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers short term counselling and wellbeing support for ACTPS employees and their immediate families. In November 2024, the utilisation rate of the Program across the ACTPS was 12.4 percent (four percent higher than the industry rate of 8.4 percent). The Program had 30,830 engagements in the contract year prior to November 2024, of which 3,496 remained active clients. In April 2022, a workshop was conducted by CMTEDD with several directorates and agencies to discuss the purpose of the Program and its utilisation. Issues raised in that workshop were low utilisation rates of the Manager Support and Career Assist services and confusion about the extent of the services that are available.

Performance and accountability arrangements

3.61 Successful implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion principles and initiatives requires robust performance and accountability arrangements. This includes:

- clearly articulated performance objectives and actions for implementation; and
- measurable targets by which to monitor progress.

Performance objectives and actions for implementation

ACT Government Performance and Accountability Framework

3.62 The ACT Government *Performance and Accountability Framework* outlines performance and accountability principles for ACT Government directorates and agencies.

3.63 The *Performance and Accountability Framework* defines government strategic planning as follows:

Strategic planning relates more closely to the way in which services are planned and delivered. Identified strategic priorities define where the Government will focus its attention and effort from a high-level policy perspective. It also requires identification of priority actions and achievements that will contribute to the longer-term goals of Government.

3.64 The *Performance and Accountability Framework* describes agency strategic planning as 'focussed on the individual contribution that each agency makes toward the Government's priorities, long-term goals and key services'. Key outputs of agency strategic planning are:

Strategic objectives — what effect or difference the agency aims to make in the community;

Strategic indicators — measures of achievement against these objectives by assessing progress of outcomes on the community; and

High-level strategies for achieving these objectives.

3.65 The *Performance and Accountability Framework* outlines the characteristics of strategic objectives and strategic indicators. This is shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Characteristics of strategic objectives and strategic indicators

Strategic objectives	Strategic indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short, concise statement • Focused on results (not activities) • Contribute to government prioritise and goals • Can be influenced by the agency over the medium term • Measurable or verifiable through strategic indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to objectives • Reliable and verifiable • Informative • Attributable to agency actions

Source: *Performance and Accountability Framework*, p.15.

3.66 With respect to performance indicators, the *Performance and Accountability Framework* states:

Performance indicators measure the extent to which government, or agencies, are achieving their objectives and stated priorities.

Performance indicators or measures are the specific criteria or means used to measure performance (most commonly of outputs produced and outcomes achieved). They may be expressed as (but are not limited to) absolute numbers, percentages, ratios, point estimates or ranges. They might also be qualitative in nature.

Cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion

3.67 Cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion were reviewed with the purpose of identifying whether they have clearly identified:

- strategic objectives and outcomes;
- actions with timeframes for implementation; and
- performance measures with targets.

3.68 Table 3-2 shows a summary of this analysis.

Table 3-2 Accountability arrangements for cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion

	Strategic objectives	Outcomes	Actions with timeframes	Performance measures with targets
<i>RED Framework</i>	✓	✗	✓	✗
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020</i>	✗	✗	✗*	✗*
<i>People with Disability Employment Framework 2020</i>	✗	✗	✗*	✗*
<i>ACT Disability Strategy and First Action Plan 2024-2033</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
<i>Veterans' Employment Strategy 2020</i>	✗	✗	✓	✓
<i>ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
<i>ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026</i>	✓	✗	✗	✗
<i>ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026 First Action Plan</i>	✗	✓	✓	✗
<i>ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026 Second Action Plan</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026 Third Action Plan</i>	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2029</i>	✓	✗	✓	✗
<i>Capital of Equality First Action Plan 2024-2026</i>	✓	✗	✓	✗
<i>Capital of Equality Second Action Plan 2022-2023</i>	✗	✗	✓	✗

Source: ACT Audit Office analysis of ACTPS whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans.

* indicates that directorate-specific targets and reporting requirements apply.

Objectives and outcomes

3.69 A review of the cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion shows that while all the frameworks, strategies and plans contain a broad statement of intent:

- four plans specifically refer to objectives;
- three plans specifically refer to outcomes; and
- three plans explicitly refer to both objectives and outcomes.

3.70 In some cases, other terminology is used to describe objectives and outcomes, such as ‘defining statements’ in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020* and *People with Disability Employment Framework 2020*.

3.71 As an example of good practice, the *ACT Women’s Plan 2016-2026 Second Action Plan* and *Third Action Plan* include clear and explicit statements of objectives and outcomes. The *ACT Women’s Plan 2016-2026 Second Action Plan* identified five objectives:

- improving the mental health and wellbeing of women and girls in the ACT;
- fostering gender equity in Canberra workplaces, including through improved gender equality in leadership and workplace participation;
- building a community where women and girls are safe and supported to participate;
- improving housing support and sustainability and reducing homelessness for women; and
- developing appropriate and accessible services, programs and policies for women and girls, ensuring consideration of those from diverse backgrounds.

3.72 Against each of the objectives, outcomes were identified (along with actions to achieve the outcome and metrics by which to measure performance).

3.73 In the *ACT Women’s Plan 2016-2026 Third Action Plan* the objectives have been replaced by themes:

- health and wellbeing;
- safety and inclusion;
- leadership and workforce participation;
- housing and homelessness; and
- appropriate and accessible services.

3.74 Similar to the *ACT Women’s Plan 2016-2026 Second Action Plan* a series of outcomes have been identified (along with actions to achieve the outcome and metrics by which to measure performance).

Actions with timeframes

3.75 Most of the cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion specify actions with timeframes (either in themselves or in a separate supporting action plan).

3.76 The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020* and *People with Disability Employment Framework 2020* do not identify actions with timeframes. Instead,

they explicitly state that staff should 'refer to directorate-specific strategies for further information on actions, timeframes, reporting etc'.¹²

3.77 The *ACT Womens Plan 2016-2026* explicitly states that separate 'action plans will outline measures which all areas of ACT Government will be held accountable for progressing'.¹³ Actions with timeframes are set out in the First Action Plan, Second Action Plan and Third Action Plan respectively.

Performance measures and targets

3.78 Only four of the 13 cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion have identified performance measures that are supported by quantifiable metrics, indicators or targets. The way in which performance measures that are conveyed in the documents varies. For example:

- the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033 First Action Plan* sets 'an initial target of 9 per cent of ACTPS employees, including executive staff, being people with disability';¹⁴
- the *Veterans Employment Strategy 2020* states that it will, in 2020-21, 'establish an Australian School Based Apprenticeship (ASBA) position for a family member of an ADF member's or Veteran's family studying Year 11 or Year 12 in the ACT School System';¹⁵
- the *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029* states that it will focus on achieving 'a >10 percentage point improvement in nonbinary people's sense of inclusion as measured by the 2027 ACTPS Staff survey';¹⁶ and
- the *ACT Womens Plan 2016-2026 Second Action Plan* 'sets a 10 per cent target for the proportion of women employed in the construction industry in the ACT'.¹⁷

3.79 Other plans do not identify performance measures that are supported by quantifiable metrics, indicators or targets. For example, the *Capital of Equality First Action Plan 2024-2026* includes an action to promote inclusive language and training for ACTPS staff, but this is not supported by a quantifiable metric, indicator or target. The relevant extract of plan is shown in Figure 3-4.

¹² *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework 2020* and *People with Disability Employment Framework 2020*, note 1, page 3.

¹³ *ACT Womens Plan 2016-2026*, p.9.

¹⁴ *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033 First Action Plan*, p.9.

¹⁵ *Veterans Employment Strategy 2020*, p.6.

¹⁶ *ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029*, p.7.

¹⁷ *ACT Womens Plan 2016-2026 Second Action Plan*, p.12.

Figure 3-4 Capital of Equality First Action Plan 2024-2026 (extract)



Source: *Capital of Equality First Action Plan 2024-2026*, p.7.

3.80 While some performance measures set out in the *Multicultural Framework Second Action Plan 2019-2020* have quantifiable metrics, indicators or targets, others do not, for example:

- ‘community use of digital platforms’;
- ‘diversity representation on Councils and in the ACT Public Service’;
- ‘participation and engagement in public forums’;
- ‘community member satisfaction with revised grants guidelines’; and
- ‘number of activities promoting oral and printed history of established multicultural communities and community participation in activities’.¹⁸



3.81 A review of cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion shows there is variability in how they identify and articulate: strategic objectives and outcomes; actions with timeframes for implementation; and performance measures with targets. Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans do this well, either in the document itself, or in a supporting action plan(s). Some of the frameworks, strategies and plans identify high-level concepts and identify that specific details on actions and timeframes for implementation are to be found in directorate-specific documents. Such an approach weakens whole-of-government performance and accountability arrangements.



Recommendation 5 Performance and accountability arrangements for cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans

When developing future frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, ACT Government agencies should clearly identify:

- a) strategic objectives and outcomes;
- b) actions with timeframes for implementation; and
- c) performance measures with targets.

¹⁸ *Multicultural Framework Second Action Plan 2019-2020*, pages 3, 4 and 5.

Employment targets

- 3.82 Employment targets are measurable objectives with timeframes for increased numbers of people in roles. Studies indicate that setting employment targets positively impacts the recruitment of underrepresented groups and fosters workplace environments that better reflect the populations they serve.¹⁹ A key finding in the public sector, both in Australia and internationally, is that employment targets improve representation but often require robust frameworks for tracking and accountability.²⁰
- 3.83 As shown in Table 3-3, the ACTPS has two whole-of-government diversity, equity and inclusion employment targets, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability.

Table 3-3 ACTPS employment targets and indicators

Diversity group	Target / Indicator
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	3% of employees in the ACTPS are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by 2026
People with disability	9% of employees and senior executives in the ACTPS are people with disability

Source: 2021-22 State of the Service Report, pp. 53, 57; ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033, p.36; Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2029, p.7; 2022-23 State of the Service Report p.14.

Employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

- 3.84 The current percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS is 2.0 percent. This is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory (2.0 percent). The ACTPS employment target of 3 percent

¹⁹ Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2024). Targets and quotas. Retrieved 20 October, 2024, from https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2014-03-04_PP_targetsquotas.pdf

²⁰ Kurtulus, F.A. (2015). *The impact of affirmative action on the employment of minorities and women over three decades: 1973–2003*. Upjohn Institute Working Paper No. 15-221. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2573219.

Mujtaba, B.G. (2023). *Affirmative action initiatives in education and employment: Its necessity then, now and in the future*. Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 24(1), pp. 46–54. doi: 10.1353/gia.2023.a897700.

Opore-Addo, J., Bertone, S. (2021). *Slow and uneven progress: The representation of non-English-speaking background employees in the Australian Public Service*. Australian Journal of Public Administration, 80(3), pp.385–406. doi: 10.1111/1467-8500.12484.

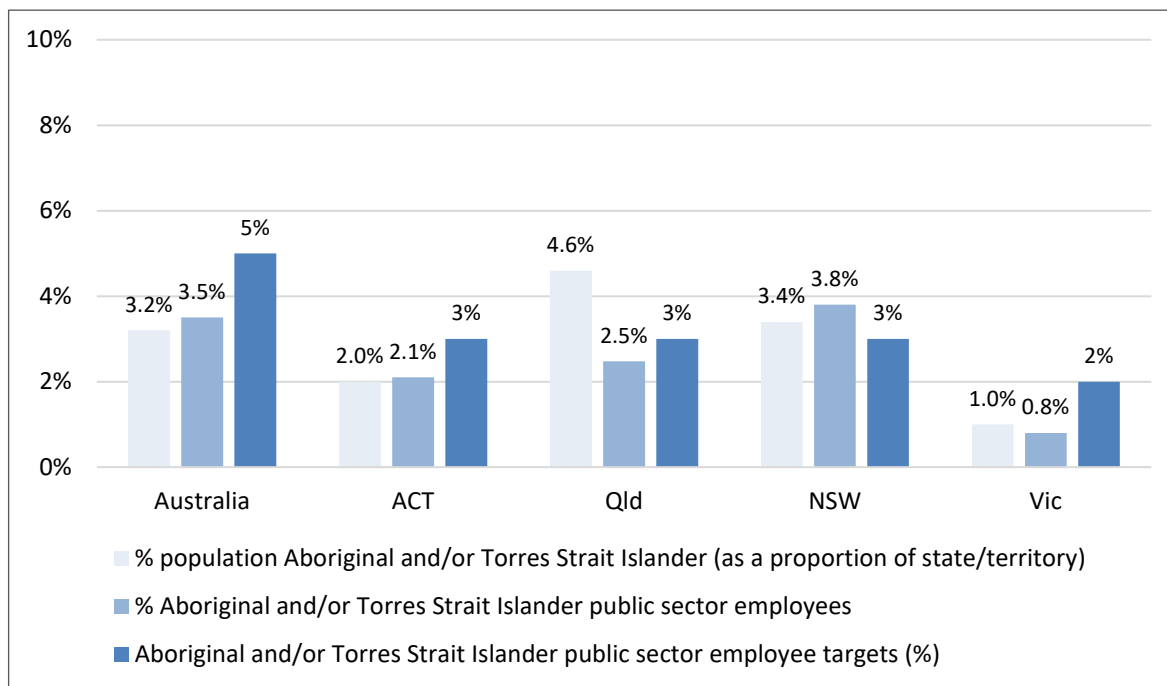
Revillard, A. (2022). *The disability employment quota, between social policy and antidiscrimination*. Global Social Policy, 23(1), 92-108. doi: 10.1177/14680181221138558.

Van Dam, E. (2021). New Dutch law to require more women in top jobs. Mondaq (accessed 18 March 2025). <https://www.mondaq.com/diversity-equity-inclusion/1128602/new-dutch-law-to-require-more-women-in-top-jobs>

by 2026 exceeds the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory.

3.85 Figure 3-5 shows Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander public service employees and public service employment targets across different jurisdictions.

Figure 3-5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander public service employees and public service employment targets



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics; Australian Government *State of the Service Report 2022-23*; *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24*; ACT Government *State of the Service Reports 2021-22 and 2023-24*; Queensland Government *State of the Sector Report 2025*; NSW Government *Workforce Profile Report 2022*; Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2021 Workforce data, facts and visuals.

3.86 Figure 3-5 shows:

- the ACTPS employment target of 3 percent is comparable to the public sector employee targets for Queensland and New South Wales, higher than Victoria’s target of 2 percent, but lower than the Australian Public Service target of 5 percent;
- the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS (2.0 percent) is lower than that of the Australian Public Service (3.5 percent), Queensland Public Service (2.5 percent) and NSW public sector (3.8 percent).

Employment of people with disability

3.87 The current reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS is 3.0 percent.²¹ This is lower than the percentages of the ACT population living with a

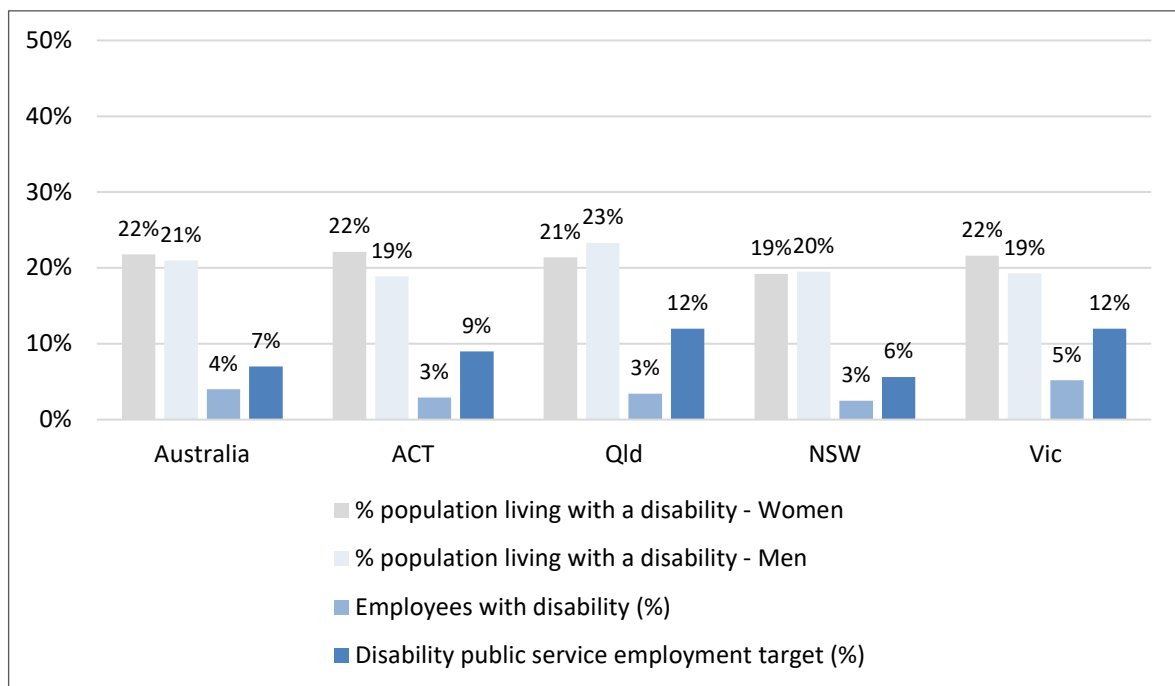
²¹ ACT Government, *2023-24 State of the Service Report*, p.27.

disability (women: 22.1 percent; men: 18.9 percent). The ACTPS employment target for people with disability was increased from 5 percent in 2020 to the current target of 9 percent.

3.88 The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate advised that the 9 percent target for employees with a disability in the ACTPS includes people who are neurodivergent.

3.89 Figure 3-6 shows public service employees with disability and public service employment targets across different jurisdictions.

Figure 3-6 Public service employees with disability and disability employment targets



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics; (2022b), *Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25*; ACT Government *2023-24 State of the Service Report*; *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033 First Action Plan*; Queensland Government *State of the sector report 2025*; NSW Government *Workforce Profile Report 2022*; Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2021 Workforce data, facts and visuals.

3.90 Figure 3-6 shows:

- the ACTPS employment target is higher than the targets set for the Australian Public Service (7 percent) and the NSW public sector (5.6 percent), but lower than the targets set in Queensland and Victoria (12 percent); and
- the reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS (3.0 percent) is lower than that of the Australian Public Service (4.0 percent), Queensland Public Service (3.4 percent) and Victorian public sector (5.2 percent).



3.91 Employment targets are measurable objectives with timeframes for increased numbers of people in roles. The ACTPS has two whole-of-government employment targets, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (3 percent by 2026) and people with disability (9 percent). The current percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS is 2.0 percent. This is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory (2.0 percent). The current reported percentage of employees with a disability in the ACTPS is 3.0 percent. This is lower than the percentages of the ACT population living with a disability (women: 22.1 percent; men: 18.9 percent).

Employment of other diversity groups

3.92 There are no ACTPS whole-of-government employment targets for the following diversity groups:

- LGBTIQ+;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- women;
- older workers;
- younger workers;
- veterans; and
- neurodivergent people.

LGBTIQ+

3.93 The ACTPS does not have employment targets for LGBTIQ+ employees.

3.94 It is not yet common for organisations to set quotas or employment targets for LGBTIQ+ employees, which, in part, can be attributed to many still not identifying as LGBTIQ+ at work. One organisation that has set employment targets is the Australian Taxation Office (3 percent from 2018).²²

²² Viellaris, R. (2018). *ATO sets a percentage for proportion of LGBTI staff*. Link: <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/ato-sets-a-percentage-for-proportion-of-lgbti-staff/news-story/0d48b1fc82106fa01bd1d8377237c831> (accessed 22 October 2024).

3.95 On 30 June 2024, the ACTPS is tracking slightly above other jurisdictions in the employment of LGBTIQ+ employees. Seven percent of respondents identified as LGBTIQ+ in the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey,²³ compared with 5.9 percent in the Australian Public Service in 2021,²⁴ 6.0 percent in the Queensland Public Service in 2024²⁵ and 5.6 percent in the Victorian public sector in 2021.²⁶



3.96 The ACTPS does not have employment targets for LGBTIQ+ employees. On 30 June 2024, the ACTPS is tracking slightly above other jurisdictions in the employment of LGBTIQ+ employees. Seven percent of respondents identified as LGBTIQ+ in the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, compared with 5.9 percent in the Australian Public Service in 2021, 6.0 percent in the Queensland Public Service in 2024 and 5.6 percent in the Victorian public sector in 2021.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

3.97 In some organisations, employment targets have been implemented to improve organisational representation among people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Members of this diversity group often experience workplace discrimination and racism. They may face disadvantages in hiring decisions and often are unemployed or under-employed in jobs that do not reflect their experience and/or qualifications gained in other countries.²⁷

3.98 Figure 3-7 shows the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees in the ACTPS and the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees in other state public services.

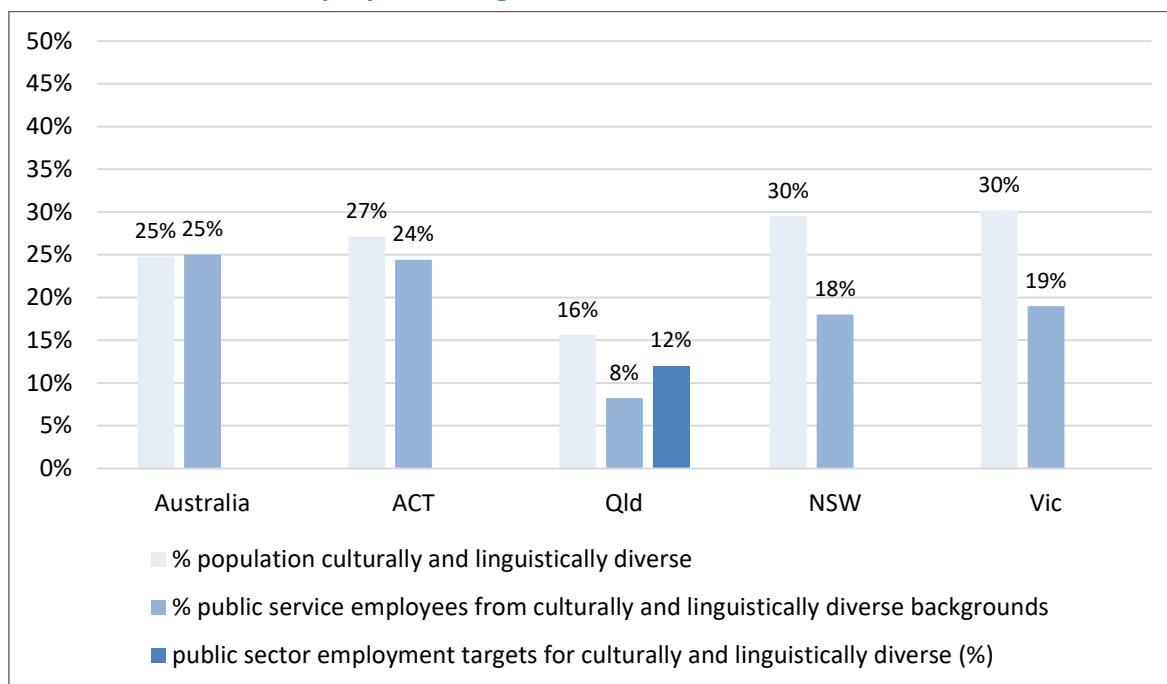
²³ ACT Government, *2023-24 State of the Service Report*, p.31.

²⁴ Australian Government, *Employees who identify as LGBTI+ in the Australian Public Service (April 2021)*, p.2.

²⁵ Queensland public sector commission, *State of the sector report 2024*, p.57.

²⁶ Victorian public sector commission, *2021 Workforce data, facts and visuals (sexual orientation)*.

²⁷ Baker, S., Due, C., Rose, M. (2021). *Transitions from education to employment for culturally and linguistically diverse migrants and refugees in settlement contexts: What do we know?* *Studies in Continuing Education*, 43(1), pp. 1–15. doi: 10.1080/0158037X.2019.1683533.

Figure 3-7 Culturally and linguistically diverse public service employees and public service employment targets

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics; *APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy and Action Plan*; ACT Government 2023-24 *State of the Service Report*; Queensland Government *State of the sector report 2025*; NSW Government *Workforce Profile Report 2022*; Victorian Public Sector Commission, Workforce data (state of the public sector) 2024.

3.99 The proportion of ACTPS employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (24.4 percent) is:

- less than the population of culturally and linguistically diverse people in the ACT (27.1 percent);
- less than the population of culturally and linguistically diverse people in Australia (24.8 percent); and
- less than the proportion of Australian Public Service employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (25.0 percent).

3.100 Figure 3-7 also shows that the proportion of ACTPS employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds exceeds the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees employed in the Victorian Public Service (19.0 percent), NSW public sector (18.0 percent) and Queensland Public Service (8.2 percent).

3.101 Although there is a high proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees in the ACTPS, the *Beyond RED* report found in 2021 that culturally and linguistically diverse employees are under-represented in senior executive roles. In 2022, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a resolution on *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Data Collection* which called on the ACT Government to better 'support the recruitment, retention and promotion of CALD people into and across the ACT Public Service'. In response, the ACT

Government committed to implementing ‘a mentorship program for aspiring SES who are from a CALD background’. A pilot mentoring program that was due to be launched in February 2024 was launched in May 2025.

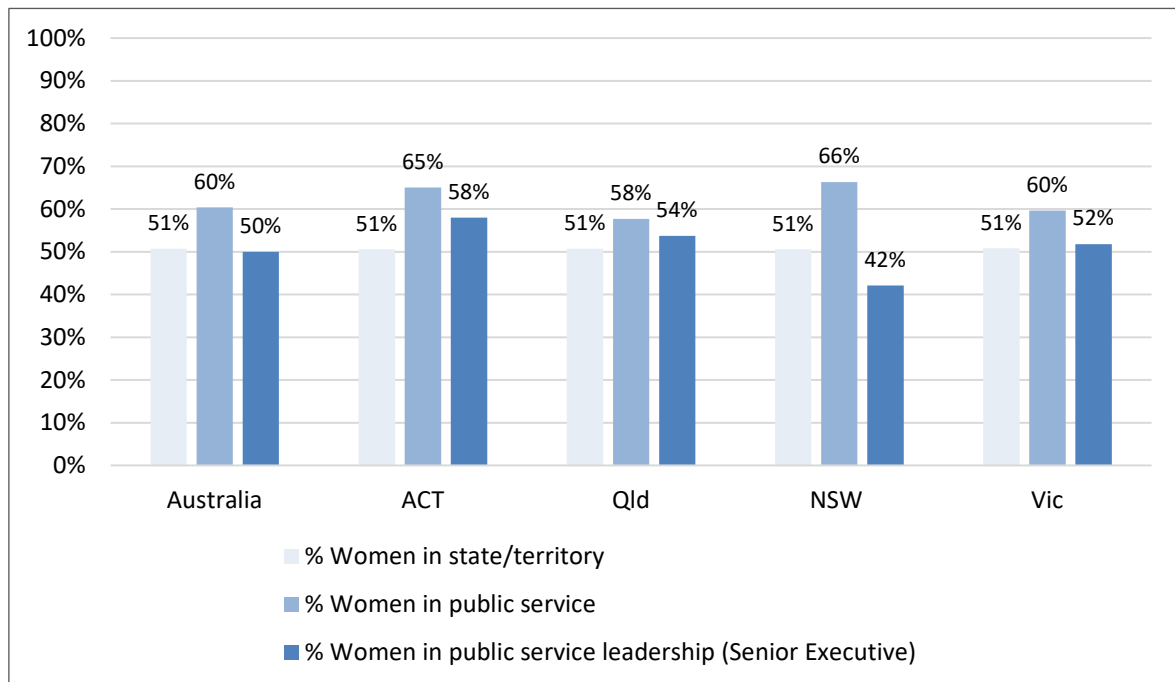


3.102 The ACTPS does not have employment targets for culturally and linguistically diverse employees. The proportion of ACTPS employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (24.4 percent) is less than the population of culturally and linguistically diverse people in the ACT (27.1 percent). Culturally and linguistically diverse employees are under-represented in SES roles. In response to a 2022 Legislative Assembly resolution the ACT Government committed to implementing ‘a mentorship program for aspiring SES who are from a CALD background’. A pilot mentoring program that was due to be launched in February 2024 was launched in May 2025.

Women

3.103 Women make up 50.6 percent of the population in the ACT. Figure 3-8 shows the proportion of women in the ACTPS, including women in senior leadership roles, and the proportion of women in other state public services.

Figure 3-8 Women in public service and public service leadership roles



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics; Australian Government 2022-23 *State of the Service Report*; APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2026; ACT Government 2023-24 *State of the Service Report*; Queensland Government *State of the sector report 2025*; NSW Government *Workforce Profile Report 2022*; Victorian Public Sector Commission, *Workforce data (state of the public sector) 2024*.

3.104 Figure 3-8 shows:

- the proportion of ACTPS employees who are women (65.0 percent) exceeds the proportion of women in the ACT (50.6 percent);
- the proportion of ACTPS employees who are women is higher than the proportion in the Australian Public Service (60.4 percent), the Queensland Public Service (57.7 percent) and the Victorian public sector (59.6 percent) but lower than the NSW public sector (66.3 percent); and
- the proportion of ACTPS women in senior leadership (58.0 percent) exceeds the proportion of women in senior leadership roles in other jurisdictions.



3.105 The proportion of ACTPS employees who are women (65.0 percent) exceeds the proportion of women in the ACT (50.6 percent) as well as the Australian Public Service (60.4 percent), the Queensland Public Service (57.7 percent) and the Victorian public sector (59.6 percent). Women are also represented in 58.0 percent of ACTPS leadership roles. This is a higher proportion than other jurisdictions.



Recommendation 6 Employment targets

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should establish employment targets for diversity groups, including LGBTIQ+, people with disability, older workers, veterans and people who are neurodiverse.

Whole-of-government monitoring and reporting

3.106 Performance reporting is a key component of monitoring and assessing the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Public reporting supports transparency and accountability and provides valuable insight into the ACTPS as an employer and its prioritisation of diversity, equity and inclusion principles.

3.107 CMTEDD reports on agencies' implementation of whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans through annual *State of the Service Reports* and the bi-annual *ACTPS Employee Survey*.

RED Framework reporting requirements

3.108 The requirements for reporting progress on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives were initially set out in the RED Framework. The RED Framework provided for the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (referred to as the Chief Minister's Department) to coordinate a *Respect, Equity and Diversity Progress Report* to the Chief Minister and Management Council annually. This would be informed by an *Action Plan*

Progress Report and an update and analysis of statistics. This report was referred to as the *Annual Respect, Equity and Diversity Progress Report*.

- 3.109 Following Recommendation 3 of the 2015 Final Report on the review of the Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework, a *Respect, Equity and Diversity Progress Report* is no longer required. CMTEDD now relies on annual *State of the Service Reports* to report on RED progress and data.

State of the Service Reports

- 3.110 The Head of Service is required to deliver a *State of the Service Report* under section 5 of the *Annual Report (Government Agencies) Act 2004*. Section 9A of the Act states that the responsible minister for the report is the Chief Minister.

- 3.111 The *Annual Report (Government Agencies) Directions 2024* identify that the purpose of the *State of the Service Report* is:

A comprehensive analysis of the ACT public service and an account of the management of the ACT public sector prepared by the Head of Service under the Annual Reports Act. The report considers the factors that influence the shape, performance, culture and behaviour of the ACT public service and its people and demonstrates how the capability and capacity of the ACT Public Service contributes to meeting strategic goals, driving new initiatives, and implementing government priorities.

- 3.112 Part 6 of the *Annual Report (Government Agencies) Directions 2024* identifies that the Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy is the coordinating entity for annual *State of the Service Reports*. In mid-July each year, the Office requests that agencies complete a State of the Service Agency Survey, the result of which are to be approved by the Director-General of each agency.

Coordination

- 3.113 For the *2023-24 State of the Service Report*, a team of three staff within the Office's State of the Service team collated agency survey responses, compiled and validated quantitative data, consulted with agencies to validate totals, selected case studies and prepared the report.

- 3.114 Email communications between agencies and the Office suggests that agencies can find it challenging to meet the required timeframe for completed surveys. In turn, this reduces the timeframe that the State of the Service team has to analyse and collate the data.

Reporting

- 3.115 Reporting on diversity, equity and inclusion matters is dispersed throughout *State of the Service Reports*. This makes it difficult to quickly obtain a snapshot of diversity, equity and

inclusion activity and progress across the ACTPS. In the *2023-24 State of the Service Report*, for example, diversity, equity and inclusion data is presented in different sections as follows:

- Public Sector Standards Commissioner Update (pp.10-11);
- misconduct processes and disciplinary actions (p.39);
- bullying and harassment (p.40);
- gender pay gap by diversity group (p.25);
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees (p.21);
- employees with disability (pp.27-28);
- employees who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse (pp.29-31);
- LGBTIQ+ employees (pp.31-32);
- veterans (p.33); and
- proportion of females and diversity groups by directorate (p.54)

3.116 *State of the Service Reports* also do not consistently present multi-year trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data. Collating and tracking data across multiple years would facilitate more meaningful trend analysis.



3.117 *Annual ACTPS State of the Service Reports* are a key mechanism for reporting on diversity, equity and inclusion matters in the ACTPS. Reporting on such matters is dispersed throughout the reports. This makes it difficult to quickly obtain a snapshot of diversity, equity and inclusion activity and progress across the ACTPS. *State of the Service Reports* also do not consistently present multi-year trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data. Collating and tracking data across multiple years would facilitate more meaningful trend analysis.

Employment of diversity group employees

3.118 Table 3-4 presents a collated summary of diversity, equity and inclusion data extracted from the *State of the Service Reports* published between 2019-20 and 2024-25 relating to the percentage of diversity group employees in the ACTPS.

Table 3-4 Percentage of diversity group employees in the ACTPS (2019-20 to 2024-25)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0
People with disability	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.0
Culturally and linguistically diverse	20.3	21.5	23.0	24.0	24.4	26.6
LGBTIQA+	Nil data	Nil data	1.7	2.2	2.4	2.8
Women	65.0	65.0	65.1	64.6	65.0	64.8
Veterans	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
Older workers	11.3	11.1	11.2	11.7	Nil data	12.7

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on *State of the Service Reports (2020-21 to 2024-25)*.

3.119 A review of the percentage of diversity group employees in the ACTPS between 2019-20 and 2024-25, as reported in *State of the Service Reports*, shows:

- the employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees has not changed between 2019-20 and 2024-25 (2.0 percent). Without growth the target of 3 percent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people employed in the ACTPS by 2026 is at risk;
- the employment of people with disability has remained relatively static (minor increase from 2.8 percent in 2019-20 to 3.0 percent in 2024-25). This is well below the target of 9 percent. The report relies on human resources data. Alternative data, however, obtained through the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, indicates that 7.0 percent of ACTPS employees identified as a person with disability;
- the employment of LGBTIQA+ people has steadily increased from 1.7 percent in 2021-22 to 2.8 percent in 2024-25;
- the employment of women has remained relatively static at 65.0 percent in 2019-20 and 64.8 percent in 2024-25; and
- the employment of veterans in the ACTPS has increased marginally from 0.8 percent in 2019-20 to 1.0 percent in 2024-25.

3.120 There is no specific reporting on older and younger workers, nor is there data on employees who identify as neurodivergent.



3.121 *State of the Service Reports* published between 2019-20 and 2024-25 show:

- the employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees has not changed between 2019-20 and 2024-25 (2.0 percent). Without growth the target of 3 percent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people employed in the ACTPS by 2026 is at risk; and
- the employment of people with disability has remained relatively static (minor increase from 2.8 percent in 2019-20 to 3.0 percent in 2024-25). This is well below the target of 9 percent. The report relies on human resources data. Alternative data, however, obtained through the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, indicates that 7.0 percent of ACTPS employees identified as a person with disability.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander reporting

3.122 The *State of the Service Reports* include data and information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees across the ACTPS. The audit compared and contrasted the reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees in the 2019-20 and 2024-25 *State of the Service Reports*. The 2019-20 *State of the Service Report* had more substantial reporting including:

- four pages of reporting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees;
- a graph showing the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS for each year over a ten-year period between 2011 and 2020;
- employee statistics including median salary, recruitment rate, average age and separation rate;
- a detailed description of whole-of-government programs and initiatives;
- a detailed description of directorate programs; and
- case studies on the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Adviser and Ngunnawal Language Project.

3.123 The 2024-25 *State of the Service Report* had less information including:

- two pages of reporting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees;
- employee statistics including number of employees, median salary and percentage of the ACTPS workforce in 2024-25;
- a brief description of the ACTPS Culture and Pathways Team; and
- a brief description of the initiatives to achieve 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability uplift'.

3.124 There is no multi-year analysis of data in the 2024-25 report nor any analysis of the relevant employment target (3 percent) or explanation of the results.

3.125 *State of the Service* reporting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment in the ACTPS has become less comprehensive and thorough over time. Multi-year analysis of data is no longer presented. There is little or no analysis of whether the results are above or below expectations, the reasons for the results, or the likelihood of achieving targets.



3.126 The *State of the Service Reports* include data and information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS. *State of the Service* reporting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment in the ACTPS has become less comprehensive and thorough over time. The *State of the Service Reports* do not present multi-year analysis of data and there is little or no analysis of whether the results are above or below expectations, the reasons for the results, or the likelihood of achieving targets.

Salary reporting

3.127 The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the median salary for diversity groups in the ACTPS. Median salary data for diversity groups between 2019-20 and 2024-25 was compiled for the purpose of the audit. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5 Median salary for diversity groups (2019-20 to 2024-25)

	ACTPS median salary	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	People with disability	Culturally and linguistically diverse
2024-25	\$107,720	\$100,987	\$112,734	\$99,878
2023-24	\$101,483	\$97,481	\$101,982	\$94,981
2022-23	\$95,834	\$91,536	\$95,439	\$89,097
2021-22	\$95,834	\$89,297	\$95,595	\$88,538
2020-21	\$93,292	\$86,719	\$92,901	\$89,106
2019-20	\$90,828 ²⁸	\$81,946	\$90,436	\$86,739

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on *State of the Service Reports (2019-20 to 2024-25)*.

3.128 A review of the median salary for diversity groups in the ACTPS between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows:

- the median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees has been consistently lower than the ACTPS median salary since 2019-20;
- the median salary for people with disability was marginally lower than the ACTPS median salary between 2019-20 and 2022-23 but exceeded it in 2023-24 and 2024-25; and

²⁸ The *State of the Service 2020-2021 Annual Report* indicates (on page 6) that ‘there was a technical error in the reported median salary in the previous report, resulting in lower reported figures. The correct median salary for last year (2019-20) was \$90,828’.

- the median salary for culturally and linguistically diverse staff has been consistently lower than the ACTPS median salary since 2019-20.

3.129 The *State of the Service Reports* do not provide any analysis or explanation of the median salary differences.

3.130 There is no data on the median salary for LGBTIQ+, veterans, older workers, younger workers or neurodivergent people.



3.131 The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the ACTPS median salary and median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse employees. A review of the median salary for these employees between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows:

- the median salary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently lower than the ACTPS median salary since 2019-20; and
- the median salary for people with disability was marginally lower than the ACTPS median salary between 2019-20 and 2022-23 but exceeded it in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Pay gap reporting

3.132 The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the gender pay gap for some diversity groups. Table 3-6 shows the gender pay gap for diversity groups between 2019-20 and 2024-25.

Table 3-6 Gender pay gap for diversity groups (2019-20 to 2024-25)

	ACTPS average	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	People with disability	Culturally and linguistically diverse
2024-25	-0.3%	-2.6%	-2.0%	2.5%
2023-24	1.0%	0.5%	-1.6%	4.6%
2022-23	-0.1%	1.3%	-0.8%	4.0%
2021-22	0.5%	-1.8%	-1.9%	4.2%
2020-21	0.8%	-3.0%	0.8%	1.4%
2019-20	0.9%	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on *State of the Service Reports (2019-20 to 2024-25)*.

3.133 A review of gender pay gap reporting for diversity groups between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows:

- the gender pay gap in the ACTPS has generally been within 1.0 percent (with women earning less than men over this period). An exception was 2022-23 and 2024-25, when the gender pay gap was marginally in favour of women;
- the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women has been in favour of women in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2024-25, but in favour of men in 2022-23 and 2023-24;
- the gender pay gap for people with disability has been consistently in favour of women and better than the ACTPS average since 2021-22; and
- the gender pay gap for culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently in favour of men and worse than the ACTPS average.

3.134 The *State of the Service Reports* typically include some discussion and analysis of the gender pay gap. For example, the *2024-25 State of the Service Report* includes three pages of analysis of the gender pay gap in the ACTPS compared to the Australian and ACT labour forces, the proportion of women in the ACTPS and executive roles, and the gender pay gap by directorate and diversity group.

3.135 However, the *State of the Service Reports* typically do not provide any analysis or explanation of the gender pay gap differences for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse employees.

3.136 There is no data on the gender pay gap for LGBTIQ+, veterans, older workers, younger workers or neurodivergent people.



3.137 The *State of the Service Reports* include data on the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse employees. A review of the median salary for these employees between 2019-20 and 2024-25 shows:

- the gender pay gap in the ACTPS has generally been within 1.0 percent (with women earning less than men over this period). An exception was 2022-23 and 2024-25, when the gender pay gap was marginally in favour of women;
- the gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women has been in favour of women in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2024-25, but in favour of men in 2022-23 and 2023-24;
- the gender pay gap for people with disability has been consistently in favour of women and better than the ACTPS average since 2021-22; and
- the gender pay gap for culturally and linguistically diverse employees has been consistently in favour of men and worse than the ACTPS average.



3.138 The *State of the Service Reports* typically include some discussion and analysis of the gender pay gap. For example, the *2024-25 State of the Service Report* includes three pages of analysis of the gender pay gap in the ACTPS compared to the Australian and ACT labour forces, the proportion of women in the ACTPS and executive roles, and the gender pay gap by directorate and diversity group. However, the *State of the Service Reports* typically do not provide any analysis or explanation of the gender pay gap differences for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or culturally and linguistically diverse employees.

ACTPS Employee Survey

3.139 The ACTPS Employee Survey is managed by the Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy. The survey is anonymous and reported data is de-identified. The Office has engaged ORIMA Research, an independent company, to conduct the survey. A pilot survey was conducted in 2021. A second survey took place in March 2023, and the survey was again conducted in September 2025. The 'Survey outcomes' tab on the ACTPS Employment Portal states:

ORIMA Research, the external service provider for the survey, will produce individual reports for participating Directorates and sector entities and the ACT public service overall. The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy will also analyse the ACT public service overall results and produce reports that explore themes that emerge across the ACTPS.

Accuracy of diversity group data

3.140 There are known challenges with the accuracy of data on diversity groups as collected through the ACT Government's HR21 system. The *Beyond RED* report of 2021 found:

The ACTPS Staff Survey provided an opportunity to compare this anonymous data set with HR21 data. HR21 data appears to under-count workforce diversity due to low identification.

...

Our research showed that we need improved data capture, categorisation and dissemination of information to take an evidence-based approach to diversity and inclusion into the future.

3.141 The *Beyond RED* report of 2021 recommended that improvements be made to data capture and analysis. In response the *2022-23 State of the Service Report* stated:

Since 2019, our human resources system has been modified to facilitate the collection of data for new employees, which includes LGBTIQ+ status. This will better position the ACTPS to support LGBTIQ+ employees moving forward. Employees can, and are encouraged to, update their diversity details in our human resources system. It is not mandatory, and current numbers are likely to be under-representative.

3.142 The *2022-23 State of the Service Report* commented on the discrepancies in employment data between the HR21 system and that reported through the ACTPS Employee Survey for LGBTIQ+ employees as follows:

Employees can, and are encouraged to, update their diversity details in our human resources system. It is not mandatory, and current numbers are likely to be under-representative. Since the collection of this data, there has been a steady increase from 0.5% to 2.2% of the ACTPS identifying as LGBTIQ+. The 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey showed 6% of respondents identified as LGBTIQ+.

3.143 With respect to the discrepancies in employment data between the HR21 system and that reported through the ACTPS Employee Survey for people with disability the *2023-24 State of the Service Report* notes:

According to self reporting in our HR/Payroll systems, as at June 2024, 2.9% of employees (888 staff) identified as living with disability, an increase of 4.7% from the previous year (848 staff as at June 2023).

The 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey showed 7% of respondents identified as people with disability. This indicates that representation is likely higher than that reported in our HR/Payroll systems. This may be in part due to anonymity of survey responses, as well as individual records in the HR/Payroll system being out-of-date.

3.144 The discrepancies between the HR21 data and the ACTPS Employee Survey data is likely attributable to the anonymity of the ACTPS Employee Survey, which provides a greater level of comfort to participants self-identifying as belonging to a diversity group. This makes the ACTPS Employee Survey data particularly valuable.

3.145 Despite this, minimal data from the ACTPS Employee Survey is included in the *State of the Service Reports*. The *2023-24 State of the Service Report* included two observations, as follows:²⁹

- on 30 June 2024, 2.9 percent of employees identified as people living with disability according to self-reporting in the HR/payroll systems but 7 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as people with disability; and
- on 30 June 2024, 2.4 percent of employees identified as LGBTIQ+ in the HR/payroll system but 6 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as LGBTIQ+.

²⁹ It is not possible to analyse data from 2024-25 for this purpose because, as stated in the *2024-25 State of the Service Report*, the 'ACTPS Employee Survey scheduled for March 2025 was postponed to September 2025 to enable Machinery of Government changes to be actioned. Results of the September 2025 survey will be included in the *State of the Service Report 2025-26'* (cf. page 10).



3.146 The ACTPS Employee Survey is held once every two years. The survey is anonymous and reported data is de-identified. There are known challenges with the accuracy of data on diversity groups as collected through the ACT Government's HR21 system, which the Employee Survey offers an opportunity to address. For example:

- on 30 June 2024, 2.9 percent of employees identified as people living with disability according to self-reporting in the HR/payroll systems but 7 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as people with disability; and
- on 30 June 2024, 2.4 percent of employees identified as LGBTIQ+ in the HR/payroll system but 6 percent of respondents to the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey identified as LGBTIQ+.

Measure of inclusivity

3.147 In April 2022, an agenda paper was provided to the ACT Public Service Strategic Board recommending that the Board endorse an 'ACTPS Workforce Inclusion target of 80% positive responses, to be measured by the 2025 ACTPS Staff Survey'.

3.148 The agenda paper gave the following rationales for the target:

- the 2021 Beyond RED Review found that while the employment of a diverse workforce has increased in recent years, the experience of inclusion across the ACTPS is variable; and
- the ACTPS 2021 Employee Survey identified inclusion as a key driver for the ACTPS workforce: addressing variation in inclusion is likely to have a positive impact on Service-wide staff engagement, satisfaction, and commitment.

3.149 The agenda paper explained that the target was set at 80 percent because it was:

... based on benchmarking undertaken against APS and jurisdictional inclusion ratings from similar employee surveys. ACTPS is currently 10 percentage points behind the APS inclusion ratings. Therefore, an ACTPS KPI of 80% would align us with the APS, being our primary workforce competition.

3.150 The agenda paper identified that 'inclusion scores from different ACTPS diversity groups were generally lower than the 70% ACTPS average'. Table 3-7 provides a summary of the inclusion scores that were provided to the Strategic Board for consideration.

Table 3-7 Inclusion scores for ACTPS diversity groups

Diversity group	Inclusion score	Diversity group	Inclusion score
Gender non-binary	55%	Women	73%
People with disability	60%	Carers	72%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	61%	Culturally and linguistically diverse	76%
Aged over 60	68%	Veterans	68%
LGBTIQ+	68%	Aged under 29	78%

Source: ACT Public Service Strategic Board Agenda Paper (6 April 2022).

3.151 The lower scores for diversity groups were identified as ‘both a strategic risk and an opportunity to understand where our efforts can be focussed to achieve the most traction on workforce inclusion’.

3.152 Later the same year, the *2021-22 State of the Service Report* identified that a:

... new key performance indicator has been established specifically to benchmark and drive inclusion. Its implementation is intended to drive meaningful inclusion support activities across the service, to achieve the aspiration of 80% of ACTPS staff agreeing that their workplace is inclusive as measured by the 2025 ACTPS staff survey (up from 70% in 2021).

3.153 The following year, the *2022-23 State of the Service Report* stated the following under the heading ‘strengthening our commitment to inclusion’:

The ACTPS is committed to workforce practices that support a diverse range of employees that reflect the community that we serve. Since 2010, we have maintained an active commitment to embedding a workplace culture that values diversity through the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework. Following a comprehensive review of the framework in 2021, we are working towards an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. The strategy will provide a renewed commitment to strengthen diversity, inclusion and belonging across the ACTPS. This will be through a targeted approach to support gender equity, along with tailored employment programs to continue to increase the diversity of our workforce and articulate our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

3.154 The *2022-23 State of the Service Report* states ‘we have established a Key Performance Indicator, measured through the ACTPS Employee Survey’. The target is for 80 percent of ACTPS staff to feel their workplace is inclusive by 2026. In 2021 the result was 70 percent and in 2023 the result was 74 percent. There was no discussion of the ACTPS Employee Survey response rates, or any discussion or analysis of the results, in the *2022-23 State of the Service Report*.



3.155 In April 2022 the ACT Public Service Strategic Board agreed to an ‘ACTPS Workforce Inclusion target of 80% positive responses, to be measured by the 2025 ACTPS Staff Survey’.

In setting the target as 80 percent it was recognised that the ACTPS was 'currently 10 percentage points behind the APS inclusion ratings. Therefore, an ACTPS KPI of 80% would align us with the APS, being our primary workforce competition'. The Strategic Board was advised that 'inclusion scores from different ACTPS diversity groups were generally lower than the 70% ACTPS average' and that the lower scores for diversity groups were identified as 'both a strategic risk and an opportunity to understand where our efforts can be focussed to achieve the most traction on workforce inclusion'.



Recommendation 7

State of the Service reporting

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should improve annual State of the Service reporting by:

- a) including multi-year tracking and trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data;
- b) incorporating analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data from the ACTPS Employee Survey; and
- c) including analysis of relevant and appropriate data from the Employee Assistance Program.

Assessing ACTPS maturity in diversity and inclusion

3.156 One means by which an organisation's maturity in diversity, equity and inclusion practices can be measured is through a self-assessment process against a relevant maturity model.

Australian Human Resource Institute Diversity and Inclusion maturity model

3.157 CMTEDD has assessed the maturity of the ACTPS against the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model. The AHRI model specifies three levels of maturity:

- Level 1: Level 1 organisations comply with Government-mandated policy such as fair work acts and anti-discrimination laws. A level one organisation has yet to implement D&I initiatives beyond the minimum required but has good groundwork from which to launch them;
- Level 2: a Level 2 organisation has moved beyond a tick-in-the-box approach, and gained leadership buy in to drive greater diversity management. It has established D&I programs, unconscious bias training and actively promotes diverse events; and
- Level 3: a Level 3 organisation has ingrained diversity and inclusion into the organisation. D&I is employee-led, supported by all and is a critical part of their wider operational strategy.

3.158 In 2021, the *Beyond RED* report concluded that the ACTPS is Level 2 maturity overall, with some variation across the service. This self-assessment has not been independently verified.

3.159 Griffith University noted that the AHRI model has strategic advantages because it is aligned with Australia's legislation and workplace culture policies, which are relevant to the ACTPS. Griffith University also advised that it is a useful tool because it enables organisations to assess the impact of their engagement strategies and leadership commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.³⁰ However, Griffith University has also observed that there are other better practice tools and approaches that may be used, most notably the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks.

Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks framework

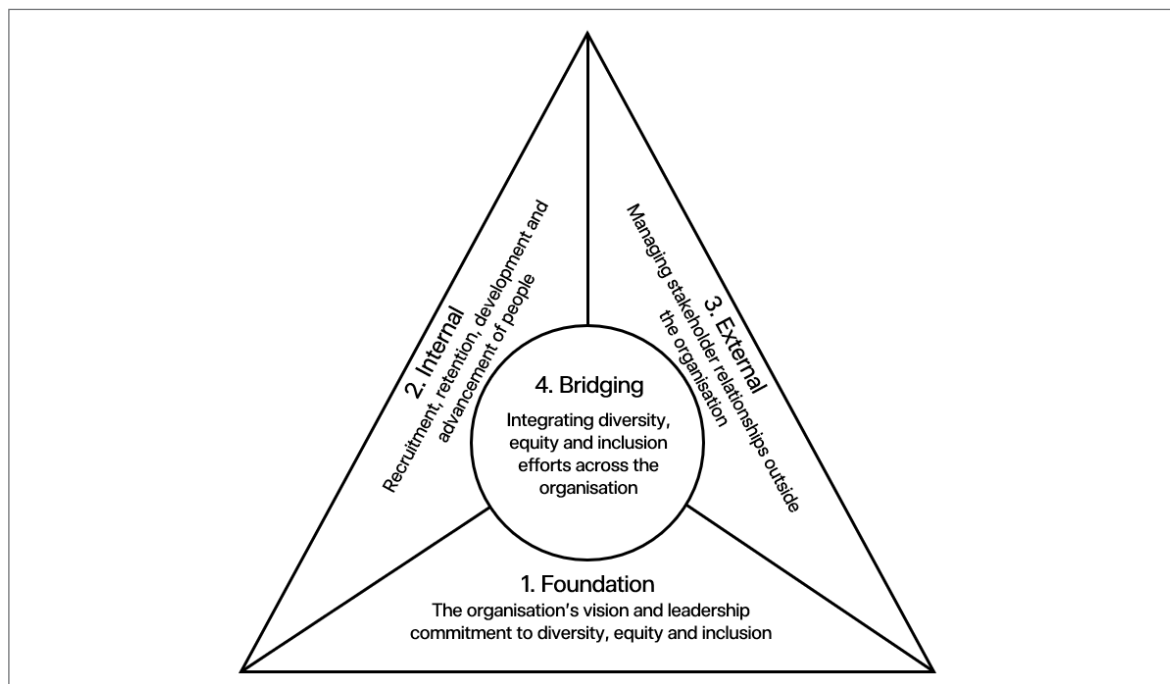
3.160 Griffith University has identified the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) framework as potentially useful for the ACTPS.

3.161 The GDEIB framework has 275 benchmarks organised into four groups (Foundation, Bridging, Internal and External) and 15 categories (such as leadership, structure, social responsibility, marketing, recruitment and communications). The groups, shown in Figure 3-9 focus on:

- Foundation (driving the strategy through leadership and vision);
- Internal (attracting and retaining people);
- External (inclusive and responsible interactions with communities, customers and the broader society); and
- Bridging (ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion policies and aims are cohesive and complementary).

³⁰ Dorney, G. (2020). *A new way to benchmark and improve your organisation's diversity and inclusion*. HRM Online. <https://www.hrmonline.com.au/diversity-and-inclusion/new-benchmark-improve-diversity-inclusion/>

Figure 3-9 Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks



Source: Adapted from Molefi, N., O'Mara, J., Richter, A. (2021). *Global diversity, equity & inclusion benchmarks: Standards for organizations around the world*. The Centre for Global Inclusion.

3.162 As discussed in paragraph 3.81, not all whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans have clear performance measures with targets. Griffith University has advised that the GDEIB framework could help to address this weakness:

[T]here is a need to set clear metrics and accountability systems that clarify responsibilities and timeframes for implementation and review of plans. The GDEIB framework addresses this by providing specific, measurable benchmarks across various organisational dimensions, enabling the ACTPS to develop clear performance indicators and systematically track [its] progress. This way, the ACTPS can identify gaps and establish monitoring systems that align with public service departments' governance requirements.

3.163 Griffith University has also advised that it would be beneficial to use the AHRI model and GDEIB in combination. The advantage of this approach is that AHRI's maturity model provides guidance on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the Australian workplace and legislative context, while the GDEIB would align the ACT Public Service with global better practices in diversity, equity and inclusion.

3.164 Griffith University has provided a practical example of how this approach could be applied to different stages of the ACTPS employee lifecycle:

Using AHRI's maturity model, the ACTPS can ensure that it complies with Australian standards of inclusion that start with the recruitment stage (inclusive job descriptions, statement of accommodation for diverse candidates, etc.) and move through to other stages, such as onboarding (training provided about diversity awareness and inclusion to new staff) and retention (accommodations and resources provided to diverse individuals). Building on this foundation, the GDEIB can be employed to embed DEI in a more in-depth manner, where all

processes and practices reflect DEI. For instance, using GDEIB leadership and professional development categories can help create mentorship programs for new staff to ensure equitable career growth for diverse staff. This combined approach, starting with AHRI's maturity model that evolves into using GDEIB's various categories, can provide a holistic way of developing and maintaining effective DEI practices.



3.165 One means by which an organisation's maturity in diversity and inclusion practices can be measured is through a self-assessment process against a relevant diversity and inclusion maturity model. In 2021 CMTEDD assessed the maturity of the ACTPS against the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model. CMTEDD assessed the ACTPS as Level 2 (mid-level) maturity overall with some variation across the service. A Level 2 organisation is identified as moving beyond a tick-in-the-box approach and has gained leadership buy-in to drive greater diversity management. It has established diversity and inclusion programs, unconscious bias training and actively promotes diverse events.



3.166 The AHRI model has strategic advantages because it is aligned with Australia's legislation and workplace culture policies and enables organisations to assess the impact of their engagement strategies and leadership commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. There are also other better practice tools by which organisations can assess and improve their diversity, equity and inclusion policies, such as the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) framework. The AHRI model and GDEIB framework may be used in combination, as the AHRI model can provide guidance on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the Australian workplace and legislative context, while the GDEIB would align the ACTPS with global better practices.



Recommendation 8

Assessing diversity, equity and inclusion maturity

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:

- a) undertake regular review of ACTPS maturity in diversity, equity and inclusion practices through self-assessment process against a relevant maturity model; and
- b) consider using multiple better practice tools or approaches, such as the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model and Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB).

4 Agency practices (strategy and monitoring)

4.1 This chapter discusses the activities of the Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Emergency Services Agency to:

- develop agency-specific strategies and plans; and
- monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies and plans.

Summary



Conclusions

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through the development of overarching strategies or plans. The way in which the agencies have developed and demonstrated this commitment has varied.

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have also undertaken a significant range of activities in support of diversity, equity and inclusion. The size, scale and expected impact of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

Throughout the chapter are examples of how the agencies have considered, recognised and sought to support diversity, equity and inclusion practices.



Key findings

Strategies and plans

Paragraph

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through the development of overarching strategies or plans. The way in which the agencies have developed and demonstrated this commitment has varied.

4.15

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a specific commitment to supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff:

4.25

- the Education Directorate promulgated its *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity* in July 2024 and developed an *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027* 'brings together and promotes career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and enhances the development of our existing workforce';

- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate promulgated a *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026*, which comprised 16 action areas and 104 deliverables. The Plan was further supported by the *Cultural Integrity Framework 2024-2025 Action Plan*, which identified specific actions to be undertaken in 2024-25; and
- the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has developed a *Reconciliation Action Plan April 2023 – March 2025* as well as a one-page *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022*. The Action Plan describes ten actions to attract, develop and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. Both the Action Plan and guidelines had an identified end-date of June 2022. They have not been updated, but are still being used.

The requirement for ‘larger public service entities to have gender action plans’ was a requirement of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (Tenth Legislative Assembly). The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate developed gender action plans. The Education Directorate has drafted a *Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29*, but the plan has not yet been finalised. Not having a finalised gender action plan is recognised as a strategic risk for the Education Directorate. 4.36

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have expressed commitment and support for other diversity groups in different ways: 4.45

- the Education Directorate has drafted an *Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27*, which is intended to ‘[detail] practical and measurable actions that will improve the experience of Directorate staff with a disability’. A Statement of Commitment for other diversity groups (LGBTIQ+, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women, veterans and carers) is identified as a deliverable in the Education Directorate’s *People and Performance 2024 Branch Work Plan*;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has developed a *Veterans Network Action Plan 2024* and *Pride Network Action Plan 2024*. The Directorate’s *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (Extended to 2025)* indicates that a further six action plans are under development: LGBTIQ+ inclusion, women, people with disability, veterans, gender equality and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds; and
- the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has an ‘*Our abilities*’ *Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24*. The strategy aims to eliminate barriers to employment, improve the experience of work and achieve positive employment outcomes for people with disability within the directorate. The Strategy came to term in June 2024 and has not been updated since then.

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have sought to engage and consult with representatives from diverse groups for the purpose of developing and informing the agency’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The way in which the agencies have done this has varied: 4.60

- the Education Directorate has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network and Disability Advocacy Network, which have been consulted for the purpose of developing various initiatives, as well as a Pride Network and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Staff Network;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had a Women's Network, Disability and Carers Network, Pride Network, Veterans Network and a RAP Committee; and
- the Emergency Services Agency has consulted with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds for the purpose of planning two initiatives: a Pilot ACT Emergency Services Agency Work Experience Program for ACT School Year 10-12 First Nations Students; and two ESA Guest Experience Officer roles as designated positions for people with disability.

Monitoring and reporting

Reports from Converge, the Employee Assistance Program provider, can provide useful information on the effectiveness of an agency's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and employees' overall sense of wellbeing. *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* produced by Converge provide a variety of quantitative and qualitative information related to staff members' access to the Program. The three agencies considered as part of the audit do not incorporate Employee Assistance Program data or information from *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* into their annual reports. 4.70

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a significant range of activities in support of diversity, equity and inclusion. The size, scale and expected impact of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities. Only on a few occasions have the agencies sought to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the specific activities. 4.80

The RED Framework provides for the identification of Respect Equity and Diversity Contact Officers (REDCOs) across directorates and agencies. The role of REDCOs is to 'model and promote the ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours to develop positive work cultures across the ACTPS. REDCOs provide information to staff seeking a solution to improve or resolve a workplace issue or situation, which may relate to inappropriate behaviour or misconduct'. The three agencies considered as part of the audit have identified and established REDCOs. Each of the agencies has established regular meetings and forums for its REDCOs, but these are not always well-attended. REDCOs are required to submit a RED Contact Report for every contact they have related to RED Framework matters. Across all agencies it was noted that REDCOs sometimes have informal contacts with staff members, which are not recorded as a contact for reporting and monitoring purposes. 4.103

Exit surveys of departing staff are an opportunity to obtain information and insights into potential workplace issues and/or dissatisfaction of staff. These may include insights into staff members' feeling of belonging and inclusion. The Education 4.114

Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have developed and implemented exit surveys of departing staff. The Education Directorate has systematically reviewed and evaluated exit survey responses with a view to identifying significant factors and trends. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had only begun to prepare quarterly reports on exit survey results as of 2024. Neither the Emergency Services Agency nor the Justice and Community Safety Directorate more broadly have conducted exit surveys of staff. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate advised that it is developing a 'Leaving the JACS Directorate Survey' which it plans to implement in 2025.

The ACTPS Employee Survey is conducted every two years. The Survey provides useful information on employees and their overall sense of wellbeing. Across the three agencies the proportion of employees who identified as belonging to a diversity group was reported as higher through the ACTPS Employee Survey than through HR21 data. This means that employees from diversity groups are under-represented in the HR21 data and more likely to self-identify in the anonymous ACTPS Employee Survey. For the Education Directorate, the annual School Satisfaction and Climate Survey (School Survey) also collects relevant feedback from school staff as well as parents, carers and students. The ACTPS Employee Survey (and School Survey) provide useful information on employees' wellbeing and inclusion.

4.135

Strategies and plans

- 4.2 The promulgation of strategies and plans is a key means by which an agency can signal its recognition of, and support for, diversity, equity and inclusion. Strategies, or their supporting action plans, should be comprehensive and identify clear objectives and priority areas for action.
- 4.3 The audit considered whether and how the agencies have developed and promulgated:
- overarching strategies or plans, which demonstrate a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion; and
 - strategies or plans relevant to specific diversity groups.
- 4.4 Table 4-1 shows key strategies and plans for the three agencies that were considered for the purpose of the audit.

Table 4-1 Agency strategies and plans

Diversity group	Education Directorate	Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate	Emergency Services Agency
All	<i>The Future of Education - an ACT education strategy for the next ten years 2018-2028</i> <i>Education Strategic Plan 2022-2025</i>	<i>TCCS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (extended to 2025)</i> <i>TCCS People Strategy 2019-2023 (extended to 2025)</i> <i>Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy</i>	<i>JACS Workforce Inclusion and Diversity Statement of Commitment</i>
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027</i> <i>Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity</i>	<i>Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026</i> <i>Cultural Integrity Framework 2024-2025 Action Plan</i>	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022 and Guideline (lapsed)</i> <i>Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025</i>
Gender	<i>Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29 (draft)</i>	<i>Gender Action Plan</i>	<i>JACS Gender Action Plan 2024-2028</i> <i>Women in Emergency Services Strategy (lapsed)</i>
People with disability	<i>Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27 (draft)</i>	Nil	<i>JACS 'Our abilities' Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24 (lapsed)</i>
Culturally and linguistically diverse	Nil	Nil	Nil
LGBTIQA+	Nil	<i>Pride Network Action Plan 2024</i>	Nil
Veterans	Nil	<i>Veterans Network Action Plan 2024</i>	Nil
Neurodivergent people	Nil	Nil	Nil
Older workers	Nil	Nil	Nil
Younger workers	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Emergency Services Agency.

Overarching strategies and plans

Education Directorate

- 4.5 The Education Directorate seeks to demonstrate a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through its *Future of Education* strategy. The strategy recognises that students have diverse and complex needs, and that diverse and inclusive school environments improve engagement and learning outcomes for students. The *Future of Education* strategy states:

In a thriving and inclusive education community, all students and their families feel welcomed and valued for who they are and what they can contribute. Schools have culturally aware environments that welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. Diversity of background, culture, gender, class, religion, sexuality, wealth and ability, all contribute depth and richness to the learning experiences of all. Inclusive learning cultures ensure schools reflect the global and connected world young people are living in.

- 4.6 The Education Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* similarly expresses a commitment to inclusion. The mission statement to the Strategic Plan states:

Our Strategic Plan 2022-25 is designed to create a coherent, equitable, inclusive and excellent education system where:

- all children and young people are supported to learn, thrive, have agency, participate and achieve high expectations
- ...
- our people are valued and supported to develop in their work and aspirations
- cultural integrity is central to our work
- ...
- families and communities are welcomed and included
- ...

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 4.7 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had developed and promulgated a *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (Extended to 2025)*. The Strategy set out three key activities to support diversity, equity and inclusion in the Directorate:

Reconfigure the Network Governance Structure to better support Executive Sponsors and their Networks to enhance effectiveness, collaboration and support innovative solutions through cross Network collaboration.

Better define and create greater understanding of everyone's roles and responsibilities and how they can individually and actively play their role to support create and maintain a diverse and inclusive culture at TCCS.

Provide specific Talented Inclusion and Diversity Employees (TIDE) training. This training will be compulsory for all Executive Sponsors and Network members to support them as diversity and inclusion leaders for TCCS.

4.8 The *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (Extended to 2025)* identified objectives, actions and outcomes for promoting diversity and inclusion and included an implementation roadmap, which 'breaks down the objectives and strategies into practical, achievable steps that should lead to TCCS' desired outcomes'. These included specific outcomes to be achieved by designated dates.

4.9 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's *People Strategy 2019-2023* similarly expressed a commitment to inclusion. It listed five priorities, the fifth of which is to shape a diverse and inclusive workforce. The strategy stated:

We will continue to approach diversity and inclusion with a whole of TCCS commitment, placing priority on aligning future TCCS initiatives with the ACTPS Diversity frameworks.

Our focus under this priority is to continue to develop an environment where we value different perspectives and the richness that diversity brings regardless of peoples' age, gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality or ability. This includes our ongoing commitment to the RED Framework.

4.10 The *People Strategy 2019-2023* identified six actions associated with the priority of shaping a diverse and inclusive workforce:

Create peer networks for diversity groups. This includes an Indigenous peer to peer network, an LGBTIQ network, and a network for people with disability.

Redesign recruitment practices. This includes designing templates to ensure the use of consistent language to remove potential bias and ensure selection practices appropriately reflect diversity and inclusion requirements.

Continue campaigns to attract applications from diverse groups.

Continue to partner with the TCCS Women's Network to design and promote activities that support gender equality in all areas of TCCS.

Implement and communicate events celebrating diversity.

Review and implement diversity training including cultural awareness, making it available to all employees and mandatory for SOGC and above/or equivalent employees.

Emergency Services Agency

4.11 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate seeks to demonstrate a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through whole-of-directorate strategies and plans. These apply to all parts of the directorate, including the Emergency Services Agency. The Emergency Services Agency has not developed its own stand-alone strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion.

4.12 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate seeks to demonstrate a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through a *Workforce Inclusion and Diversity Statement of Commitment* by Executives and Statutory Office Holders.

4.13 The Statement was signed by the Commissioner of the Emergency Services Agency along with other Executives and Statutory Office Holders. The Statement commits the directorate to:

- equality in employment;
- engagement and accessibility;
- leadership; and
- valuing workplace diversity and inclusion.

4.14 The Statement identifies actions under each of the areas, but these are not supported by targets or indicators, timeframes for implementation or division-specific implementation plans.



4.15 The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a general commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through the development of overarching strategies or plans. The way in which the agencies have developed and demonstrated this commitment has varied.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees

Education Directorate

4.16 In July 2024 the Education Directorate promulgated its *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity*. The Commitment expresses an intention to ‘work with and for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, both now and into the future’. The Commitment is in lieu of a Reconciliation Action Plan. The Directorate advised that work is ongoing to embed the Commitment into Professional Development Plans (PDPs) and Branch Action Plans.

4.17 The Education Directorate’s *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027* ‘brings together and promotes career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and enhances the development of our existing workforce’. The Action Plan includes specific outcomes and supporting actions for different stages of the employment lifecycle:

- attract and recruit;
- retain and build capability; and
- leadership and accountability.

- 4.18 For example, at the ‘attract and recruit stage’ there is a stated commitment to advertising identified positions and bulk recruitment rounds in the Koori Mail. At the ‘retain and build capability’ stage, there are specified actions for promoting career development, raising the profile of the First Nations Staff Network and developing guidance for managers and supervisors on the provision of leave for cultural responsibilities.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 4.19 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate promulgated a *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026*. The Plan was developed with the assistance of a majority Aboriginal-owned professional services company. The Plan was 30 pages in length and had 16 action areas and 104 deliverables. The number of deliverables represents a significant commitment to reconciliation. The Plan was further supported by the *Cultural Integrity Framework 2024-2025 Action Plan*, which identified specific actions to be undertaken in 2024-25.

Emergency Services Agency

- 4.20 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate had a *Reconciliation Action Plan April 2023 - March 2025* which identified a range of actions supported by specified deliverables, with timelines for implementation and identified responsibilities. The Plan concluded in March 2025. The *Annual Report 2024-25* states that the Directorate is transitioning ‘from a formal Reconciliation Action Plan to a more integrated approach – embedding cultural integrity directly into [JACS’] strategic direction, as outlined in the JACS Strategic plan 2024-2027’. The report indicates that in the next phase of the Directorate’s reconciliation journey, the Directorate will prioritise:

enhancing accessibility and equity of services

embedding cultural integrity into policies, practices, and decision-making

supporting economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations

improving access to data that enables shared decision-making and community-led outcomes

inviting staff and stakeholders to shape this next phase, ensuring that the Directorate’s approach remains inclusive, responsive, and grounded in respect.

- 4.21 On 30 June 2025, the appointment of a Cultural Advisor for the Justice and Community Safety Directorate was announced, with a view to ensuring that ‘Directorate programs, policies, and practices are culturally informed and respectful’. On 14 November 2025, the Cultural Advisor for the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has delivered full-day, in-person cultural awareness training to 46 ACTPS staff, managers and members of the Executive.

- 4.22 In September 2025, a group of senior staff from different branches and service areas across the Justice and Community Safety Directorate participated in a discussion about cultural safety in the workplace. That conversation was subsequently developed into a podcast called the 'Grounded in Culture Podcast'. In October 2025, JACS launched a page on the Directorate's intranet featuring Cultural Safety resources.
- 4.23 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate exceeded the employment target for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff in 2023-24; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff made up 3.6 percent of the workforce. However, the Emergency Services Agency as a stand-alone agency has not achieved this target. There are different sources of data for the proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff in the Agency. According to Justice and Community Safety Directorate data, 2.1 percent of Agency staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. According to Emergency Services Agency data, 1.7 percent of its staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 4.24 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate also developed a one-page *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022*. The Action Plan describes ten actions to attract, develop and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. The Action Plan is supported by guidelines, which are designed to provide background information and ideas for staff on how to support the Action Plan. The guidelines describe suggested approaches to each of the actions described in the Action Plan and sets out the benefits of the suggested approaches. Both the Action Plan and guidelines had an identified end-date of June 2022. They have not been updated but are still being used.



- 4.25 The three agencies considered as part of the audit have demonstrated a specific commitment to supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff:
- the Education Directorate promulgated its *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity* in July 2024 and developed an *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027* 'brings together and promotes career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and enhances the development of our existing workforce';
 - the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate promulgated a *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026*, which comprised 16 action areas and 104 deliverables. The Plan was further supported by the *Cultural Integrity Framework 2024-2025 Action Plan*, which identified specific actions to be undertaken in 2024-25; and
 - the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has developed a *Reconciliation Action Plan April 2023 – March 2025* as well as a one-page *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022*. The Action Plan describes ten actions to attract, develop and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. Both the Action Plan and guidelines had an identified end-date of June 2022. They have not been updated, but are still being used.

Gender

- 4.26 The requirement for 'larger public service entities to have gender action plans' was a requirement of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (Tenth Legislative Assembly).

Education Directorate

- 4.27 The Education Directorate has drafted a *Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29*, but the plan has not yet been finalised. In July 2024, the People and Performance Branch identified that failure to finalise the gender action plan was a strategic risk:

The Directorate has not met the WhoG deadline to have a Directorate Gender Equity Action Plan in place by June 2024. This risk will be addressed through briefs in preparation for hearings and in the wording included in the Directorate Annual Report submission.

- 4.28 The Education Directorate's *2023-24 Annual Report* identified that the 'Directorate's first Gender Equity Action Plan has been developed' but did not inform readers that the plan had not yet been executed. The *2024-25 Annual Report* states that '[t]he plan is currently pending final endorsement. Progress on implementation is paused until endorsement is confirmed'.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 4.29 In 2024, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate developed the *TCCS Gender Action Plan*. The Plan stated:

TCCS aims to be an employer that reflects the community that we serve. To do so, we will:

1. Be the employer of choice for people of all genders.
2. Help all genders reach their potential in any type of work within TCCS.
3. Ensure a safe and inclusive workplace for all genders.

- 4.30 The *TCCS Gender Action Plan* identified a series of objectives, along with timeframes for implementation (from 0-2 years, 2-4 years and 5+ years) as well as responsibilities.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

- 4.31 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate developed the *Gender Action Plan 2024-2028*.
- 4.32 The *Gender Action Plan 2024-2028* identifies a series of actions to be undertaken against a series of focus areas, with supporting targets and timeframes and responsibilities. The Plan identifies mandatory training requirements, actions to understand and address gender segregation and the gender pay gap and a target to achieve a greater than five percent

reduction in discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or lawful sexual activity as measured by the 2027 Annual ACTPS Survey.

4.33 The *Gender Action Plan 2024-2028* identifies issues that are specifically relevant to the Emergency Services Agency, especially concerning gender segregation and the gender pay gap. The likely impact of the Plan on the Emergency Services Agency was discussed at an ESA Inclusion and Belonging Committee meeting on 26 July 2024. There is no evidence of any further meetings, and it is not yet clear what actions are being taken by the ESA Inclusion and Belonging Committee to implement the Gender Action Plan.

4.34 The Emergency Services Agency previously had a *Women in Emergency Services Strategy*, which was launched in December 2015. The Strategy sought to:

... identify those areas where we need to focus our efforts and implement initiatives to attract, recruit, retain and develop women in our emergency services.

... inform the development of workforce plans by our emergency services and further supports the ESA in its strategic planning.

... [identify] a series of targeted actions, taking the ESA on a journey to achieve greater diversity through inclusion.

4.35 It was supported by an accompanying Action Framework, with reporting against key outputs as part of the Agency's five-year Strategic Plan. The *Women in Emergency Services Strategy* lapsed in 2020.



4.36 The requirement for 'larger public service entities to have gender action plans' was a requirement of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (Tenth Legislative Assembly). The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate developed gender action plans. The Education Directorate has drafted a *Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29*, but the plan has not yet been finalised. Not having a finalised gender action plan is recognised as a strategic risk for the Education Directorate.

Other plans and strategies

Education Directorate

4.37 The Education Directorate has drafted an *Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27*, with which it intends to replace the *Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2019-2023*. The Plan is intended to '[detail] practical and measurable actions that will improve the experience of Directorate staff with a disability'. The Plan has not yet been finalised as the Directorate is awaiting legal advice on its compliance with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2024 (ACT)*.

- 4.38 In 2024-25, culturally and linguistically diverse employees made up 16.6 percent of total staff across the Education Directorate. Although the Directorate has had a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network since 2022, which provides peer support and advocacy for culturally and linguistically diverse staff, the Directorate does not have a specific strategy or action plan to support its culturally and linguistically diverse staff.
- 4.39 A Statement of Commitment for other diversity groups (LGBTIQ+, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women, veterans and carers) is identified as a deliverable in the Education Directorate's *People and Performance 2024 Branch Work Plan*. The Education Directorate has advised that work on this deliverable has not progressed due to work on the *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity* having taken priority in 2024.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 4.40 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate developed a *Veterans Network Action Plan 2024* and *Pride Network Action Plan 2024*. These one-page documents identified fifteen actions and seven actions respectively. These action plans were developed with the support of individual diversity networks within the directorate.
- 4.41 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (Extended to 2025)* indicated that a further six action plans were under development: LGBTIQ+ inclusion, women, people with disability, veterans, gender equality and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Emergency Services Agency

- 4.42 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate has an '*Our abilities*' *Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24*. The strategy aims to eliminate barriers to employment, improve the experience of work and achieve positive employment outcomes for people with disability within the directorate. The Strategy came to term in June 2024 and has not been updated since then. The Strategy set an employment target of five percent of the workforce being people with disability by 2026.
- 4.43 On 30 June 2025, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate identified that:
- 4.2 percent of its staff were people with disability; and
 - 1.6 percent of the staff of the Emergency Services Agency were people with disability.
- 4.44 This target is yet to be aligned with the new *ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033*, which sets an initial target of nine percent of ACTPS employees (including executive staff) as being people with disability.



4.45 The three agencies considered as part of the audit have expressed commitment and support for other diversity groups in different ways:

- the Education Directorate has drafted an *Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27*, which is intended to '[detail] practical and measurable actions that will improve the experience of Directorate staff with a disability'. A Statement of Commitment for other diversity groups (LGBTIQ+, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women, veterans and carers) is identified as a deliverable in the Education Directorate's *People and Performance 2024 Branch Work Plan*;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has developed a *Veterans Network Action Plan 2024* and *Pride Network Action Plan 2024*. The Directorate's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (Extended to 2025)* indicates that a further six action plans are under development: LGBTIQ+ inclusion, women, people with disability, veterans, gender equality and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds; and
- the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has an *'Our abilities' Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24*. The strategy aims to eliminate barriers to employment, improve the experience of work and achieve positive employment outcomes for people with disability within the directorate. The Strategy came to term in June 2024 and has not been updated since then.

Engagement with diversity groups

4.46 A better practice approach to developing and informing an agency's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives involves engaging and consulting with diverse populations. Such an approach would ensure that initiatives reflect the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals and the community and would strengthen the policies' effectiveness and relevance. It is important for an agency's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives to be shaped by the voices of diverse groups at the:

- planning and design stage (through surveys, user interviews and focus groups); and
- the implementation and monitoring stages (by continuing to seek contributions and make improvements through qualitative and quantitative feedback from diversity groups).

Education Directorate

4.47 The Education Directorate engages with diversity groups for the purpose of informing its diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives as follows:

- the Directorate has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network (the Network) which is intended to provide a voice for First Nations Staff in the Directorate. The Network contributed to the development of the *Aboriginal and*

Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027 and a Statement from the Chair of the Network is included in the Plan;

- the Directorate has a Disability Advocacy Network, which was established in 2018. The Education Directorate consulted with the Network, staff and with internal teams and networks for the purpose of developing the *Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27* (which is yet to be promulgated);
- the Directorate has a Pride Network which was established in 2018. The Network ‘aims to create a safe, diverse and inclusive workplace for all employees regardless of sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity and intersex status’;
- the Directorate has a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network which ‘was established in 2022 to promote and celebrate the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of Education employees’; and
- for the purpose of developing the draft *Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29*, the Directorate hosted consultation opportunities for all directorate staff via two workshop sessions and a survey. The Directorate also consulted with key stakeholders and other directorates. The *Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29* has not yet been promulgated.

4.48 The Education Directorate also engages with diversity groups during policy implementation. For example, the Diversity and Inclusion team collaborated with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education team and the Working Group to develop an implementation plan for the *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity* and in doing so integrated suggestions from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education team on how to embed cultural understanding into its processes.

4.49 When implementing the former *Access and Inclusion (Disability) Employment Action Plan 2019-2023*, the Education Directorate consulted with the Disability Advocacy Network on disability in the workplace, barriers to recruiting, retaining, building capacity, career pathways and potential solutions. The Network gave feedback on positive aspects of the action plan, as well as topics of interest for the 2024-27 iteration of the plan such as disability leave provisions for staff with a disability and chronic illnesses. The Directorate also consulted with several disability service providers on how to increase the recruitment of people with disability.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

4.50 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate engaged with diversity groups for the purpose of informing its diversity, equity and initiatives.

4.51 In 2023 the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had the following networks and advocacy groups:

- a Women's Network
- a Disability and Carers Network;
- a Pride Network;
- a Veterans Network; and
- a RAP Committee.

4.52 In 2023, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate reviewed its *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*. In doing so the Directorate:

- analysed 2023 *ACTPS Staff Survey* results and feedback;
- hosted a drop-in session for Diversity and Inclusion Network representatives to give feedback on the updated Inclusion Committee structure;
- delivered two presentations to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee;
- gathered feedback from the Women's Network, the Disability and Carers Network, the Pride Network, the Veterans Network and the RAP Committee; and
- deployed an electronic questionnaire to gather feedback from employees and integrated that feedback into the revised strategy.

4.53 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate responded to feedback that was received during the review of the *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*. For example, feedback was received that neurodivergent employees and their managers/supervisors would benefit from additional support. The Directorate responded by adding a new action item to the Strategy that involves exploring support mechanisms for neurodivergence and identifying a Leaders Forum in 2024 to focus on supporting neurodivergent people.

4.54 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate also engaged the services of consultants to assist with the development of specific initiatives. The Directorate engaged an external consultant to develop the *Gender Action Plan*. The consultant conducted in-depth interviews with the Director-General of the Directorate and Executive Branch Managers, 90-minute focus groups with specific branches and teams and consultations with diversity networks. The Directorate also engaged the services of an Aboriginal controlled professional services supplier to assist in developing the *TCCS Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026*. The Plan stated that the service provider:

Conducted a desktop review of our previous RAP and facilitated multiple workshops with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous employees as well as the Executive Leadership Team to support the development of this RAP.

Emergency Services Agency

- 4.55 The Emergency Services Agency has consulted with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds for the purpose of planning two initiatives:
- a Pilot ACT Emergency Services Agency Work Experience Program for ACT School Year 10-12 First Nations Students; and
 - two ESA Guest Experience Officer roles as designated positions for people with disability.
- 4.56 In 2023-2024, the Emergency Services Agency designed a *Pilot ACT Emergency Services Agency Work Experience Program for ACT School Year 10-12 First Nations Students*. In designing the Program, the Agency consulted with:
- the Justice and Community Safety Directorate First Nations Justice Programs team, which provided feedback on culturally appropriate wording for the Expression of Interest form;
 - a working group incorporating the ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Rural Fire Service, ACT State Emergency Services and ESA Enabling Services;
 - the Education Directorate's Service and Design Branch, which provided subject matter expertise on the workplace learning program and advice on better practice; and
 - Fire and Rescue NSW, which had experience running a four-day work experience program. Fire and Rescue NSW met with the ESA Assistant Commissioner to explain the NSW program and provided a copy of the NSW program documentation and schedule.
- 4.57 Eleven Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students completed the Work Experience Program between 1-5 July 2024. The Emergency Services Agency sought feedback from the students for the purpose of evaluating the Program. The students were asked to rate their enjoyment of the program on a scale from 1 (not enjoyed) to 5 (really enjoyed). Feedback was positive, with students rating their overall experience across the week as an average score of 4.6 out of 5. A follow-up review was conducted with the presenters and the ACT Education Directorate representatives to discuss future improvements to the program. The review noted that the Program included four Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees of the Agency who acted as Liaison Officers for the duration of the program. This feature was observed as having been particularly well received by the students and one that should be included in future programs.
- 4.58 In 2024, the Emergency Services Agency planned to create a role for Guest Experience Officers. These officers were intended to be the first point of contact welcoming visitors to ESA Headquarters and were to assist the Commissioner's Office with general administration. Two roles were planned for people with disability, with each role working approximately twenty hours per week. In designing the roles, the Emergency Services Agency consulted with:

- the ACT Down Syndrome Association and the Canberra Business Chamber on the development of the roles and the creation of the identified positions, including the evidence that would be required to support eligibility;
- the ESA Our Abilities Working Group which gave input on enhancing inclusive and accessible recruitment; and
- JACS Workforce Inclusion and JACS Human Resources, both of which provided advice on the development of the roles and the declaration process.

4.59 The roles were approved and designated as identified positions for people with disability. The Emergency Services Agency has advised that it is currently preparing to recruit staff for these identified positions.



4.60 The three agencies considered as part of the audit have sought to engage and consult with representatives from diverse groups for the purpose of developing and informing the agency's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The way in which the agencies have done this has varied:

- the Education Directorate has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network and Disability Advocacy Network, which have been consulted for the purpose of developing various initiatives, as well as a Pride Network and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Staff Network;
- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had a Women's Network, Disability and Carers Network, Pride Network, Veterans Network and a RAP Committee; and
- the Emergency Services Agency has consulted with staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds for the purpose of planning two initiatives: a Pilot ACT Emergency Services Agency Work Experience Program for ACT School Year 10-12 First Nations Students; and two ESA Guest Experience Officer roles as designated positions for people with disability.

Monitoring and reporting

4.61 Monitoring and reporting refer to processes that an organisation has to track and assess whether it is creating a safer, more inclusive and welcoming workplace. Data inputs might include mechanisms such as staff feedback, staff surveys, staff complaints and exit surveys.

Employee Assistance Program reports

4.62 Reports from Converge, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, can provide useful information on the effectiveness of an agency's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and employees' overall sense of wellbeing.

4.63 *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* are produced by Converge. The reports provide a variety of quantitative and qualitative information related to staff members' access to the Program. Converge can also provide directorate-specific reports upon request.

Education Directorate

4.64 The *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Report* prepared by Converge for the Education Directorate for the period from October 2023 to September 2024 indicates that:

- the incidence of perceived bullying or harassment in the workplace has increased compared to the previous period and is higher than the industry benchmark;
- the incidence of perceived discrimination in the workplace has increased compared to the previous period and is higher than the industry benchmark;
- 27 percent of clients were assessed as medium risk, which is 8 percent higher than the industry risk percentage; and
- 55 percent of employees who accessed EAP counselling perceived that the workplace was the main cause or a contributing factor to the issue.

4.65 EAP data and information from *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* are not currently incorporated into Education Directorate annual reports.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

4.66 The *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Report* for the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate for the period from October 2023 to September 2024 indicated that:

- the incidence of perceived bullying or harassment in the workplace had decreased compared to the previous period and is lower than the industry benchmark;
- the incidence of perceived discrimination in the workplace had increased compared to the previous period but is lower than the industry benchmark;
- 29 percent of clients were assessed as medium risk, which was 11 percent higher than the industry risk percentage; and
- 41 percent of employees who accessed EAP counselling perceived that the workplace was the main cause or a contributing factor to the issue.

4.67 EAP data and information from *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* were not incorporated into Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate annual reports.

Emergency Services Agency

4.68 The *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Report* for the Justice and Community Safety Directorate for the period from October 2023 to September 2024 does not contain any specific data or insights with respect to the Emergency Services Agency. The report for the Justice and

Community Safety Directorate for the period from October 2023 to September 2024 indicates that:

- the incidence of perceived bullying or harassment in the workplace has increased compared to the previous period and is higher than the industry benchmark;
- the incidence of perceived discrimination in the workplace has increased compared to the previous period and is higher than the industry benchmark;
- 29 percent of clients were assessed as medium risk, which is 11 percent higher than the industry risk percentage; and
- 41 percent of employees who accessed EAP counselling perceived that the workplace was the main cause or a contributing factor to the issue.

4.69 EAP data and information from *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* are not currently incorporated into Justice and Community Safety Directorate annual reports.



4.70 Reports from Converge, the Employee Assistance Program provider, can provide useful information on the effectiveness of an agency's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and employees' overall sense of wellbeing. *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* produced by Converge provide a variety of quantitative and qualitative information related to staff members' access to the Program. The three agencies considered as part of the audit do not incorporate Employee Assistance Program data or information from *Workplace Wellbeing Impact Reports* into their annual reports.

Reviewing and evaluating diversity, equity and inclusion activities

Education Directorate

4.71 The Education Directorate has provided evidence of its involvement in, or organisation of, multiple diversity, equity and inclusion activities and events, many of which are conducted annually. These include:

- communicating and participating in activities on days of significance, such as Wear It Purple Day;
- promoting the Future Choices Virtual Transition Expo for students with disability, via the Directorate's Schools Bulletin;
- advertising meetings of the Disability Yarning Circles hosted by the ACT Disability Reference Group, which is intended to provide opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their families to come together over lunch to yarn and connect;
- publishing regular Diversity and Inclusion newsletters on the Diversity and Inclusion ConnectEd page;

- arranging sponsorship for Education employees to attend the Garma Festival to build cultural awareness;
- Director-General and Deputy Principal participation in Engoori cultural awareness training to learn a three-phase approach to address complex challenges or issues;
- hosting REDCO Forum events as a networking and professional development opportunity; and
- supporting four diversity networks (the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network, Disability Advocacy Network and Pride Staff Network).

4.72 The Education Directorate has not assessed the impact of its diversity, equity and inclusion activities and events, either individually or collectively.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

4.73 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate developed an Inclusion communication and engagement activity forecast for 2024. This provided details of forty activities, days of significance and network events for different diversity groups throughout 2024. Days of significance were featured on the Directorate's annual Inclusion calendar and aligned with the employee-led Inclusion Networks and Communities within the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate. Activities include:

- an all-staff event for NAIDOC Week including Touch Football match at Boomanulla Oval and BBQ supplied by a Rotary Club;
- communications encouraging staff to wear purple for Wear it Purple Day; and
- an all-staff event for World Sight Day including Blind Cricket match and BBQ, presented by the Disability and Carers Network and RED Network.

4.74 Throughout 2024, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate also ran a series of livestream speaker sessions. These included:

- March 2024: Imposter Syndrome (presented by Women's Network);
- April 2024: Acknowledging Indigenous ANZACs (presented by Veterans' Community);
- September 2024: From Wagga Wagga to the world stage (presented by RAP Committee);
- November 2024: Gender and Sexuality explained: A Gen X/Millennial's guide (presented by Pride Network); and
- December 2024: Uniting for Change: Addressing DFSV (presented by Executive Champions for Domestic, Family, Sexual Violence (DFSV) and Mental Health and Wellbeing).

4.75 Staff feedback on these speaker sessions was collected via the MS Teams Livestream chats and MS Feedback Forms. In the feedback forms, staff were asked open-ended questions about the content discussed in the livestream and suggestions for future topics or guest speakers. The staff feedback on these sessions has been positive. While the occurrence of the livestream series was reported in the Directorate's *2023-24 Annual Report*, there is no evidence of the Directorate analysing feedback in a structured way as part of annual business planning, reflecting on key learnings or planning future activity.

Emergency Services Agency

4.76 The Public Information and Engagement team within the Emergency Services Agency sends out all staff emails acknowledging diversity, equity and inclusion days of significance and holds events such as a breakfast for International Women's Day and the Canberra Springout Pride festival. The Emergency Services Agency also sends out a weekly internal communication known as *The Agency Dispatch* which regularly features diversity, equity and inclusion activities and days of significance.

4.77 In addition to agency-wide events, the Emergency Services Agency has provided evidence of the:

- Ambulance Service commissioning First Nations artwork which is displayed on vehicles and stations and First Nations epaulettes which are worn all-year round;
- ACT Fire and Rescue commissioning First Nations artwork for a water tanker and for First Nations rank slides to be worn by all staff for NAIDOC week and attendance by two staff members at the Indigenous Leadership Summit in Sydney in 2022; and
- diversity, equity and inclusion activities coordinated by the ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Services Agency, including Women's Networks, training to encourage women to undertake higher roles within the services and First Nations artwork for the firefighting helicopter.

4.78 A Senior Executive Service Women's Network workshop was conducted in February 2023. It noted that no specialised support for senior executive women had occurred since 2019. In late 2022, a survey was distributed to all 112 female members seeking feedback on the re-establishment of the Network. Twenty-six members responded, 80 percent of whom supported the re-establishment of the Network. The Network identified 15 ideas/proposed actions that would address barriers and challenges experienced by women. It was agreed that a second workshop would be conducted for the planning of activities. There is no evidence that this second workshop took place or that the ideas/proposed actions were actioned.

4.79 The Emergency Services Agency has not reviewed, evaluated or documented evidence of the impact of its diversity, equity and inclusion activities.



- 4.80 The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a significant range of activities in support of diversity, equity and inclusion. The size, scale and expected impact of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities. Only on a few occasions have the agencies sought to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the specific activities.

RED Network

- 4.81 The RED Framework provides for the identification of Respect Equity and Diversity Contact Officers (REDCOs) across directorates and agencies. The role of a REDCO is to:

... model and promote the ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours to develop positive work cultures across the ACTPS. REDCOs provide information to staff seeking a solution to improve or resolve a workplace issue or situation, which may relate to inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.

- 4.82 To support REDCOs fulfill their responsibilities, the *Guidelines for ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Contact Officers* have been developed. The Guidelines note the purpose of REDCOs as follows:

Under the RED Framework, REDCOs were introduced to:

- raise awareness of the importance of respect, equity and diversity in the workplace;
- promote and model the ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours as outlined in the ACTPS Code of Conduct;
- provide information to Contacts who may be experiencing workplace issues that are inappropriate in nature or may constitute misconduct, including work bullying, discrimination or harassment; and
- support the development of a positive workplace culture by participating in RED activities and promoting RED principles within their own work area.

- 4.83 The Guidelines stipulate that for every contact, REDCOs must submit a RED Contact Report to enable the collection of de-identified statistical information regarding RED matters.

- 4.84 The Guidelines also recommend that RED Network meetings occur quarterly within directorates.

Education Directorate

- 4.85 The Education Directorate currently has 108 REDCOs across the Directorate.

- 4.86 Education Directorate RED Network meetings occurred on a regular basis between 2022 and 2024 and included presentations on issues such as workplace conflict.

4.87 The Education Directorate conducts REDCO Surveys to gather feedback and suggestions for improvement from its REDCOs. The April 2024 REDCO Survey had a response rate of 29 percent (32 out of 100 REDCOs). While the majority of REDCOs who responded indicated that they were likely or very likely to recommend the role to a colleague, REDCOs also reported that it was sometimes difficult to:

... find a suitable location to have confidential or sensitive conversations, and

... find time to perform the REDCO role around other responsibilities.

4.88 One of the recommendations made in response to the survey was to increase managerial support for REDCOs, along with increasing awareness of the REDCOs, increasing REDCO role clarity and improving REDCO network meetings.

4.89 Similar issues were raised in the 2021 REDCO Survey. In a March 2022 presentation on the outcomes of the REDCO Survey, it was observed that although the REDCO role was valuable, there was low attendance at network meetings due to clashes and sometimes lack of support for attendance by managers.

RED contacts

4.90 Analysis of RED Contact Reports submitted in the period between 2020 and 2024 indicates that some employees have had multiple contacts with a REDCO about behaviour in the same school or workplace over a period of time. The documented instances of this between 2020 and 2024 are shown in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 Multiple RED contacts between 2020 and 2024

Name (deidentified)	Number of contacts made and relevant period	Employee with whom Contact is experiencing issue and number of instances	Same school/division/network/area in all instances?
Person A	4 contacts between January 2023 and November 2023	Colleague (x4)	Yes
Person B	3 contacts between June and November 2023	Colleague (x3)	Yes
Person C	2 contacts between May and June 2022	Colleague (2)	Yes
Person D	15 contacts between April 2020 and September 2022	School leader (5), Teacher (4), Principal (1), Colleague (4)	Yes
Person E	27 contacts between July 2020 and March 2022	Executive (18), School leader (2), executive and school leader (1), colleague (5), subordinate (1)	Yes
Person F	5 contacts between May and September 2021	Executive (1), School Leader (2), colleague (1), not specified (1)	Yes
Person G	2 contacts between Dec 2020 and August 2021	Executive (1), not specified (1)	Yes
Person H	11 contacts between Feb 2020 and Aug 2021	Colleague (5) Manager (1), Executive (5)	Yes, Office-based worker
Person L	8 contacts between March and November 2020	School leader (4), colleague (2), ESO (1), other (1)	School not specified as contact was concerned about possible identification
Person M	2 contacts between August and November 2020	Manager (2)	No

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on RED Contact forms provided by the Education Directorate.

4.91 The table demonstrates that the employee with whom the contact is experiencing the issue is frequently identified as a manager or member of the Executive. The types of issues which typically form the basis for the contacts include inappropriate behaviour, disrespect, harassment, bullying, discrimination and breaches of the Code of Conduct.

4.92 Since 2020, the Education Directorate has tracked REDCO contacts annually in a spreadsheet, from which it records the details of the REDCO, the person making the contact, the employee with whom the contact is experiencing the workplace issue, the nature of the issue and the action taken (e.g. speaking to a manager or supervisor, speaking to the People and Performance Branch or lodging a complaint). The spreadsheet also records whether the

specific issue has been reported before. There is no evidence of this data being brought to the attention of Executive staff members within the Education Directorate or being actioned at a directorate-wide level.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

4.93 At the time of audit fieldwork there were 24 REDCOs in the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and one RED Executive Sponsor. In September 2024, the Directorate engaged a contractor to provide 'Masterful REDCO' training to seven REDCOs.

4.94 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has provided minutes from RED Network meetings held between November 2021 and September 2024. The minutes:

- identify the need to raise the profile of REDCOs;
- remind REDCOs about their reporting requirements;
- identify challenges for REDCOs in having the time to perform RED duties;
- report low attendance at REDCO meetings; and
- identify difficulties booking and scheduling REDCO training.

4.95 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has provided data showing the number of REDCO contacts in the eight-month period between 20 July 2023 and 14 February 2024. There were five contacts in total, three of them from female staff, with concerns related to bullying and/or harassment and issues with management and discrimination.


4.96 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate *Annual Report 2022-2023* states that nine REDCO contact forms were submitted by REDCOs in the twelve-month period between July 2022 and July 2023. The report states:

An aim for 2023-24 is to raise awareness around REDCOs as a source of support in the workplace and encourage positive reporting using the RED contact forms. An increase in reporting will aid in improving data collection and cultural knowledge and inform improved responses to issues.

4.97 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate notes that there are sometimes informal conversations with REDCOs that are not documented or recorded as RED contacts.

Emergency Services Agency

4.98 Since 2022, ten Emergency Services Agency staff have completed REDCO training. This number includes staff who have elected not to continue filling the role of REDCO and the current Commissioner who temporarily backfilled the role of RED Champion in 2022.

- 4.99 REDCO Network meetings have taken place on a regular basis between 2021 and 2024. The meeting minutes record the need for REDCOs to record contacts and pass information onto RED Network Coordinators:
- the meeting in September 2021 noted that no RED contacts had been reported between July and September 2021;
 - the meeting in December 2021 reaffirmed that RED contacts must be documented; and
 - the meeting in March 2022 observed that RED contacts are happening but are not being documented or notified to the RED Network Coordinator.
- 4.100 There have also been consistent challenges with low attendance at Justice and Community Safety Directorate RED Network meetings between June 2021 and June 2024. For example:
- on 8 September 2022, 10 REDCOs out of 30 attended;
 - in September 2023, four REDCOs out of 29 attended; and
 - in June 2024, five REDCOs attended.
- 4.101 In November 2023, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate REDCO Coordinator undertook a review and recommended to the Assistant Commissioner of the Emergency Services Agency that the Emergency Services Agency refresh its REDCO representation. This resulted in the removal of eight inactive REDCOs. In the second half of 2024, the Emergency Services Agency recruited and trained four additional staff members as REDCOs. The Emergency Services Agency currently has eight REDCOs.
- 4.102 The REDCO Guidelines identify that for every contact, REDCOs must submit a RED Contact Report 'in order to collect de-identified statistical information regarding RED matters'. The Emergency Services Agency advised that since 2020, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate REDCO Coordinator has received 21 REDCO contact reports (at least one of which was submitted by an Emergency Services Agency REDCO).
-  4.103 The RED Framework provides for the identification of Respect Equity and Diversity Contact Officers (REDCOs) across directorates and agencies. The role of REDCOs is to 'model and promote the ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours to develop positive work cultures across the ACTPS. REDCOs provide information to staff seeking a solution to improve or resolve a workplace issue or situation, which may relate to inappropriate behaviour or misconduct'. The three agencies considered as part of the audit have identified and established REDCOs. Each of the agencies has established regular meetings and forums for its REDCOs, but these are not always well-attended. REDCOs are required to submit a RED Contact Report for every contact they have related to RED Framework matters. Across all agencies it was noted that REDCOs sometimes have informal contacts with staff members, which are not recorded as a contact for reporting and monitoring purposes.

Exit surveys

Education Directorate

4.104 The Education Directorate has developed an exit survey for departing staff. Since February 2023 departing Education Directorate staff have been sent a link and QR code to the exit survey in their 'final entitlement' email.

4.105 An annual review of the exit survey was conducted in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The 2024 annual review identified that '[r]esponse rates remain low' although rates had increased since 2022 and 2023:

- in 2024 15.3 percent of departing employees submitted an exit survey;
- in 2023 10.8 percent of departing employees completed an exit survey; and
- in 2022 8.5 percent of departing employees completed an exit survey.

4.106 The exit survey includes questions on age, gender and diversity group status. The exit survey asks 'Are you of a non-English speaking background?' The phrasing of this question is out of step with current terminology used by the ACT Government (which prefers 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse').

4.107 In 2024:

- 26 percent of respondents were aged 25-34 years old; 21 percent were aged 35-44 years old; 15 percent were aged 45-54 years old; and 19 percent were aged 55-64 years old;
- 71 percent of respondents were female, 20 percent were male, seven percent left this demographic question blank, one percent preferred not to say and one percent were indeterminate/intersex/unspecified; and
- three percent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, three percent as a person with disability and five percent as a person of non-English speaking background.

4.108 In 2024, the most significant factors in deciding to leave the Education Directorate were:

- employment conditions (e.g. work-life balance, flexible work);
- personal factors unrelated to employment;
- quality of senior leadership;
- workload; and
- support from immediate supervisor.

- 4.109 A free-text comment question asks respondents to elaborate on any other reasons behind their decision to leave. The most prominent theme to emerge from responses to this question in 2024 was 'lack of support'.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 4.110 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had an exit survey which was five pages in length. It requested information on age, gender and diversity group status. It asked why the staff member was leaving and included tick-a-box options and allowed for a free-text response. There was an option for the departing staff member to request a follow-up conversation with a supervisor/manager.
- 4.111 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate advised that quarterly reporting on exit survey results only began in 2024. There was only one exit survey report for January-April 2024. In that period, eight surveys were completed. Two of the departing employees identified as LGBTIQ+.

Emergency Services Agency

- 4.112 Neither the Emergency Services Agency nor the Justice and Community Safety Directorate more broadly conducts exit surveys of staff. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate advised that it is developing a 'Leaving the JACS Directorate Survey' which it plans to implement in 2025. Until the survey is developed and implemented, neither the Emergency Services Agency nor Justice and Community Safety Directorate is gathering important data or insights on the reasons for an employee's departure. This represents a missed opportunity to reflect on improvements that could be made at both the divisional and directorate levels.
- 4.113 In its response to the draft proposed report the Emergency Services Agency advised that it conducts exit surveys of volunteers. The Audit Office did not see any evidence to support this assertion.



- 4.114 Exit surveys of departing staff are an opportunity to obtain information and insights into potential workplace issues and/or dissatisfaction of staff. These may include insights into staff members' feeling of belonging and inclusion. The Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have developed and implemented exit surveys of departing staff. The Education Directorate has systematically reviewed and evaluated exit survey responses with a view to identifying significant factors and trends. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had only begun to prepare quarterly reports on exit survey results as of 2024. Neither the Emergency Services Agency nor the Justice and Community Safety Directorate more broadly have conducted exit surveys of staff. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate advised that it is developing a 'Leaving the JACS Directorate Survey' which it plans to implement in 2025.

ACTPS Employee Survey

4.115 The 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey was conducted by ORIMA in March 2023.

Education Directorate

4.116 A briefing for the Director-General of the Education Directorate was prepared by ORIMA in May 2023. ORIMA highlighted inclusivity as an area of focus for the Education Directorate.

4.117 Staff were notified of results in June-July 2023. The *Analysis and Recommendations for Directorate Action Planning* noted particularly poor results for LGBTIQ+ staff and people with disability:

Attachment A demonstrates that employees who identify as LGBTIQ+ or with disability have significantly poorer results than the Directorate average. Furthermore, employees who reported that they have formal caring responsibilities responded more negatively across a range of factors.

Within these diversity groups, there are much poorer perceptions of the organisational executive and Executive Group Managers, which may indicate a need for more visible action and support for inclusion.

These employees have responded more negatively to perceptions of inclusivity within the Directorate.

Employees with disability reported much more negative perceptions of the direct supervisors, suggesting that further work may be required in training supervisors to be inclusive for employees with disability.

Employees who identify as LGBTIQ+ or with disability were more likely to report that they witnessed or experienced bullying, violence and aggression.

4.118 A review of the ACTPS Employee Survey data confirms these observations as:

- 62 percent of LGBTIQ+ staff felt 'engaged' and 63 percent felt 'satisfied' (compared to 75 percent engagement and 79 percent satisfaction rates among Education Directorate staff overall);
- 64 percent of people with disability felt 'commitment and loyalty' and 43 percent approved of their supervisor's performance (compared to 73 percent in both cases among Education Directorate staff overall); and
- LGBTIQ+, people with disability and carers all reported lower confidence in the organisational executive (averaging 50 percent) compared to 62 percent among Education Directorate staff overall.

4.119 Furthermore, an *ACTPS Survey Insight Paper* produced by the Education Directorate observed that LGBTIQ+ staff are more likely to experience bullying, discrimination and violence and aggression. These incidents have increased compared to the 2021 results. The incidence of bullying in 2023, for example, was 25 percent for LGBTIQ+, which is more than

double the Education Directorate average of 10 percent. This represents a two percent increase on the rate in 2021.

4.120 In response to these issues, the *2023 ACTPS Employee Survey Directorate Branch Action Plan* identified two diversity and inclusion priority areas for action:

- make better use of the EAP as a support tool (i.e. promote the EAP and raise awareness of the range of services offered); and
- emphasise a culture of reasonable adjustment to support employee wellbeing.

School Satisfaction and Climate Survey

4.121 The annual School Satisfaction and Climate Survey (School Survey) collects feedback from school staff as well as parents, carers and students. The staff survey is administered online and takes approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary.

4.122 In 2023 the School Survey was amended so that it would enable comparisons between the survey results for school-based staff (from the School Survey) and Education Support Office staff (from the ACTPS Employee Survey). An April 2024 report prepared by the People and Performance Branch noted that the two surveys cover many of the same themes, including workload management, inclusivity, career intentions and ethics and misconduct.

4.123 The responses on the theme of inclusivity in the two surveys were noted as being similar:

Almost four in every five (78 per cent) of SCS respondents agreed with the statement 'My organisation supports and actively promotes a safe and inclusive workplace culture'. Only six per cent disagreed with the statement. This result was consistent with the respondents to the ACTPS Survey, of which 80 per cent agreed and six per cent disagreed.

4.124 In contrast, the survey responses on bullying, violence and aggression were noted as being different:

Staff were asked if they had personally experienced or witnessed bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, violence and aggression, and/or corruption. Responses from both SCS and ACTPS respondents were largely similar, except for SCS staff who had reported witnessing greater amounts of violence or aggression. The table below outlines the percentage of survey respondents for each survey that reported witnessing these behaviours within the last 12 months.

<i>Ethics-and-misconduct-witnessed</i>	<i>SSCS</i>	<i>ACTPS</i>
Bullying	24%	22%
Discrimination	9%	10%
Sexual-Harassment	3%	1%
Violence-and-aggression	50%	15%
Corruption	1%	3%

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

4.125 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate ACTPS Employee Survey 2023 survey results indicate that:

- 80 percent of staff were of the view that the organisation supports and actively promotes a safe and inclusive workplace culture (compared to 79 percent in the ACTPS);
- 69 percent of staff were of the view that they do not face unfair barriers in accessing opportunities (compared to 72 percent in the ACTPS);
- 67 percent of staff were of the view that the organisation fosters an environment where staff are treated fairly and with respect (compared to 70 percent in the ACTPS);
- 17 percent of staff reported personally experiencing bullying in the last twelve months (which was at least four percentage points higher than the ACTPS); and
- 8 percent of staff reported personally experiencing discrimination in the last twelve months (which was at least two percentage points higher than the ACTPS).

4.126 The TCCS Executive Board was an executive body with a whole of directorate focus which encompassed planning, strategy, risk, change management, budget, and resources. The response of the TCCS Executive Board to the Survey findings was documented in a 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey Action Planning Worksheet. Action 3 of the Worksheet targeted 'unreasonable behaviour', recognising that a higher percentage of Directorate staff reported experiencing or witnessing bullying than the ACTPS average. Six specific actions were listed including modelling appropriate behaviour, training, promoting reporting channels, commitments within Executive and senior leader Performance Development Plans and regular reporting. There were measures of success to be measured via the 2025 survey and via training completion. The document set out how the Executive Board was expected to achieve these actions, such as conducting an 'anti-bullying campaign' throughout 2024.

Differences in diversity, equity and inclusion data

4.127 The ACTPS Employee Survey indicates higher percentages of some diversity groups than is indicated by HR21 data. For example, the 2023 Survey data indicates that six percent of Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate staff identified as LGBTIQ+ (compared to the 0.08 percent reported on 30 June 2023) and eight percent identified as people with disability (compared to the four percent reported on 30 June 2023). This suggests that employees from diversity groups are under-represented in the HR21 data, and more likely to self-identify in the anonymous ACTPS Employee Survey. The ACTPS Employee Survey also captures data on diversity groups not represented in the human resources data, such as five percent of staff being carers and two percent of staff being Australian Defence Force personnel.

Emergency Services Agency

4.128 A comparison of the 2021 and 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey results for satisfaction, inclusivity and recognition within the Emergency Services Agency demonstrates that:

- LGBTIQ+ employees in the Emergency Services Agency had lower inclusion rates in 2021, and lower satisfaction rates and recognition rates than the Justice and Community Safety Directorate or ACTPS benchmark rates in 2021 and 2023;
- carers in the Emergency Services Agency had lower inclusivity and recognition rates than the Justice and Community Safety Directorate or ACTPS benchmark rates in 2021 and 2023; and
- the rate of inclusivity for people in the 'non-English spoken at home' category increased from 58 percent to 69 percent between 2021 and 2023.

4.129 A comparison of the 2021 and 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey results on personal experience of discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, and aggression or violent behaviour at the Emergency Services Agency in the last twelve months reveals that:

- LGBTIQ+ staff, carers and people in the 'non-English spoken at home' category have all personally experienced higher rates of discrimination than the ACTPS or Justice and Community Safety Directorate benchmarks in both 2021 and 2023;
- LGBTIQ+ staff and people in the 'non-English spoken at home' category have experienced higher rates of bullying and sexual harassment than the ACTPS or Justice and Community Safety Directorate benchmarks in both 2021 and 2023;
- there was a reduction in carers experiencing sexual harassment at work between 2021 and 2023; but an increase for LGBTIQ+ and the 'non-English spoken at home' category; and
- LGBTIQ+ staff and carers experienced higher rates of aggression or violent behaviour at work than the ACTPS or Justice and Community Safety Directorate benchmarks in both 2021 and 2023.

4.130 There is no evidence of actions being taken by the Emergency Services Agency in response to these survey results.

Diversity, equity and inclusion data for volunteers

4.131 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate collects workforce diversity data from Shared Services Centre payroll data via the Chris21 system. Data is collected during recruitment, onboarding and via updates to diversity status made by staff. This data does not include the volunteer workforce.

- 4.132 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate annual reports include a brief statement on workforce diversity and inclusion across the directorate's workforce and an aggregate Justice and Community Safety Directorate diversity group profile.
- 4.133 ACT Government *State of the Service Reports* present workforce profile data by directorate. An exception is the gender and gender pay gap data presented in Table A.8 by classification group (where groups such as Ambulance Officers, Ambulance Support Officers, Fire and Rescue Officers can be identified as belonging to the Emergency Services Agency).
- 4.134 Aside from data collected centrally by the directorate, the Emergency Services Agency collects its own diversity data on staff and volunteers through its tracking of participants in industry-specific training programs. This is a more accurate and complete data set than the data collected by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate because it includes diversity data on the volunteer workforce. This data is currently not reported to, or collected by, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. The incorporation of this data into Justice and Community Safety Directorate annual reports would help to build a more accurate workforce profile of the Emergency Services Agency. Table 4-3 shows a summary of Emergency Services Agency data in September 2024.

Table 4-3 Emergency Services Agency volunteer and employee workforce diversity data (September 2024)

Total workforce	2,514
Males	1,723 (68.9%)
Females	695 (27.7%)
Not stated	90 (3.5%)
Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified	5 (0.1%)
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	43 (1.7%)
English language spoken at home	1766 (70.4%)
Other language spoken at home	748 (29.7%)

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Emergency Services Agency.



- 4.135 The ACTPS Employee Survey is conducted every two years. The Survey provides useful information on employees and their overall sense of wellbeing. Across the three agencies the proportion of employees who identified as belonging to a diversity group was reported as higher through the ACTPS Employee Survey than through HR21 data. This means that employees from diversity groups are under-represented in the HR21 data and more likely to self-identify in the anonymous ACTPS Employee Survey. For the Education Directorate, the annual School Satisfaction and Climate Survey (School Survey) also collects relevant feedback from school staff as well as parents, carers and students. The ACTPS Employee Survey (and School Survey) provide useful information on employees' wellbeing and inclusion.

5 Agency practices (employee lifecycle)

5.1 This chapter discusses the activities of the Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Emergency Services Agency to recognise and implement relevant diversity, equity and inclusion principles at key stages of the employment lifecycle:

- attraction;
- recruitment;
- onboarding; and
- retention and development.

Summary



Conclusions

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to attract, retain and develop employees from diversity groups. The way the agencies have sought to do so has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

Throughout the chapter are examples of how the agencies have considered, recognised and sought to support diversity, equity and inclusion practices.



Key findings

Attraction

Paragraph

The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to attract potential employees from different diversity groups. The nature of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

5.20

Recruitment

Better practice recruitment involves systematically replacing subjective decision-making in recruitment processes with objective decision-making by developing objective criteria and standards to reduce bias. Better practice recruitment approaches also include training for recruiters/selection panels in diversity, accessibility, cultural awareness, reasonable adjustments and unconscious bias. All three agencies considered as part of the audit have developed policy and procedural guidance in relation to the conduct of recruitment and selection processes, with a view to ensuring that recruitment processes are fair and free of bias. The Education

5.36

Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have developed and implemented mandatory training for members of recruitment and selection panels. The mandatory training addresses the key principles of merit, equity, diversity and fairness; conflicts of interest; and unconscious bias.

Onboarding

Onboarding refers to the process by which new employees come to understand the expectations of their workplace and receive appropriate training. The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to onboard employees from different diversity groups. The nature of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities. In two specific instances the Education Directorate's Diversity and Inclusion team has made efforts to improve the onboarding experience for specific groups, namely people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women/new parents. 5.47

Retention and development

Targeted training and career development pathways equip employees with the skills and opportunities needed to grow within an organisation. This approach fosters engagement, satisfaction and loyalty and creates a cohesive employee experience that promotes retention. The three agencies considered as part of the audit provide a variety of training and development opportunities to their employees. The nature of the training and development opportunities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities. 5.73

Attraction

5.2 Attraction refers to an organisation being an appealing, inclusive employer. It encompasses an agency's reputation and what information a prospective employee can find out about the agency. Organisations that consider diversity, equity and inclusion a strategic priority tend to attract employees who share similar values and foster innovative work cultures.

Better practice

5.3 Better practice approaches to attraction involve:

- effective branding, which is creating a culture that attracts and retains diverse people and being known for that culture;
- effective communication, which involves communication campaigns that explicitly welcome diverse applicants; and
- provision of accurate information on what it is like working at the organisation (e.g. the extent of support for flexible working arrangements).

- 5.4 An Employee Value Proposition is one means by which this can be achieved. It is a statement or 'pitch' made by an employer that outlines the rewards and benefits of working at an organisation.

Education Directorate

- 5.5 The Education Directorate's *Future of Education* strategy expresses a commitment to:

Develop recruitment processes and incentives to identify the right new staff, strengthen internship models for new teachers and principals, and design a workforce plan to increase diversity and expertise in the school workforce.

- 5.6 The Education Directorate has undertaken the following activities to attract diverse employees:

- the Pre-Service Teacher Program offers third-year and fourth-year pre-service teachers a pathway into employment prior to graduation. The program includes a teaching position with a public school salary, participation in the three-year New Educator Support Program and a relocation reimbursement. This represents an incentive for younger workers to join the Education Directorate; and
- a Work Experience Pilot Program was hosted by the Education Directorate in partnership with Koomarri, an organisation to support people with disability. The program involved the employment of cleaning service officers at multiple school sites.

- 5.7 To attract Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-27* commits to:

- holding bi-annual meetings with external Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations and networks (actions 1.2 and 1.3); and
- including cultural integrity in all staff induction and new educator induction programs (action 2.3).

- 5.8 Not all actions have timeframes or specified performance targets or measures. For example, Action 2.1 (the development and implementation of recruitment panel training on diversity in recruitment, unconscious bias, and cultural integrity) has no timeframe and action 2.4 (promoting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training as recommended learning) has no associated performance target or measure. The lack of timeframes, targets or measures presents challenges to the timely and impactful implementation of these initiatives.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- 5.9 The *TCCS People Strategy* identified a set of outcomes that are focused on attracting the right people to the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate. These included:
- having a clear Employee Value Proposition that positions the directorate as an employer of choice;
 - being innovative in the use of attraction initiatives to access a broad audience; and
 - ensuring that managers are skilled and equipped to hire skilled employees.
- 5.10 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate engaged Peak Corporate Solutions to develop an Employee Value Proposition for entry-level Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. The directorate also developed Employee Value Propositions to attract people with disability, veterans, younger workers and migrants/visa holders. Directorate staff were encouraged to use the pre-written Employee Value Proposition wording to tailor job advertisements.
- 5.11 The *Review of the TCCS People Strategy 2019-2023* identified that the development of Employee Value Propositions had a positive impact, with over 1400 views of the external Employee Value Proposition site between the launch in April 2021 and 1 March 2022.
- 5.12 The *Review of the TCCS People Strategy 2019-2023* recommended that the *TCCS Recruitment Toolkit* be reviewed to include the Employee Value Propositions and other attraction initiatives. This recommendation had not been actioned at the time of audit fieldwork.
- 5.13 As part of its efforts to attract younger workers, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had a Traineeship Program which provided mentoring and training during rotations across four business areas within the directorate. Trainees who successfully complete the program could commence as a General Services Officer Level 3. One of these positions was a designated position, which was only open to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- 5.14 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had an employment target which was to increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment to three percent in 2024, four percent in 2025 and five percent in 2026.

Emergency Services Agency

- 5.15 The first theme of the *2024-2027 ESA Strategic Plan* is to 'back our people' which includes growing 'a culture of inclusion that values each person's unique contribution'. To attract diverse staff and grow a culture of inclusion, the Strategic Plan identifies that the Emergency Services Agency is aiming to:
- develop agency-wide staff and volunteer value propositions;
 - develop an inclusion roadmap, revitalise the Women in Emergency Services Program and provide matching initiatives for other diversity groups;
 - conduct a comprehensive review of staff and volunteer wellbeing across the agency;
 - refresh the agency's learning and development offerings to build a culture of continuous learning; and
 - work with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to align key Human Resources policies and processes, including artefacts related to recruitment, performance management, retention, leave, mobility, flexibility, Workplace Health and Safety, discrimination and harassment, termination, and complaints.
- 5.16 A Strategic Plan Implementation Group has been established to coordinate, monitor and report on the implementation of the plan. The terms of reference indicate that meetings are to be conducted monthly for the life of the Strategic Plan.
- 5.17 The Emergency Services Agency currently has a variety of initiatives to attract diverse candidates:
- for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, the Emergency Services Agency ran the First Nations Work Experience Program in July 2024 and has participated in a NSW Indigenous Fire and Rescue Strategy (IFARES) program. The program is led by Indigenous Firefighters and aims to engage Indigenous Firefighter candidates. In 2020-21, ACT Fire and Rescue employed five employees through the IFARES program;
 - for women, the Emergency Services Agency runs Come & Try sessions, Information Sessions, Physical Preparation Programs and a targeted media campaign in conjunction with HerCanberra and Mamma Mia Australia; and
 - for people with disability, the Emergency Services Agency has designed two entry-level identified positions.
- 5.18 For all target audiences, the Emergency Services Agency has advised that it endeavours to use diverse images and photography in its social media posts and on its website. The ACT Fire and Rescue Applicant Information 2024 booklet, for example, features a female firefighter on the cover page.

5.19 ACT Fire and Rescue developed a Communications Plan for attracting up to 20 new firefighters between August 2024 and January 2025. The plan identified that the primary target audience was members of the Canberra region community who are of working age and interested in a career in emergency services and the secondary target audience is women and people interested in moving to the ACT. The approach involved a combination of paid media, social media, direct marketing to previous applicants, online and face-to-face information sessions and Come & Try Days. A key message was that ACT Fire and Rescue is seeking to attract diverse staff.



5.20 The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to attract potential employees from different diversity groups. The nature of the activities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

Recruitment

Better practice

5.21 Better practice recruitment involves systematically replacing subjective decision-making in recruitment processes with objective decision-making by developing objective criteria and standards to reduce bias. Examples can include:

- developing structured interview processes that rigorously apply selection criteria and apply the same procedures to all applicants; and
- developing objective criteria and processes for performance evaluation.

5.22 Cognitive biases are errors in thinking that tend to affect decision-making. Recognising forms of cognitive bias (such as unconscious bias) and the impact they can have on recruitment and decision-making is a preliminary step. Better practice recruitment processes are free of bias. They clearly signal that diverse candidates are welcome to apply. Applications are sought from diverse candidates and talent is assessed on a fair and equal basis.

5.23 Better practice recruitment approaches also include measures such as:

- training for recruiters/selection panels in diversity, accessibility, cultural awareness, reasonable adjustments and unconscious bias;
- educating recruiters and selection panels about different forms of engagement and expression by interviewees. For example, people with some forms of neurodivergence and from some cultures do not make eye contact, and people with some physical disabilities and from some cultures may not be able to or are not accustomed to physical gestures;

- recruiting neurodivergent candidates through accessible processes and communications;
- enhanced pathways and support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who face compound barriers;
- cultivating awareness that not all people will choose to disclose disability, especially if they have already experienced prejudice and discrimination; and
- creating inclusive job descriptions and advertisements and statements of accommodation for diverse candidates.

Education Directorate

5.24 The People and Performance Branch in the Education Directorate delivers training on Joint Selection Committee and Recruitment Principles to guide the use of joint selection committees for teacher and school leader vacancies. All Joint Selection Committees are required to meet the following requirements:

- all committee members must have completed Joint Selection Committee training;
- there must be a minimum of three members;
- there must be an independent person who is external to the school and has not worked at the school in the previous twelve months;
- there must be a gender mix (where reasonably practical);
- the chair must be at least one nominal level higher than the vacancy;
- other selection committee members should be at the same nominal level or higher than the vacancy;
- if a position is identified, all reasonable efforts must be made to include a member of that diversity group on the selection committee; and
- panel makeup is approved by the relevant union.

5.25 The requirements relating to both the training of committee members, and the composition of panels, reflect a concern to ensure that recruitment processes are fair and free of bias.

5.26 The training materials explicitly cover the key principles of merit, equity, diversity and fairness; conflicts of interest; and unconscious bias. The training defines unconscious bias and advises that it can be addressed by identifying biases; reflecting on why biases exist; deciding which biases to address first; making a conscious decision to be vigilant about tendencies to categorise others; and encouraging and challenging others to become more conscious of bias in decision-making. This training approach reflects better practice because it aims to ensure objective decision-making in recruitment processes.

5.27 In addition to providing training for selection committees, the Education Directorate has prepared its own draft workplace factsheets on what identified positions are and how to fill them, how to establish diverse selection panels, and an inclusion plan whereby employees can specify to their manager or supervisor what reasonable adjustments they need. These documents have not yet been finalised because the Education Directorate says that it has temporarily deprioritised implementation work to enable the development of diversity action plans.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

5.28 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had also centralised the recruitment process and implemented a *Best Practice Recruitment and Selection* training course for staff wishing to participate in recruitment selection panels. The aim of this program was to encourage business units to tailor recruitment and assessment activities to best suit the role being recruited for, recognising that not all roles are best filled by written applications and interviews.

5.29 The *TCCS Identified Positions Factsheet* expressed a commitment to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees and employees with disability. It provided guidance on identifying a position, advertising an identified position, filling an identified position and equity and inclusion in recruitment. It contained links to relevant diversity, equity and inclusion strategies and policies and the Employee Value Proposition information page.

5.30 On 30 June 2024, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had five identified positions for people with disability (three of which were vacant) and 13 identified positions for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (seven of which were vacant).

5.31 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate also developed a suite of resources to assist staff to understand and meet their diversity, equity and inclusion obligations when conducting recruitment:

- *Recruitment Fact Sheet 05* clearly and succinctly set out diversity requirements for the composition of selection committees and the specific requirements that apply when recruiting to identified positions. Members of selection committees were required to be diverse in gender and must have completed the *Best Practice Recruitment and Selection* training course;
- *Diversity and Inclusion Advice for TCCS Recruitment Panels* was six pages long and provided detailed guidance for staff when interviewing an applicant who identified as belonging to a diversity group in their job application form. The document reiterated the importance of equity and inclusive thinking as a panel member and listed specific matters to consider prior to, during, and after interviews with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people,

people with disability, current and former Australian Defence Force members, and LGBTIQ+ people; and

- *TCCS Recruitment and Selection Guidelines* outlined a set of recruitment principles, with reference to how recruitment should reflect principles such as merit, fairness, efficiency and transparency, equity and diversity, and the concept of reasonable adjustment.

Emergency Services Agency

- 5.32 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate's *Corporate People and Workplace Strategy Branch* has oversight of recruitment processes for vacancies of six months or more. The Branch seeks to ensure that recruitment processes across the Directorate are conducted in accordance with the relevant legislation and policy including the *ACTPS Recruitment Policy and Guidelines 2020*, the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and relevant enterprise agreements. This includes ensuring that the Position Description and capabilities meet the requirements of the role and align with the Work Level Standards.
- 5.33 Once relevant documentation has been reviewed by the JACS Corporate People and Workplace Strategy Branch, the Emergency Services Agency manages the recruitment process, including devising the recruitment/advertisement strategy, selecting and appointing the recruitment panel, and making interview arrangements. The Agency advised that all job advertisements are required to include a 'Pro-Diversity' Statement as per ACTPS guidelines.
- 5.34 The Emergency Services Agency's *Our Abilities Employment Strategy Action Plan 2022-24* committed the Agency to several actions, which directly related to training and educating staff about making reasonable adjustments. The Action Plan, detailed in the Strategy's online reporting tool, tracked which commitments were completed or ongoing. Specifically with respect to recruitment the following activities have been identified:
- the Emergency Services Agency was required to engage a Disability Employment Service or disability recruitment provider to advise on at least one recruitment process per year (completed);
 - staff involved in recruitment activities were required to have completed Disability Awareness training and understand the principles of Reasonable Adjustment (ongoing);
 - the Emergency Services Agency Recruitment Team must ensure that corporate position advertising includes a statement of inclusion for people with disability (completed).
- 5.35 The Emergency Services Agency has participated in ACTPS employment programs, such as the Vocational Employment Program and Graduate Program, both of which seek to involve diverse candidates. The Agency has also participated in the Work Experience Support

Program (WESP) which aims to help ACT residents who are migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to gain experience and qualifications in the ACTPS. The Agency hosted two participants in the 2023 WESP program. These participants were then employed by the Agency on temporary contracts, one of which progressed to a permanent role. In 2024, the Agency hosted one participant in the October round.



5.36 Better practice recruitment involves systematically replacing subjective decision-making in recruitment processes with objective decision-making by developing objective criteria and standards to reduce bias. Better practice recruitment approaches also include training for recruiters/selection panels in diversity, accessibility, cultural awareness, reasonable adjustments and unconscious bias. All three agencies considered as part of the audit have developed policy and procedural guidance in relation to the conduct of recruitment and selection processes, with a view to ensuring that recruitment processes are fair and free of bias. The Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have developed and implemented mandatory training for members of recruitment and selection panels. The mandatory training addresses the key principles of merit, equity, diversity and fairness; conflicts of interest; and unconscious bias.

Onboarding

5.37 Onboarding refers to the process by which new employees come to understand the expectations of their workplace and receive appropriate training. It also refers to whether employees are asked about their need for adjustments, and how they are helped and supported to perform at their best.³¹

Better practice

5.38 Better practice approaches to onboarding consider the following:

- the importance of mandatory induction diversity training;
- cultural safety principles in onboarding processes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people;
- the use of 'disability confident' onboarding practices;
- understanding that heteronormativity in workplace culture and amongst the majority of employees creates a fear of disclosure by LGBTIQ+ workers and a need to re-disclose each time they encounter a new work team, manager or department; and
- specific onboarding support for employees with caring responsibilities.

³¹ Cox, S. A. J. (2024). *Equity, diversity and inclusion: The employee life cycle*, <https://www.stevenajcox.com/diversity-and-inclusion-employee-lifecycle/> (Accessed 28 October 2024).

Education Directorate

5.39 The Education Directorate has advised that it relies on the following external resources to guide it in making reasonable adjustments:

- a Conversation Guide entitled 'Making Workplace Adjustments Easy, Effective and Equitable', published by the Australian Government and Job Access, and made available to staff on the directorate's intranet;
- Quick Guides on inclusive recruitment and onboarding published by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and made available on the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub; and
- a factsheet entitled 'Complex reasonable adjustment assessment' published by the ACT Government and designed to provide information for participants.

5.40 The Education Directorate's Diversity and Inclusion team has made efforts to improve the onboarding experience for specific groups, as follows:

- All Staff Inductions include an Introduction to Staff Networks (namely the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network, PRIDE Network, Disability Advocacy Network and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network);
- New Educator Induction sessions also include information about the Staff Networks; and
- a dedicated intranet page plans to support staff who are currently or recently pregnant or are new parents. The page provides information, guidance and tools on topics such as breastfeeding and nursing, flexible work arrangements and family friendly workspaces.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

5.41 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's Welcome Letter referred to the RED Framework and Code of Conduct as mandatory training. It had a 'workplace behaviours' section under the heading 'helpful resources' which refers to the *ACTPS Code of Conduct 2022*, RED Framework and RED Contact Officer (all with links).

5.42 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had developed its own Onboarding Checklist, which was clearly set out and easy to follow. On a new employee's commencement day, the manager/supervisor was required to provide information on: reasonable adjustments (with links provided to the *ACT Public Service Reasonable Adjustment Policy*); the RED Contact Officer; and the Employee Assistance Program. In the first week, information was to be provided on the RED Framework, *TCCS Code of Conduct* and *TCCS Values*. In the first month, mandatory training on RED and Code of Conduct was to be completed by new staff; Disability Awareness training for all managers and supervisors;

and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training for staff at SOGC level and above.

- 5.43 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate reviewed its Induction program in 2019, and as part of the *Review of the TCCS People Strategy* in 2022. The Directorate sought input from staff via staff surveys, as well as participants in the program and managers of new starters.

Emergency Services Agency

- 5.44 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate has a Commencement Checklist for New Staff. Part of the Checklist must be completed by the reporting manager at least one week prior to the new employee's arrival, while the remainder is completed by the employee in consultation with their manager. Prior to an employee's arrival, the reporting manager is required to organise the workstation, including any workplace modifications to accommodate reasonable adjustments. Within the first four weeks, employees are to be introduced to the RED Contact Officer; and to have discussed with their manager the *JACS Reconciliation Journey* and the Directorate's Commitment to Workforce Inclusion.

- 5.45 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate Commencement Checklist sets out which training courses are mandatory for all non-frontline staff. These include one whole-of-government diversity, equity and inclusion course (the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness* course) and one Directorate-specific course (the *JACS RED and Code of Conduct* course). There are no mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion courses specified for frontline staff. Rather, the checklist specifies that managers should identify and assign priority training on a case-by-case basis.

- 5.46 In the first half of 2025, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate conducted a Training Needs Analysis across the directorate involving desktop analysis, stakeholder consultation, benchmarking and trend analysis and a learning maturity assessment. The analysis identified key gaps in learning maturity, with the directorate scoring 2.76 out of a possible score of 5 in learning maturity. The resulting recommendations to uplift the directorate's learning maturity included the following:

- implement consistent mandatory training;
- uplift mandatory training;
- develop leadership accountability;
- improve staff awareness and accountability for learning.



- 5.47 Onboarding refers to the process by which new employees come to understand the expectations of their workplace and receive appropriate training. The three agencies considered as part of the audit have undertaken a variety of activities to onboard employees from different diversity groups. The nature of the activities has necessarily varied across the

agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities. In two specific instances the Education Directorate's Diversity and Inclusion team has made efforts to improve the onboarding experience for specific groups, namely people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women/new parents.

Retention and development

- 5.48 Retention and development refers to equitable approaches to rewards, performance management, training, career development and progression, which together create a supportive and motivating work environment.³²
- 5.49 Targeted training and career development pathways equip employees with the skills and opportunities needed to grow within an organisation. This approach fosters engagement, satisfaction and loyalty and creates a cohesive employee experience that promotes retention.

Education Directorate

- 5.50 The Education Directorate provides the following evidence of mentoring and professional development support:
- the Education Directorate supports employees to undertake approved professional development through a Studies Assistance program. The proposed study must align with the Branch/Directorate strategic priorities. Permanent staff with more than 12 months service are eligible to apply and financial assistance may include full or partial payment of course costs; and
 - the People Strategy team within the Education Directorate were successful in obtaining funding support for two Pride Network Co-Chairs from Education to attend a four-day LGBTIQ+ Leadership Summit in Sydney NSW in September 2024. This leadership summit aimed to foster leadership that embraces authenticity, inclusivity and resilience.

Training

- 5.51 There are seven mandatory online training courses for school managers and staff in the Education Directorate. These are:
- Disability Standards for Education
 - Work Health and Safety Due Diligence for Leaders

³² Cox, S. A. J. (2024). *Equity, diversity and inclusion: The employee life cycle*, <https://www.stevenajcox.com/diversity-and-inclusion-employee-lifecycle/> (Accessed 28 October 2024).

- Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children and Young People Safe
- Occupational Violence
- Work, Health and Safety Refresher
- Reportable Conduct

5.52 The Education Directorate has identified that of these seven mandatory courses, only the Disability Standards for Education course is directly relevant to diversity and inclusion. There are no additional mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements in place for new managers or supervisors.

5.53 There are a further 60 optional training courses, of which 38 courses have been identified by the directorate as directly relevant to diversity and inclusion. Table 5-1 shows Education Directorate staff participation numbers for additional optional training courses.

Table 5-1 Education Directorate optional training course attendance

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Respect Equity and Diversity (RED) Training [all EDU staff]	9	6	79	163	30
Respect, Equity and Diversity Training [EDU Managers and School Leaders]	5	13	-	-	-
Anti-Bias Training	-	-	-	-	32
Leading Inclusive Schools	-	-	-	-	8
Transforming Thinking for Inclusion (all modules)	-	4	249	198	310
Let's Talk Disability – Disability Awareness	-	-	-	-	29
Supporting Trans, Gender Diverse, and Intersex People at Work	-	-	-	7	-

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Education Directorate.

5.54 The Education Directorate offered online training sessions on LGBTIQ+ Awareness and Allyship on 5 and 12 August 2025.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

5.55 A priority stated in the *TCCS People Strategy 2019-2023 (extended to 2025)* was to ensure a 'great employee experience'.

- 5.56 In support of this the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate developed a Reward and Recognition Framework and toolkit in 2019 with the aim of improving staff satisfaction rates with recognition in the Directorate. The Framework was updated in 2023 to better reflect what staff recognition is, why it is important, and how it can be achieved. The Staff Recognition Framework encompassed everyday recognition, formal recognition and recognition for excellence. In recognition of diversity, the Framework noted that people differ in their reaction to public recognition (such as being mentioned within large team meetings). It recommended that managers check in with staff as to what form of recognition they prefer. The Framework also highlighted that the Director-General Awards include a category for Diversity and Inclusion.
- 5.57 Another priority stated in the *TCCS People Strategy 2019-2023 (extended to 2025)* was to ensure that the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate create 'pathways to grow'. There are seven actions listed against this priority as follows:
- Develop career transition initiatives to build cross functional capability and enhance organisational collaboration.
 - Deliver a fit for purpose TCCS wide Learning and Development strategy outlining how employees can develop technical, behavioural and leadership capabilities. This strategy will specifically address the development of values-based leadership capabilities, core management skills, digital literacy, community engagement, leading and adapting to change.
 - Design and deliver a TCCS mentoring program with a framework outlining the objectives of the mentor/mentee relationship. Develop the coaching skills of mentors to support their effectiveness by leveraging whole of government mentoring opportunities.
 - Adopt and embed Workforce Planning as a business enabler linked to the business planning cycle. Develop and embed a succession planning toolkit enabling business areas to identify their needs, the succession options available to them and to develop implementation plans.
 - Provide our employees with the tools and skills to confidently apply for roles across the organisation.
 - Identify transferable skills that are valued across the organisation in addition to technical requirements.
 - Identify and support cross Government secondment and career development opportunities.
- 5.58 Two of the planned actions (delivery of a fit for purpose Directorate-wide learning and development strategy and adoption and embedding of workforce planning as a business enabler) were reported as having been achieved in the *TCCS People Strategy Review* in May 2022. The design and delivery of a mentoring program has been deferred. The delivery of a succession planning toolkit for an increasingly ageing workforce has not been completed.
- 5.59 The *Review of the TCCS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023* found that there was a need for a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse employee network and better support for neurodivergent employees. It was resolved to establish an Inclusion Committee to meet

quarterly throughout 2024. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate had not implemented these measures at the time of audit fieldwork.

Training

5.60 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate Onboarding Checklist identified training courses as mandatory in the first month of an employee's employment. These are shown in Table 5-2 and diversity, equity and inclusion related courses are indicated in italics.

Table 5-2 Mandatory training listed in the TCCS Onboarding Checklist

For all TCCS Employees	For all managers and supervisors	SOGC Level (equivalent and above)
TCCS Induction	Domestic and Family Violence Managers Training	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training</i>
Fraud and Ethics	<i>Let's Talk Disability – Disability Awareness</i>	
Security Awareness	Work Health and Safety – Manager Training	
<i>Respect Equity and Diversity and Code of Conduct</i>		
Work Health and Safety		
Domestic and Family Violence Foundation Training		

Source: TCCS Onboarding Checklist, page 4.

5.61 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's *2023-24 Annual Report* reported that the implementation of mandatory training requirements resulted in a five percent increase in training completions from 81 percent in 2022-23 to 86 percent in 2023-24.

5.62 Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate data indicates that in the last five years, 3,874 staff have completed the *Respect, Equity and Diversity and Code of Conduct* online course and a further 539 staff have completed the modules face-to-face. Sixty-four staff have completed the face-to-face *Let's Talk Disability – Disability Awareness* course and 232 staff have completed the face-to-face *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training*.

5.63 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate set performance targets for training specified in its *People Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy* and *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan*. A summary of the training applicable to different employment groups is shown in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 Training targets for different groups within the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

TCCS Employees	TCCS Senior Officers and Executive	RAP Working Group Members	Executive Sponsors and Network Members	Managers
<p>Make diversity training available to all employees</p> <p>All TCCS employees offered Talented Inclusion and Diversity Employees (TIDE) suite of training</p> <p>25% of TCCS employees complete face-to-face full-day cultural awareness training (by May, annually in 2024, 2025 and 2026)</p> <p>25% of TCCS employees complete online or in person full-day (or two half-day) cultural awareness training (by May, annually in 2024, 2025 and 2026)</p>	<p>Make diversity training mandatory for SOGC and above/or equivalent employees</p> <p>99% of Senior Officers and Executive complete face-to-face full-day cultural awareness training (by May, annually in 2024, 2025 and 2026)</p>	<p>100% of RAP Working Group Members complete face-to-face full-day cultural awareness training (by May, annually in 2024, 2025 and 2026)</p>	<p>Compulsory TIDE training</p>	<p>TIDE training included in Performance Development Plans for managers.</p>

Source: TCCS People Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

TIDE Training

- 5.64 The Talented Inclusion and Diversity Employees (TIDE) suite of training includes eight training modules relevant to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, people with disability and LGBTIQ+ employees. It also included training courses on inclusive and equitable recruitment practices.
- 5.65 TIDE training is compulsory for Executive Sponsors and network members and is included in Performance Development Plans for managers. Once completed, acknowledgment of being a TIDE accredited employee is included in signature blocks.

Emergency Services Agency

5.66 The Emergency Services Agency has advised that eligible staff are encouraged to participate in two staff networks hosted by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate:

- a network for people with disability, carers of people with disability and allies (the Our Abilities Staff Network); and
- a network for people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (the First Nations Staff Network).

5.67 Both networks seek to provide opportunities for peer support and informal mentor discussions.

5.68 The *2024-2027 ESA Strategic Plan* states that the Emergency Services Agency is aiming to revitalise the Women in Emergency Services program and provide:

Matching initiatives for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including First Nations peoples, people with disabilities, and people from the LGBTI community.

5.69 ACT Fire and Rescue has an Indigenous Advisory Group which provides advice to the Chief Officer on cultural content and issues relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff. In 2024, for example, the Indigenous Advisory Group proposed that rank insignia displaying Indigenous art be created and worn by all ACT Fire and Rescue ranked staff during Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks. An individual who was both a member of the Indigenous Advisory Group and an ACT Fire and Rescue firefighter was engaged to design the artwork. The rank insignia were created and worn as a visible sign of ACT Fire and Rescue's commitment to the JACS Reconciliation Action Plan and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Priority Reform 3 'Transforming Government Organisations'.

Training

5.70 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate Factsheet on *Priority Training* outlines which training courses apply to categories of staff. Training on the RED Framework and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training are listed as a priority only for new staff, those who have not undertaken such training and staff who are seeking a refresher. (The 2018 Justice and Community Safety Directorate Factsheet on the *Application Process for Training Provided Centrally and by the ACTPS Training Calendar*, which states that training on the RED Framework and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness is mandatory for *all* JACS employees.) Following the Training Needs Analysis project conducted by the directorate in the first half of 2025, training on the RED Framework, ACTPS Values and Code of Conduct have been identified by the directorate as mandatory and 'required by policy and statutory obligations'.

- 5.71 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate tracks staff completion of diversity, equity and inclusion courses. These courses include Respect, Equity and Diversity and Code of Conduct training and Cultural Awareness Training. According to Justice and Community Safety Directorate data, the completion of diversity, equity and inclusion training by Emergency Services Agency staff for 2023-24 was at its lowest point in four years, with 109 completions in 2023-24 (compared with 160 completions in 2022-23, 602 completions in 2021-22 and 284 completions in 2020-21). On 30 June 2025, there were 155 completions.
- 5.72 The Justice and Community Safety Directorate organises and offers several optional diversity, equity and inclusion-related training activities to staff. Table 5-4 shows the number of Emergency Services Agency staff participants in these activities since 2021.

Table 5-4 Emergency Services Agency staff attendance at diversity, equity and inclusion-related training

	2021	2022	2023	2024
White Cane Day and World Sight Day Webinar	Not recorded			
Autism and Neurodiversity Awareness Training (delivered by David Smith, Employ for Ability)		2 participants		
JACS and Canberra Blind Society Mentor Program			1 participant	
AHRI Diversity and Inclusion Conference			1 participant	
Indigenous Awareness Training			2 participants	
ANZSOG Working with First Nations: Delivering on the Priority Reforms program			6 participants	
'Our Neuro-Verse': Understanding ADHD, Executive Functioning and Workplace Adjustments' Webinar				4 participants

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Emergency Services Agency.



- 5.73 Targeted training and career development pathways equip employees with the skills and opportunities needed to grow within an organisation. This approach fosters engagement, satisfaction and loyalty and creates a cohesive employee experience that promotes retention. The three agencies considered as part of the audit provide a variety of training and development opportunities to their employees. The nature of the training and development opportunities has necessarily varied across the agencies, depending on each agency's staffing cohort, focus and priorities.

Appendix A: Glossary

This Appendix provides a glossary of key diversity and inclusion terms, and an overview of the diversity groups referred to in the report.

Table A-1 Diversity and inclusion terms

Term	Meaning
Belonging	Belonging is an emotion a person experiences when they are: a) connected to a group of others; and b) also recognised and valued for their uniqueness within that group. A feeling of belonging is a foundational human need . Many people become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety and even clinical depression when they do not feel they belong.
Disability	Disability is any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months. This wording is used in HR21 but not in other contexts where the information is collected.
Discrimination	Unjust or prejudicial treatment of people, on the grounds of a protected attribute such as age; race; or gender. Indirect discrimination is when a rule or policy that is the same for everyone has an unfair effect on people who share a protected attribute.
Diversity	The representation of people in our organisation (or in society) with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance. Diversity is a fact, based on recognised demographic groupings such as age, gender etc.
Equality	The quality or state of being equal such as having the same rights, social status etc as other people.
Equity	Recognises individual difference and provides different resources and opportunities to achieve a fair outcome.
Gender	Gender: a social and cultural concept about differences in identity, expression and experience. ABS recommended gender descriptors are man; woman; non-binary; or a free text option entitled 'I use another term'.
Inclusion	Workforce inclusion is the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes such as access to information and resources, involvement in work groups, and ability to influence the decision-making process.
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class and gender are regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
Respect	Respect in the ACTPS means treating others with the sensitivity, courtesy and understanding we would wish for ourselves, and recognising that everyone has something to offer.
Sex	Sex: a person's sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. A person may choose to change their sex over their lifetime. Some people do not have a sex of male or female recorded at birth. ABS terms to describe sex are male; female; and a range of intersex variations which are better collected via a free text option entitled 'I use another term'.

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on ACT Government, *Beyond RED – Respect, Equity and Diversity*, December 2021.

Table A-2 Diversity groups

Diversity group	Definition	Source of definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and is accepted as such by the community in which they live or formerly lived.	<i>ACTPS Inclusive Terminology Guide</i> , July 2024, p.7.
Culturally and linguistically diverse	A collection of personal identity factors such as languages spoken or county of birth. Term is used throughout ACTPS reporting. Better practice recommends additional information be collected on cultural background, ethnicity and faith.	ACT Government, <i>Beyond RED – Respect, Equity and Diversity</i> , December 2021, p.4.
LGBTIQA+	A respectful term to represent a wide range of identities, including but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual, aromantic, agender, non-binary and pansexual individuals. However, there is no single experience or narrative that captures what it means to be part of the LGBTIQA+ communities. The terms used provide a common language, but they cannot encompass the full breadth and complexity of individual identities and experiences.	<i>ACTPS Inclusive Terminology Guide</i> , July 2024, p.10.
Neurodivergent person	Neurodivergent (ND) means having a brain that works differently from what is considered 'standard' by society i.e. neurotypical (NT). About one in ten people in the Australian workforce are estimated to be neurodivergent. Neurodivergence is the state of being neurodivergent. It can be something you're born with, such as autism or dyslexia, or it can happen because of experiences including trauma or brain injury, or a mix of both.	<i>ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub: Neurodiversity, neurodivergence and neuroinclusion</i> (accessed 16 May 2025)
Older worker	Older workers are described as those over the age of 60.	ACT Government, <i>Beyond RED – Respect, Equity and Diversity</i> , December 2021.
Person with disability	An individual with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various social, physical, and ideological barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.	<i>ACTPS Inclusive Terminology Guide</i> , July 2024, p.11.
Veteran	An individual who is a current or former member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).	<i>ACTPS Inclusive Terminology Guide</i> , July 2024, p.12.
Woman	A gender identity that is understood and expressed through labels such as pronouns, appearance and expression. Women are considered to be historically underserved in the workplace (compared to men) due to a range of social standards and expectations that apply.	ACT Government, <i>Beyond RED – Respect, Equity and Diversity</i> , December 2021, p.4.
Younger worker	Younger workers are described as those under the age of 24.	ACT Government, <i>Beyond RED – Respect, Equity and Diversity</i> , December 2021, p.4.

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on ACT Government, *Beyond RED – Respect, Equity and Diversity*, December 2021; *ACTPS Inclusive Terminology Guide*, July 2024; *ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub: Neurodiversity, neurodivergence and neuroinclusion* (accessed 16 May 2025).

Appendix B: Summary of agency assessment

Table B-1 Better practice report card

DEI better practice	ED	TCCS	ESA
Agency engages with diversity groups in developing DEI strategies and action plans?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency engages with diversity groups in implementing DEI strategies and action plans?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency is actively seeking to attract diverse employees?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency has set agency-specific employment targets for diversity groups?	Yes	Yes	No
Agency utilises employee value propositions?	No	Yes	No
Agency has mandatory DEI training for selection panel members?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency is taking action to improve recruitment processes and reduce bias?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency provides onboarding support to diversity groups?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency offers tailored mentoring and career development opportunities for diversity groups?	No	No	No
Agency has mandatory and regular DEI training for staff?	Yes	Yes	No
Agency has mandatory and regular DEI training requirements for managers and supervisors?	No	Yes	No
Agency assesses the impact of its DEI activities?	No	Yes	No
Agency has REDCOs and conducts regular RED Network meetings?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency collects and tracks data on RED contacts?	Yes	No	No
Agency takes follow-up action on RED contacts?	No	No	No
Agency has an exit survey?	Yes	Yes	No
Agency analyses exit survey results and reports to Executive?	Yes	Yes	No
Agency has an employee survey?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency takes effective action in response to employee survey?	No	No	No
Agency effectively utilises available data (e.g. from EAP)?	No	No	No

Source: ACT Audit Office.

Education Directorate

The Education Directorate is the second largest directorate in the ACTPS with a total headcount of 8,962 staff (including 4,068 teachers) on 30 June 2025.

Table B-2 shows the workforce profile of the Education Directorate.

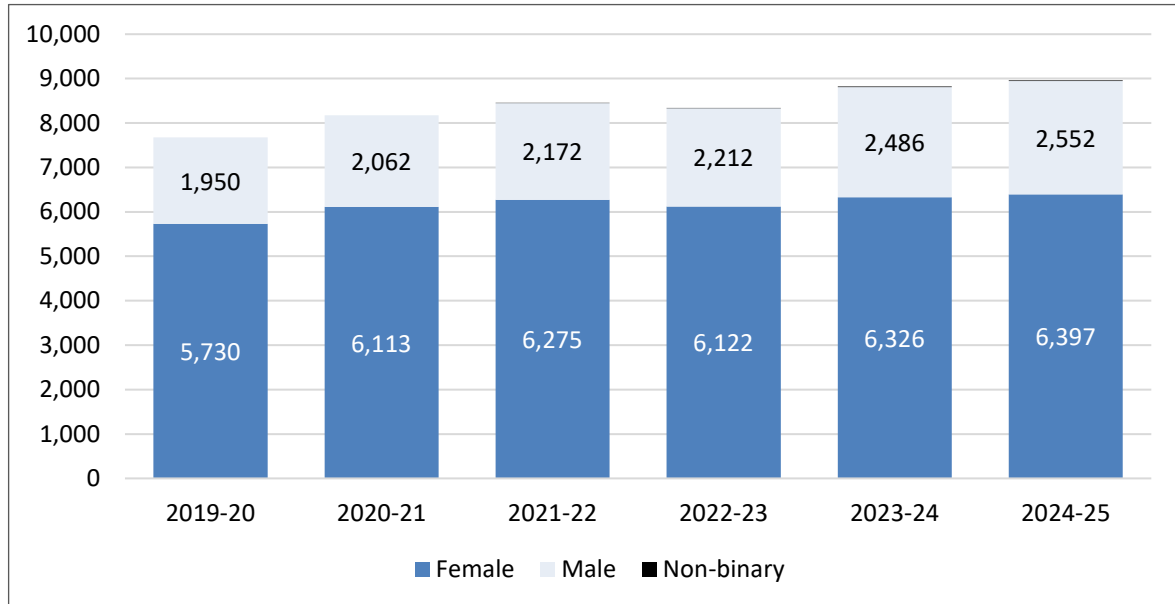
Table B-2 Education Directorate workforce profile

Profile	Data on 30 June 2025
Total headcount	8,962 staff (4,068 teachers)
Gender segregation	Yes - 71.4% female
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	2.0%
People with disability	2.7%
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	16.6%
Gender pay gap (for Directorate)	-4.2%
Gender pay gap for LGBTIQ+	Nil data (16.6% on 30 June 2024)
Gender pay gap for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Nil data (10% on 30 June 2024)
Gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	Nil data (1.8% on 30 June 2024)

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Education Directorate.

Figure B-1 shows the headcount by gender in the Education Directorate on 30 June of each year between 2020 and 2025.

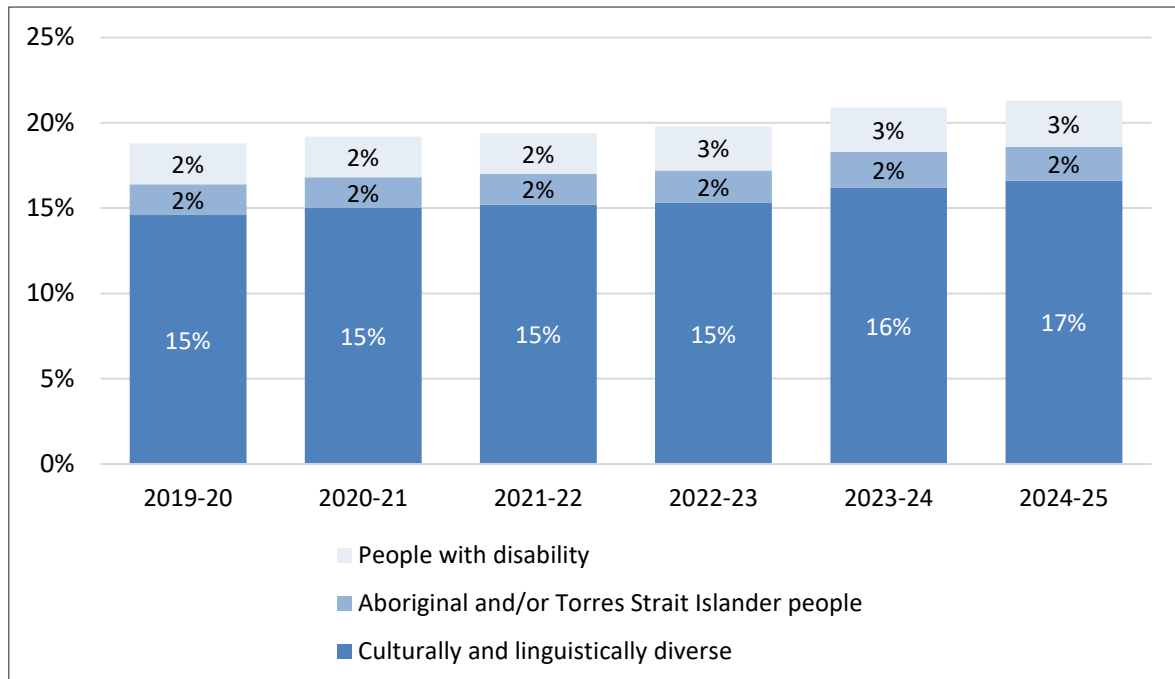
Figure B-1 Education Directorate headcount by gender (2020 to 2025)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Education Directorate and Education Directorate Annual Reports.

Figure B-2 shows the proportion of selected diversity groups in the Education Directorate on 30 June of each year between 2020 and 2025.

Figure B-2 Education Directorate proportion of diversity groups (2020 to 2025)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Education Directorate and Education Directorate Annual Reports.

Table B-3 shows strategies and plans in place for the Education Directorate relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Table B-3 Education Directorate strategies and plans

Diversity group	Title of plan/strategy	Status
All	<i>The Future of Education - an ACT education strategy for the next ten years 2018-2028</i> <i>Education Strategic Plan 2022-2025</i>	Current
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2024-2027</i> <i>Statement of Commitment to Cultural Integrity</i>	Current
Gender	<i>Gender Equity Action Plan 2024-29</i>	Draft
People with disability	<i>Access and Inclusion Employment Action Plan 2024-27</i>	Draft
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Nil	N/A
LGBTIQ+	Nil	N/A
Veterans	Nil	N/A
Neurodivergent people	Nil	N/A
Older workers	Nil	N/A
Younger workers	Nil	N/A

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Education Directorate.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

On 30 June 2025, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) had 2,551 staff. The Directorate had a high percentage of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds within its workforce (26.1 percent on 30 June 2025). The Directorate also had a high percentage of older workers. On 30 June 2025, over 30 percent of the staff (770 headcount) were aged 55 and over.

Table B-4 shows the workforce profile for the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

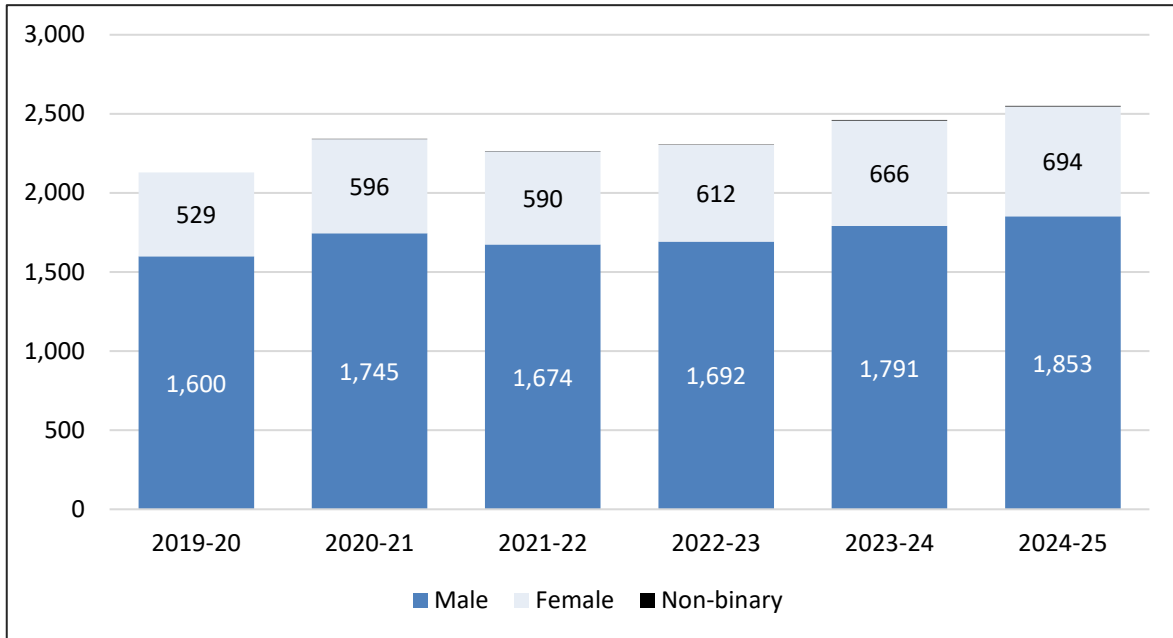
Table B-4 Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate workforce profile

Profile	Data on 30 June 2025
Total headcount	2,551 staff
Gender segregation	Yes - 73% male
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	2.9%
People with disability	4.4%
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	26.1%
Gender pay gap (for Directorate)	-11.5%
Gender pay gap for LGBTIQ+	Nil data
Gender pay gap for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Nil data
Gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	Nil data

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Figure B-3 shows the headcount by gender in the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate on 30 June of each year between 2020 and 2025.

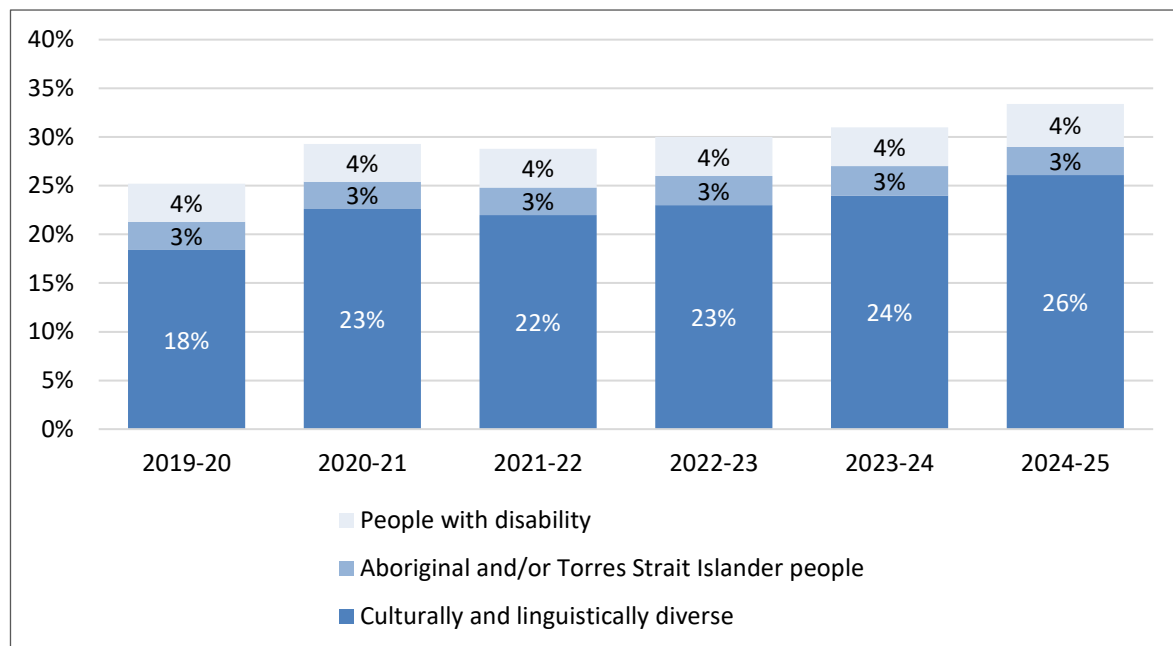
Figure B-3 Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate headcount by gender (2020 to 2025)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate *Annual Reports 2019-20 to 2024-25*.

Figure B-4 shows the proportion of selected diversity groups in the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate on 30 June of each year between 2020 and 2025.

Figure B-4 Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate proportion of diversity groups (2020 to 2025)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate *Annual Reports 2019-20 to 2024-25*.

Table B-5 shows strategies and plans in place for the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Table B-5 Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate strategies and plans

Diversity group	Title of plan/strategy	Status
All	<i>TCCS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (extended to 2025)</i> <i>TCCS People Strategy 2019-2023 (extended to 2025)</i> <i>Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy</i>	Current
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	<i>Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026</i> <i>Cultural Integrity Framework 2024-2025 Action Plan</i>	Current
Gender	<i>Gender Action Plan</i>	Current
People with disability	Nil	N/A
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Nil	N/A
LGBTIQ+	<i>Pride Network Action Plan 2024</i>	Current
Veterans	<i>Veterans Network Action Plan 2024</i>	Current
Neurodivergent people	Nil	N/A
Older workers	Nil	N/A
Younger workers	Nil	N/A

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Emergency Services Agency

The Emergency Services Agency (ESA) is the largest of the 17 divisions within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS). It has been a division of the Directorate since 2006. It has four operational services (ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Rural Fire Service and the ACT State Emergency Service) and is supported by ESA Enabling Services. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate's *2024-25 Annual Report* indicates that on 19 June 2025, ESA had a headcount of 989 staff and 1,476 volunteers, making a total workforce of 2,465 people.

Table B-6 shows the workforce profile of the Emergency Services Agency.

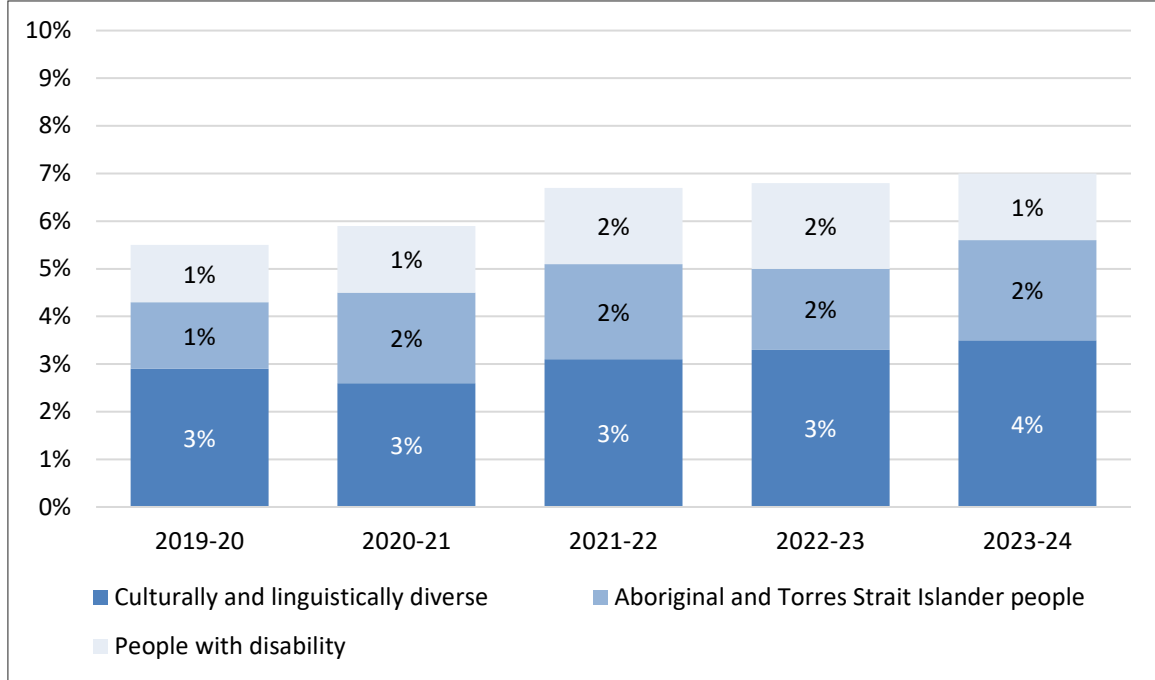
Table B-6 Emergency Services Agency workforce profile

Profile	JACS data in June 2025	ESA data in September 2024
Total Headcount	2,465 (including 989 staff and 1,476 volunteers)	2,514 (including 950 staff and 1,564 volunteers)
Gender segregation	Yes – 68% male	Yes – 69% male
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (for Directorate)	3.4%	1.7%
People with disability (for Directorate)	4.2%	N/A
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for Directorate)	12.1%	29.7%
Gender pay gap (for Directorate)	-9.5%	N/A
Gender pay gap for LGBTIQ+	Nil data	Nil data
Gender pay gap for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Nil data	Nil data
Gender pay gap for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (Directorate)	2.3%	Nil data

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Figure B-5 shows the proportion of selected diversity groups in the Emergency Services Agency on 30 June of each year between 2020 and 2024.

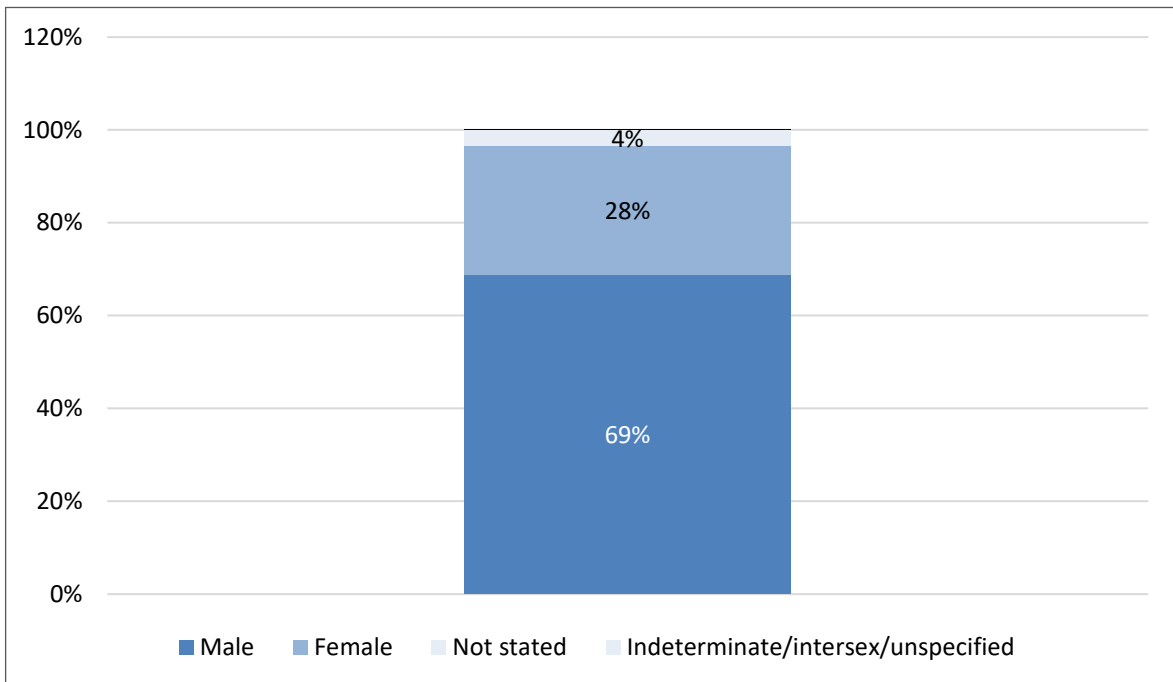
Figure B-5 Emergency Services Agency proportion of diversity groups (2020 to 2024)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Figure B-6 shows the Emergency Services Agency workforce proportion by gender.

Figure B-6 Emergency Services Agency headcount by gender (September 2024)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Emergency Services Agency.

Table B-7 shows strategies and plans in place for the Emergency Services Agency relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Table B-7 Emergency Services Agency strategies and plans

Diversity group	Title of plan/strategy	Status
All	<i>JACS Workforce Inclusion and Diversity Statement of Commitment</i>	Current
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2021-2022 and Guideline</i> <i>Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025</i>	Lapsed Current
Gender	<i>JACS Gender Action Plan 2024-2028</i> <i>Women in Emergency Services Strategy</i>	Current Lapsed
People with disability	<i>JACS 'Our abilities' Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2022-24</i>	Lapsed
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Nil	N/A
LGBTIQ+	Nil	N/A
Veterans	Nil	N/A
Neurodivergent people	Nil	N/A
Older workers	Nil	N/A
Younger workers	Nil	N/A

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on information provided by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Audit reports

Reports Published in 2025-26	
Report No. 07 – 2025	2024-25 Financial Audit Program – Overall Results
Report No. 06 – 2025	Annual Report 2024-25
Report No. 05 – 2025	Specialist assessment services for dementia and cognitive decline
Reports Published in 2024-25	
Report No. 04 – 2025	Gaming machine licensee regulation
Report No. 03 - 2025	ACT Government long-term plans and strategies
Report No. 02 - 2025	Energy efficiency standard for rental properties
Report No. 01 - 2025	Management of the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program
Report No. 14 - 2024	Facilities management and support services for ACT Courts
Report No. 13 - 2024	Invoicing and payments for Digital Health Record hosting services
Report No. 12 - 2024	2023-24 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings
Report No. 11 - 2024	Governing boards of selected ACT Government entities
Report No. 10 - 2024	Safer Families Levy
Report No. 09 - 2024	2023-24 Financial Audits – Overview
Report No. 08 - 2024	Annual Report 2023-24
Report No. 07 - 2024	Reusable Facility Services Procurement
Report No. 06 - 2024	Business Transformation Program: ICT renewal activities
Reports Published in 2023-24	
Report No. 05 - 2024	Management and oversight of ACT Policing services
Report No. 04 - 2024	Planning and delivery of services for young people with moderate to severe mental health illness
Report No. 03 - 2024	Management of the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program
Report No. 02 - 2024	Management of key contracts under A Step Up For Our Kids
Report No. 01 - 2024	Urban Tree Management
Report No. 11 - 2023	2022-23 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings
Report No. 10 - 2023	Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS) Program
Report No. 09 - 2023	2022-23 Financial Audits Overview
Report No. 08 - 2023	Supports for students with disability in ACT public schools
Report No. 07 - 2023	Annual Report 2022-23
Report No. 06 - 2023	Implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement
Report No. 05 - 2023	Activities of the Government Procurement Board

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