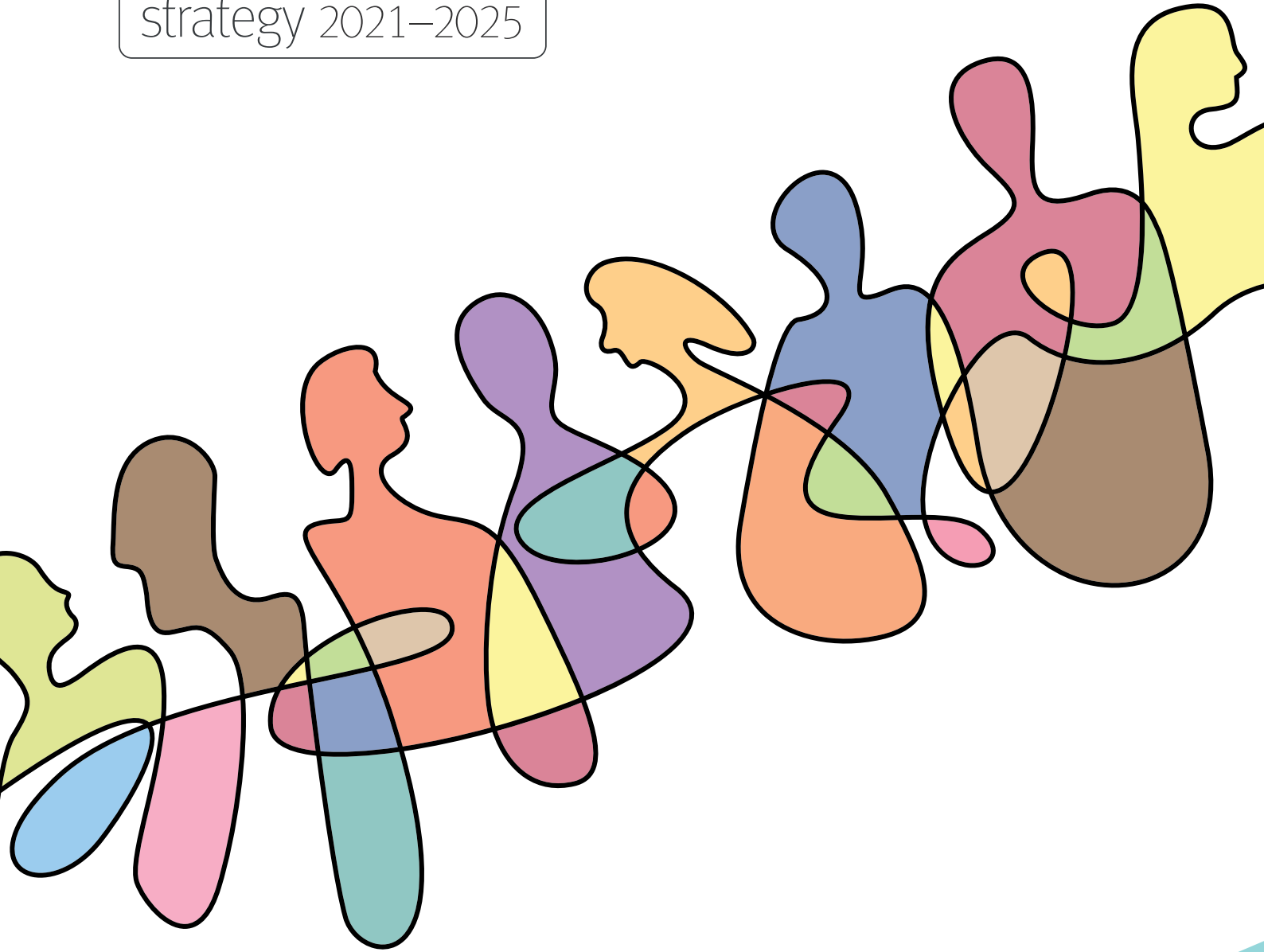


Queensland public sector

Inclusion and diversity

strategy 2021–2025



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Acknowledgement:

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors—our First Nations peoples—gives strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

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An electronic version of this document is available at forgov.qld.gov.au/inclusion-and-diversity-commitment.



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Introduction

The Queensland public sector’s (the sector) vision for inclusion and diversity is a public sector for all, where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

This is a vision for all, especially groups in our community who may be under-represented in the workforce and seek more equitable opportunity. This includes, but is not limited to:

- women
- people with disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- the LGBTIQ+ community
- young people
- older people.

The *Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2021–2025* (the strategy) recognises the intersectionality between these and other diverse communities and aims to drive safety, respect and inclusion in Queensland Government workplaces for every person.

The risks of workplaces that are not diverse are recognised and understood. However, diversity alone does not guarantee better organisational culture and performance.



The sector must leverage the experiences and perspectives of all employees to create inclusive workplaces.

Addressing systemic inequity and building inclusive workplace cultures begins with a willingness to be open to different perspectives.

Inclusive and diverse workplaces have employees who are engaged, productive and effective. Organisations that can harness the complementary strengths of their workforce are known to be high-performing.

Moreover, individual respect must be a central value in how we provide public services to a diverse and ever-changing community. As Queensland’s largest and most diverse employer, the sector:

- is uniquely placed to make a positive contribution to inclusion and diversity in the wider community
- has committed to systemic change to create more inclusive and diverse workplace cultures where every employee can thrive.



Although focus areas continue to evolve, the sector remains strongly committed to inclusion and diversity, as evidenced through the work of various sector-wide groups and the strategies they have implemented to date.

The sector’s inclusion and diversity landscape is complex with multiple agencies responsible for the delivery of various inclusion and diversity activities. Creating sector-wide systemic change relies on a strong ecosystem of leaders, champions and complex governance arrangements to drive changes and continuously improve.

There is more that unites us than divides us. Our shared common ideals of public service, making a difference, and having healthy and productive working lives unite us all in service to the community. How this looks for each person might be different, but the basic tenets of safety, respect and inclusion are core values that each of us must foster and build for and with each other.

This strategy encapsulates our responsibilities as leaders and individuals to drive this change and build a public sector for all.

A Queensland public sector for all,

where everyone feels safe,
respected and included.



Five-year progress

Since the release of the sector’s first *Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2015–2020* significant progress has been made towards inclusive and diverse workplaces by taking purposeful action to drive sector-wide cultural change, through:

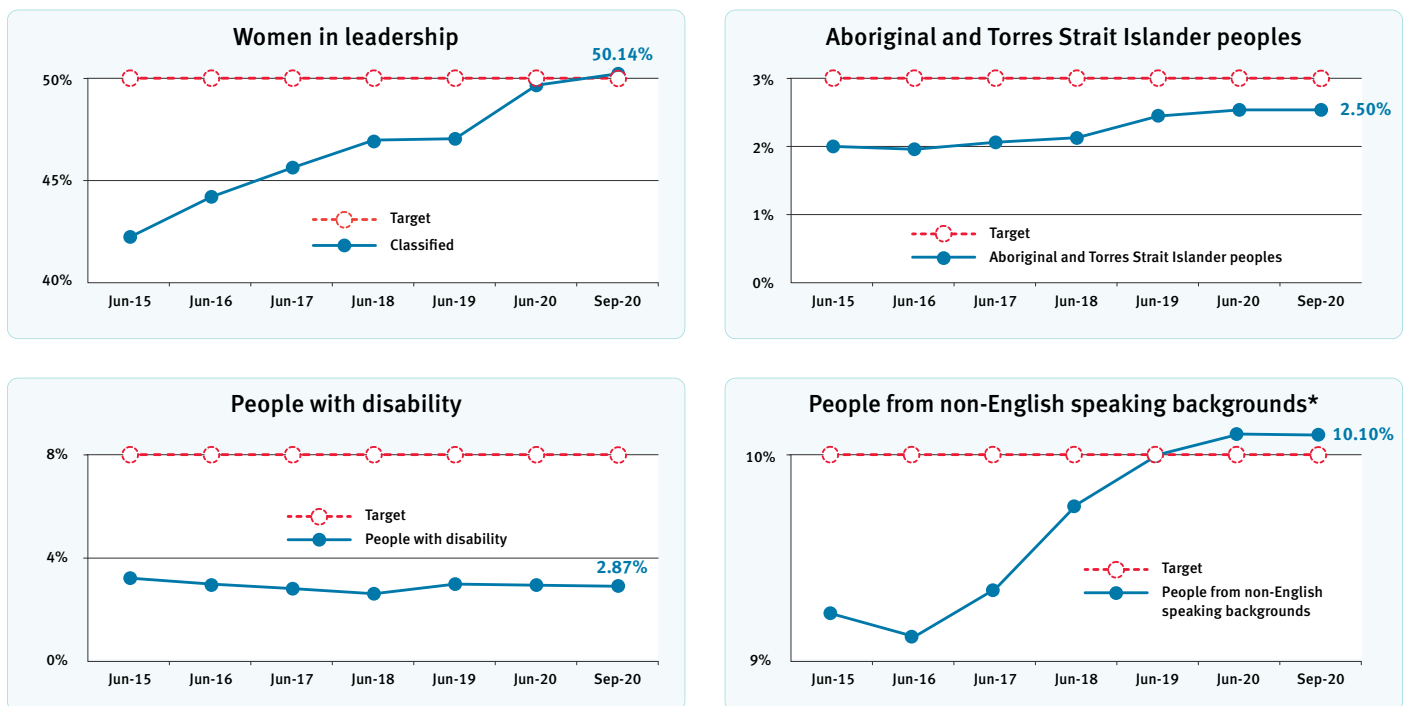
- flagship initiatives such as rainbow lanyards, census days to improve data reliability, a review of gender pay equity, and the revision of the Paid parental leave directive 05/20
- career pathways initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as for young people, people in late careers and veterans.

These initiatives point to the creativity the Queensland public sector can bring to embedding more inclusive and diverse workforces.

They also work to drive change through key groups, including the:

- Inclusion Champions of Change
- LGBTIQ+ Steering Committee
- Inclusion and Diversity Community of Practice
- Cultural Agency Leaders Group.

Figure 1 - Diversity targets progress



* Commencing in 2021-22, the data on people from non-English speaking backgrounds will be replaced by data on people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The transformative actions driven by these groups and by all Queensland public servants who support inclusion and diversity, continue to be critical in building a public service for all, where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

Diversity targets

Understanding the demographic makeup of our workforce helps foster strategies that attract and retain people from diverse backgrounds. Sector-wide diversity targets for the following groups are included in Chief Executive Leadership Board member’s performance agreements:

- women in leadership
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people with disability
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Figure 1 illustrates that diversity targets are progressing steadily in the right direction, with exception to employment of people with disability which has decreased. Establishing specific strategies to improve representation and the employment experience of people with disability will occur through the *Disabling the barriers implementation plan*.



Inclusion measures

Inclusion is more difficult to measure than diversity as it is embedded in organisational culture and the extent to which a person feels safe, respected and included. The sector-wide Working for Queensland survey includes a series of questions to gauge employee opinion of inclusion. Survey results show:

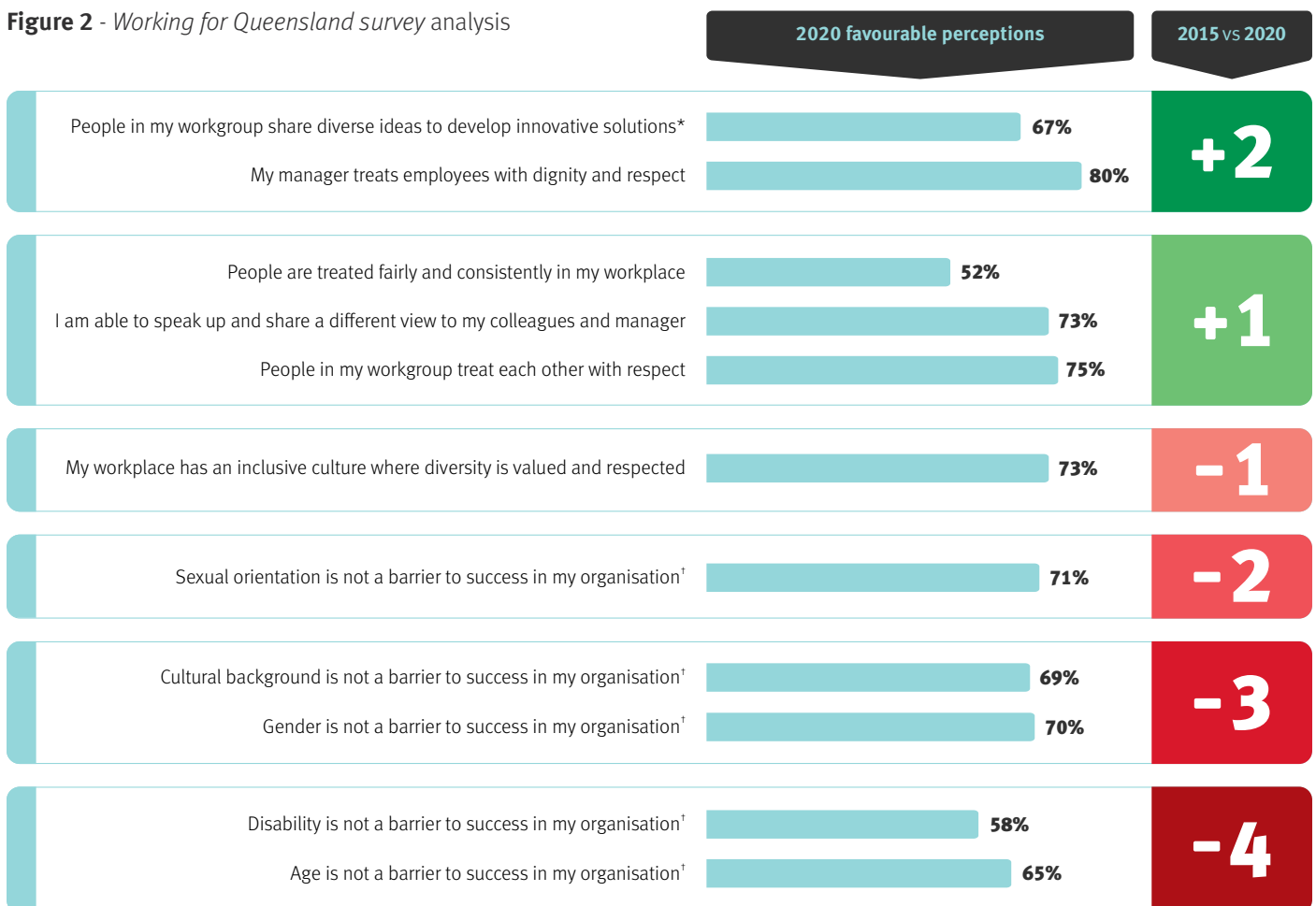
- there have been minor increases in measures of respect and fairness over the past five years
- almost three out of four respondents believe people in their workgroup are treated with respect, and four out of five respondents believe their manager treats employees with dignity and respect
- one half of respondents believe people are treated fairly and consistently in their workplace, representing an area for improvement

- the perception of fair and consistent treatment among employees is an element within the organisational fairness factor, which is traditionally one of the lower scoring factors in the survey.

Although approximately three quarters of respondents believe their workplace has an inclusive culture, there has been little movement on this indicator. However, both indicators of the ability to speak up and share different views, and of sharing diverse ideas to develop innovative solutions, have improved over the period since 2017 by 2 percentage points.*

All five measures that speak to the diversity of backgrounds and the extent to which people feel these are barriers† to success have decreased in positive responses over the past five years. However, the proposition that disability is not a barrier to success continues to receive the least favourable responses.

Figure 2 - Working for Queensland survey analysis

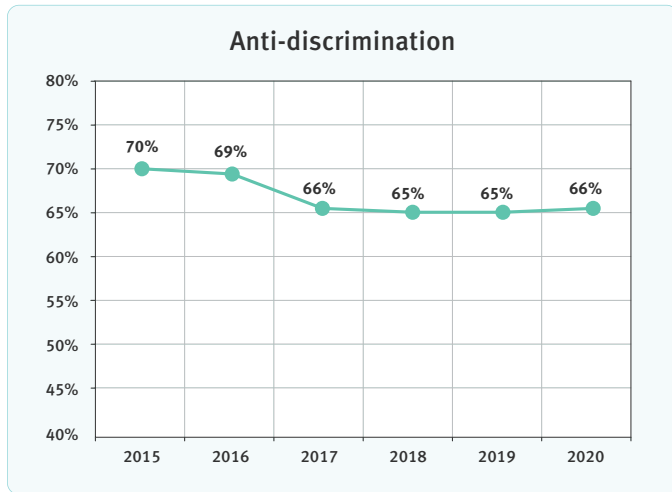


* Data for these questions are only available from 2017. Comparison is from 2017 to 2020.



The anti-discrimination factor—one of the key indices in the annual survey data—has improved by one percentage point in 2020, the first improvement since 2016.

Figure 3 - Anti-discrimination factor over time



Statistical analysis shows there is a strong correlation with employee opinions about whether management models the behaviours expected of staff and that complaints will be taken seriously.

By working on these issues, we can positively influence outcomes for organisational fairness, which is important for visible leadership and creating a safe work environment for all employees.

Emerging trends

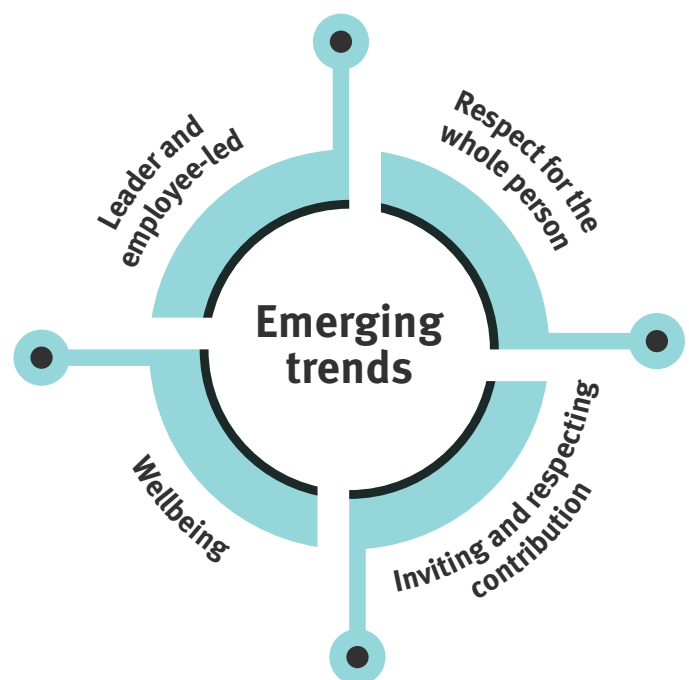
Today’s workforce and the community we serve is more complex and diverse than ever.

Organisational approaches to help people feel valued and welcome in the workplace have evolved from the language and constructs of equality of employment opportunity (EEO). This shift is from an emphasis on redressing past discrimination in the workplace and establishing a more level playing field – to an approach that seeks to embed and integrate inclusive cultures in our work and workplaces.

Central to this shift is the principle that inclusion and diversity is everyone’s responsibility coupled with an emphasis on respect for the dignity of each unique individual as a part of our collective humanity.

This approach seeks to proactively engage diverse and dissenting voices and ensure they are respected and included in planning and decision making. By building and embedding inclusive cultures and fostering a sense of wellbeing, everyone can contribute and thrive.

Contemporary approaches look beyond individual characteristics to bring people together in ways that can promote a greater sense of belonging. This approach seeks to strengthen linkages to public purpose work and help people consider how they can uniquely contribute. Emerging trends and contemporary approaches incorporated in this next generation inclusion and diversity strategy include:



1. Respect for the whole person

There is recognition that a broad range of perspectives, approaches and ideas makes us a stronger, more creative public sector, better able to engage with and serve the community.

While traditional approaches to diversity focused on a person’s visible characteristics, contemporary approaches recognise the whole person and actively foster the less visible aspects of diversity.

This requires a more nuanced approach to the full range of human diversity that resists labels. It recognises the unique blend of identities, backgrounds and experiences that each person brings to a task. It goes beyond EEO and affirmative action approaches to prioritise realising everyone’s full potential.



2. Inviting and respecting contribution

There is growing recognition that when people feel they can be themselves and speak freely they are more likely to feel connected to a shared purpose and psychologically safe. This enables the organisation and its people to grow, learn and adapt in a safe environment.

Organisations that proactively engage diverse and dissenting voices in healthy and respectful dialogue, and ensure employees and stakeholders are respected and included in planning and decision making, can build momentum around shared goals and values.

Creating a culture where everyone can contribute to their full potential requires examining systems and processes to design the conditions that promote inclusion in everything we do.

3. Wellbeing

In the workplace, wellbeing and the extent to which a person feels that they belong are inextricably linked. A focus on wellbeing should also extend beyond individuals, to teams and to support the overall health of the organisation.

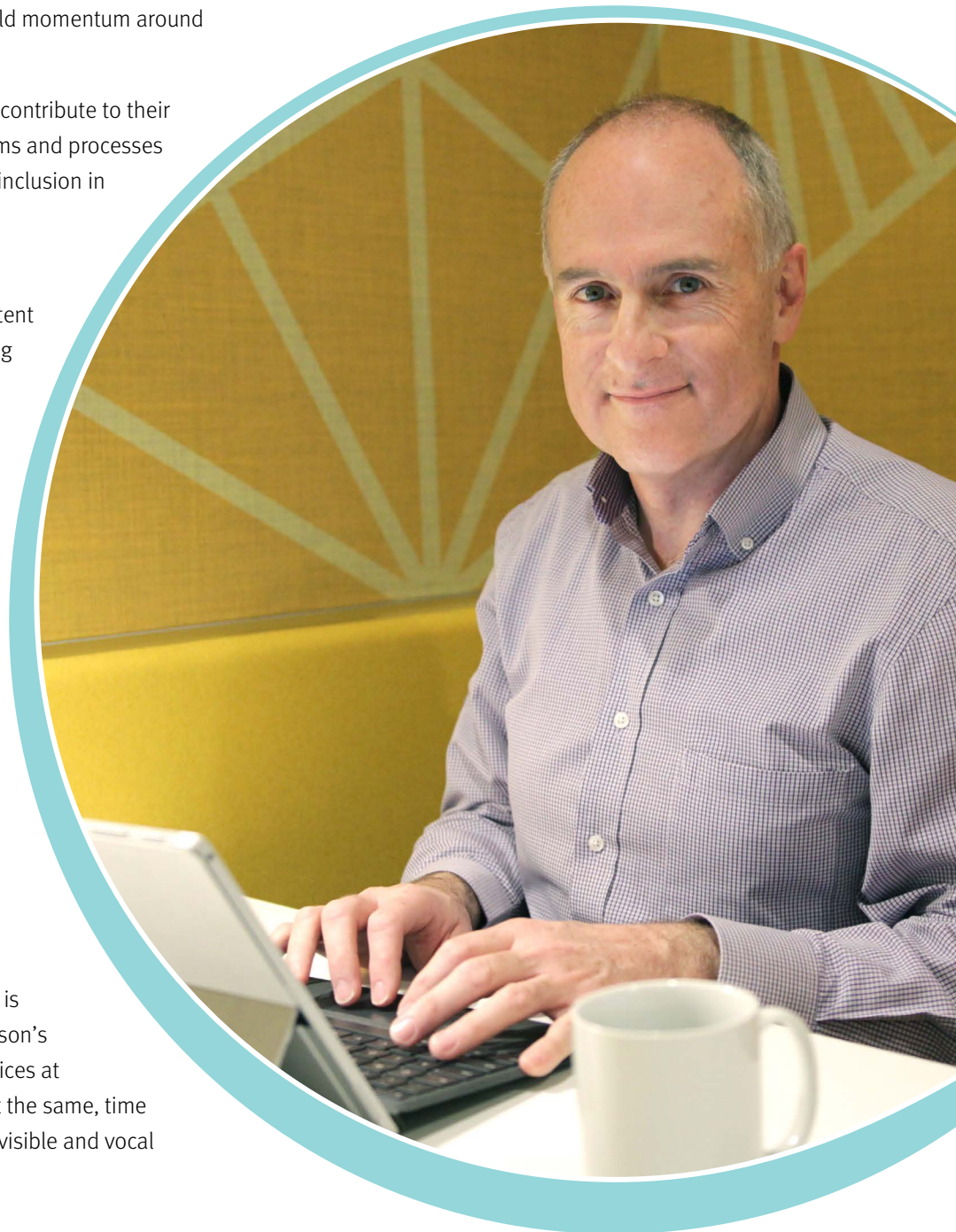
Integrating wellbeing into the design of work recognises that the organisation views employees as people, as individuals connected to communities, and not just as staff members. The sector's response to the COVID-19 health pandemic highlighted the importance of recognising wellbeing as a foundation for healthy work, for all workers, workplaces and communities.

4. Leader and employee-led

An inclusive and welcoming workplace is everyone's business, and it is each person's responsibility to ensure that diverse voices at every level are heard and respected. At the same time transformational change also requires visible and vocal leadership, commitment and buy in.

In this way inclusion and diversity become mainstream, integrated and embedded. Top-down approaches drive compliance, rather than commitment. Inclusion and diversity needs to be part of everything we do and everyone's business.

For transformational change to happen, every individual leader needs to be able to lead with empathy and compassion. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are needed to model and influence real behavioural change.



Inclusion and diversity 2021 and beyond

Vision

As Queensland’s largest and most diverse employer, the sector has a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to inclusion and diversity in our workplaces and in the wider community. The sector is purposefully working towards creating a workforce that better reflects the Queensland community we serve.

Our vision is: A Queensland public sector for all, where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

Areas of focus

The next evolution of the sector’s approach has at its core leadership, accountability and human capital management



strategies that foster inclusion and diversity. The 2021–2025 strategy aims to embed inclusion and diversity into all our work. The emphasis is on integrating inclusion and diversity into all elements of our organisation and reflecting the unique contributions, potential and needs of each employee.

These areas of focus seek to create systems and cultures that promote wellbeing and belonging and enable every employee to contribute and thrive.

1. Leadership and accountability

Inclusive, authentic and compassionate leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence are essential to addressing intractable challenges and inequities, by leading structural reforms and setting out strategies and targets. The path to lasting change starts with leaders who demonstrate their accountability for ensuring inclusive cultures, by:

- setting, reporting and delivering on diversity targets
- driving greater workforce participation of diverse groups at all levels of the organisation, including in leadership and executive roles
- creating workplaces where diverse voices are heard and contribute to influence outcomes and decisions at every level of the organisation
- ensuring people feel safe to voice dissent and add value by offering their own views and perspectives
- monitoring the Working for Queensland inclusion index at sector and agency level, and driving organisational improvement activities
- fostering inclusive and welcoming workplace cultures where people feel that they belong
- providing visible and vocal leadership, and demonstrating commitment to inclusion and diversity
- leading by example and role modelling healthy work-life balance, wellbeing strategies and a culture of belonging
- actively challenging processes or behaviours that are not inclusive.



2. Human capital investment

It remains important for organisations to foster inclusion and diversity through purposeful policy and responsive strategy design, and implementation. Supported by human resources teams and communities of practice, agencies will effect transformational change by:

- incorporating inclusion and diversity actions into strategic workforce plans, business plans and workforce policy
- developing inclusive strategies to improve the representation, retention and employee experience of people from diverse groups
- designing recruitment and selection processes that value transferable skills and lived experience, and invite, and accommodate diversity
- promoting flexible work options and blended workplaces
- prioritising wellbeing, physical and mental health for ourselves and our colleagues
- investigating improved analysis and reporting of employee’s experience of inclusion
- embedding behavioural change by ensuring quality learning and education is available to foster inclusive cultures.
- leveraging organisational strategy, business planning and internal policy making to build a shared sense of identity, values and goals to which every employee can contribute
- implementing strategies that deliver quality outcomes for multiple groups and interest areas
- fostering strong linkages to public purpose work and helping employees and stakeholders consider how they can uniquely contribute
- establishing ways of working that bring employees together to promote a greater sense of belonging, understanding and appreciation
- engaging diverse and dissenting voices so they contribute to policy, planning and decision making
- reviewing the minimum obligatory human resource information (MOHRI) specification to accommodate diversity
- ensuring mentorship programs reach across diverse groups.

3. System levers

In an environment of increasing complexity and interdependence it is more important than ever that we operate across boundaries.

Developing system level strategies requires inviting multiple people to contribute and foster multiple perspectives to resolve complex issues and contribute to decision making.

We all have a role to play in taking up opportunities to influence and impact the broader system by:

- simplifying and streamlining reporting so it focuses on outcomes
- ensuring workforce and leadership capability are designed to foster inclusion, equity and diversity
- leveraging diverse views for improved service delivery design
- working across agencies to tackle systemic issues
- ensuring safe and inclusive cultures and a workforce that is reflective of the community we serve



Performance

The Commission Chief Executive of the Public Service Commission and the CEO Leadership Board drive accountability for inclusion and diversity across the sector.

The Public Service Commission supports implementation in collaboration with the Strategic Workforce Council and the Inclusion and Diversity Community of Practice.

To gauge sector and agency performance, the following measures will be monitored:

- Diversity targets for:
 - » women in leadership
 - » Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - » people with disability
 - » people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Working for Queensland inclusion index, which comprises measures of employee perceptions of:
 - » fairness and respect
 - » valuing diversity
 - » barriers to success.



Governance, roles and responsibilities

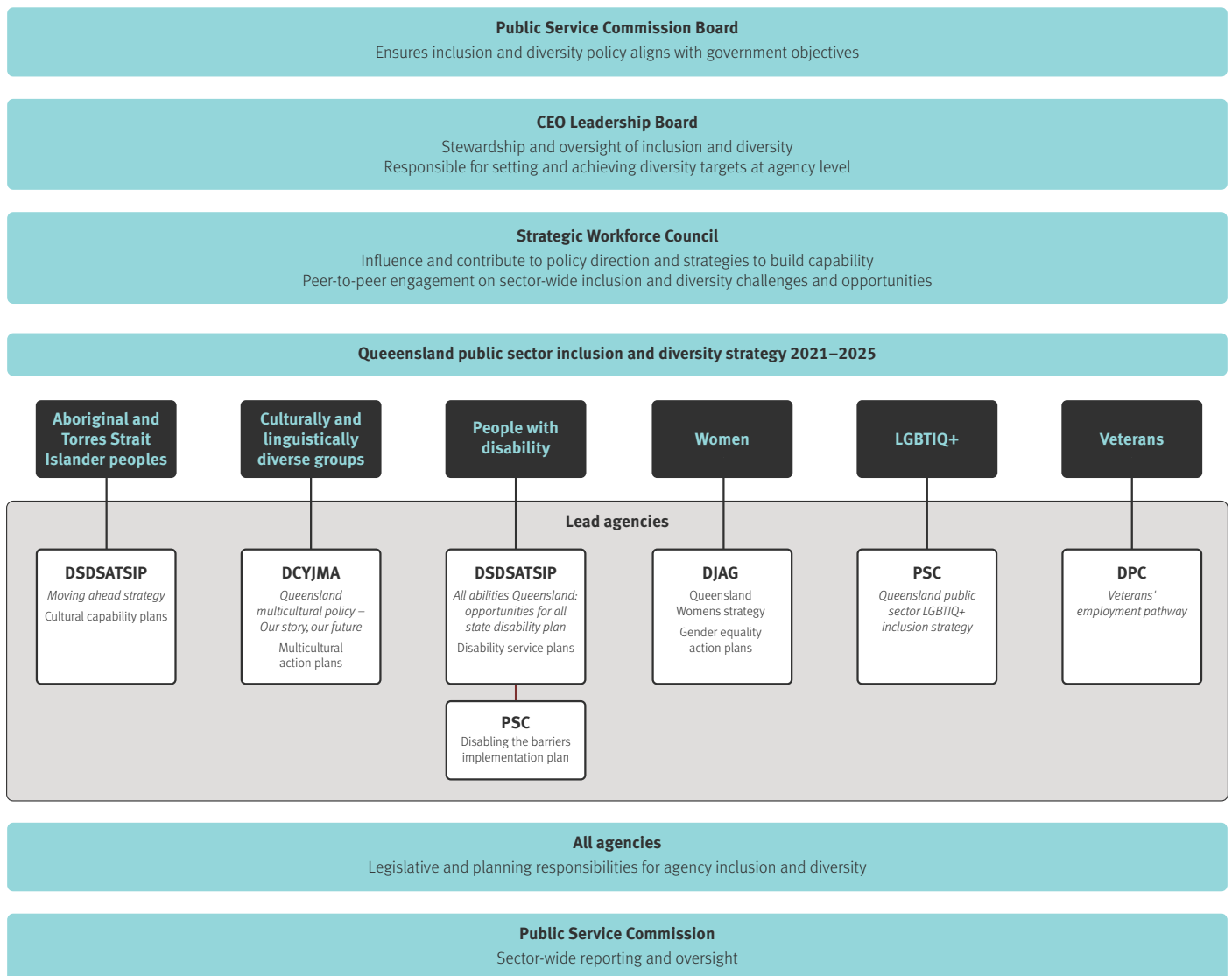
All agencies have responsibilities for inclusion and diversity through the *Public Service Act 2008*, and the agency planning requirements to:

- provide the Public Service Commission with a report about EEO actions and outcomes during each financial year (*Public Service Act 2008* section 31)
- develop, implement and publish a disability service plan (*Disability Service Act 2006* section 221) which is reviewed every three years

- ensure awareness of and publish multicultural policy and plans on their agency’s website (*Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* section 19, section 20, section 22)
- develop and implement a cultural capability action plan (*Moving Ahead Strategy* 1.6)
- develop and implement gender equality action plan (*Queensland Women’s Strategy 2016–2021*).

The sector-wide inclusion and diversity governance framework highlights high-level roles and responsibilities, including the lead agencies responsible for focused activity and reporting requirements.

Sector-wide inclusion and diversity governance framework





The *Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2021–2025* is an initiative that supports the diverse workforce strategic imperative within the *Queensland public sector 10 year human capital outlook* – creating a different workforce future by design.

An initiative of the Public Service Commission in partnership with the chief human resource officers.

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