

Department of Environment and Science

Equity and Diversity Plan 2023-2026

Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Environment and Science acknowledges the Country and people of Queensland's First Nations. We pay our respect to Elders, past and present. We acknowledge the continuous living culture of First Nations Queenslanders—their diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledge and systems. We acknowledge the deep relationship, connection and responsibility to land, sea and sky Country as an integral element of First Nations identity and culture. This Country is sacred. Everything on the land has meaning and all people are one with it. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection as central to culture and being. First Nations people speak to Country, listen to Country, sing up Country, dance up Country, understand Country and long for Country. We acknowledge and thank First Nations people for the enduring relationship connecting people, Country and ancestors—an unbreakable bond that safely stewarded and protected the land, waters and sky for thousands of generations.



A message from the Director-General

I am proud to introduce the Equity and Diversity Plan 2023-2026 for the Department of Environment and Science (DES). This plan represents a commitment from every DES employee, so that together, we can continue the good work already underway to build equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplaces.

Making equity, diversity and inclusion a priority benefits everyone. It promotes a positive and safe workplace culture, builds our reputation as an employer of choice, and helps us to attract and retain talented employees. It also helps us to understand and better represent the needs of the diverse Queensland communities that we serve.

The DES Equity and Diversity Plan has three key goals:

1. to ensure DES provides equal conditions of employment, and equity in access to employment opportunities and leadership roles;
2. to develop workforces that represent the diverse views, experiences, and backgrounds of the people of Queensland; and
3. to foster a respectful and inclusive workplace culture in which all employees feel safe, valued, accepted, and supported at work and can participate equitably; and create a workplace free from unlawful discrimination.

These goals will be achieved through the collaboration of all employees, working together to build respectful workplaces that value and support each individual's contribution. All employees have a role to play in taking accountability to actively contribute to these goals, and work towards removing structural barriers and proactively address discrimination.

A key requirement of the [Public Sector Act 2022](#) (Act) is to ensure we have a diverse workforce that is representative of our community. Each recruitment and selection process is an opportunity to promote, support and progress equity in our workplace and all recruitment and selection processes must reflect the obligations of equity and diversity contained within the Act.

I encourage you to embrace opportunities to show empathy for others, be curious about different perspectives, and understand how you can contribute every day to building an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace.

Jamie Merrick

Director-General

Department of Environment and Science

A message from the DES Gender Equity Champion

None of us can underestimate how our behaviours and actions can impact on our work colleagues, stakeholders or customers and the importance of making sure everyone feels heard, respected, and included.

I encourage all of you to understand how you can contribute to our equity and diversity agenda, both through your words and actions, through participating in the initiatives and programs outlined in this plan, and through the work you do at DES every day.

I am proud of the work we are doing to ensure that DES builds equitable, diverse and inclusive workplaces and I look forward to seeing the progress through our annual Equity and Diversity Audits.

Karen Hussey

Deputy Director-General

Environmental and Heritage Policy and Programs

DES Gender Equity Champion

Introduction

A requirement of the *Public Sector Act 2022* is for public sector entities to develop workforces that represent the diverse views, experiences, and backgrounds of the people of Queensland, and to build a culture of respect and inclusion so that all employees feel safe and a sense of belonging in the workplace.

In April 2023, DES conducted an Equity and Diversity Audit to analyse the make-up of the DES workforce under an equity and diversity lens and to understand the employee experience of our diverse groups. The Audit was conducted using workforce profile data and feedback from the Working for Queensland (WfQ) Survey 2022, the insights from the Audit have informed the development of this Plan.

Key insights from the 2023 Equity and Diversity Audit:

1. Employees are much more likely to report belonging to a diversity target group through the WfQ survey than the Equality of Employment Opportunity (EEO) census, indicating an opportunity to promote the purpose and benefits of census completion. Higher rates of census completion provide a more accurate picture of the workforce and informs equity and diversity programs within the department. Improving rates of reporting will also be a key factor in DES achieving its diversity targets for 2023-2026.
2. The Gender Pay Gap in DES overall is negative (-1.76 per cent), meaning the average earnings of women in DES exceed the average earnings of men. This varies at the divisional level and is influenced by the high levels of male representation in the ranger cohort.

3. DES has almost equal representation of men and women in leadership roles (SO and above), however this decreases at the SES3+ and equivalent levels, influenced by the smaller number of roles at these levels.
4. The representation of men and women can vary significantly within occupational groups, and across divisions. Societal stereotypes that indicate that work should be 'men's work' or 'women's work' can impact this, indicating a need to incorporate initiatives that increase gender diversity across some occupational groups and aim to break down these stereotypes.
5. As an employee's age increases (60 and over) the representation of women in the workforce declines more rapidly than men.
6. Persons identifying as belonging to diversity target groups are more likely to be employed in more junior classification levels, highlighting the importance of ensuring our actions and initiatives encourage and enable increased representation at all levels of the organisation.
 - 3.9 per cent of DES employees identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, however two-thirds of these are employed at the AO4 and equivalent level or below. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent 2.1 per cent of DES' senior leadership group (SO and above).
 - 4.7 per cent of DES employees identify as having a disability (noting self-identification is significant in WFQ at 17 per cent), with 84 per cent employed at the AO6 and equivalent level and below.
 - Persons who identify as speaking a language other than English at home (CALD2) represent 3 per cent of DES' workforce with 70 per cent employed at the AO6 and equivalent level and below.
7. Employees identifying as belonging to diversity groups generally report less positive perceptions about recruitment, development and performance discussions than employees overall, highlighting the importance of ensuring all employees feel safe and are supported to progress their career paths.
8. TheWfQ survey data has been used to capture the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning) and other identity (LGBTIQ+) employees and the data indicates there is an opportunity for DES to increase visibility of LGBTIQ+ allies in the department, including at the leadership level. The EEO Census does not capture whether an employee identifies as LGBTIQ+ but captures employees who identify as non-binary.

DES has an extensive program of work underway that contributes to building equity, diversity, and a culture of inclusion across the department. The Audit insights have further informed areas of focus for this work, as outlined below and the outcomes will be reviewed annually to inform future iterations of this Plan.

1. Equity

Our goal: DES provides equal conditions of employment, and equity in access to employment opportunities and leadership roles across the department.

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Starting in	Measure/Tracking guide (Annual audit)
Increase representation of diversity target groups in higher classification levels (above AO6 and equivalent) across the department (Key insight 6)	Provide development opportunities for diversity target groups to improve competitiveness at higher classification levels	Women in Leadership or Emerging Women Scholarship opportunities	Lead: People and Culture	Annual	Percentage of diverse employees above A06 classification level
		First Nations Scholarship opportunities	Lead: People and Culture	Annual	
		Scholarship opportunities for all diversity target groups including CALD2	Lead: People and Culture	To commence 1 July 2023	
		Identify and support First Nations employees to participate in the Career Pathways Program, including support for participants to attend development opportunities	People and Culture All divisions	Ongoing	
		Continue to promote the DES Mentoring program to diverse employees	All Leaders, Managers and Div HR	Ongoing	
	Increase visibility and encourage usage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Policy and the Diverse Ability Policy	Ongoing coaching for divisions to support panels in advertising roles as priority consideration or Designated or Identified.	Lead: People and Culture Divisions: Hiring managers	Ongoing	Number of candidates identifying in the application stage as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations • Having disability Number of roles advertised using Policies out of total roles advertised
	Increase use of targeted advertising options	Use of First Nations networks and disability networks to advertise roles with higher classifications (above AO6 or equivalent)	Lead: People and culture Divisions: Hiring managers	Ongoing	
	Increased awareness of the changes to recruitment and selection following the PS Act and Recruitment and	Face to face training in major locations across Queensland to improve awareness of new recruitment principles in the Act relating to the	Lead: People and Culture Divisions: People leaders	June 2023	

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Starting in	Measure/Tracking guide (Annual audit)
	Selection Directive	recruitment and selection of diverse employees	and hiring managers		
		Coaching for hiring managers to implement new recruitment principles and to conduct contemporary recruitment processes, including increasing hiring manager awareness of how to attract and recruit people from diverse groups	Lead: People and Culture Hiring managers	Ongoing	
Increased number of men and leaders in higher classification levels accessing flexible work arrangements (FWA) (Key insights 2,3,4)	Reduce bias for men in accessing flexible work arrangements and leave options	Investigate perceptions of managers who work part-time to understand how we can improve perceptions of part-time managers	Lead: People and Culture	September 2023	Percentage of men at A08 and above classification level accessing flexible working arrangements WfQ data on Flexible Working
		Review current flexible work arrangements to identify any bias in flexible work arrangements by gender, branch or level	Div HR		
		Explores barriers for men in accessing flexible work arrangements through consultation process	Lead: People and Culture	2024	
		Communications campaign sharing case studies of men and leaders throughout their careers accessing flexible work, different leave options available, and different options for flexibility. Coaching and engagement with managers/supervisors to support their employees in adopting FWA.	Lead: People and Culture	From July 2023	WfQ data on Flexible Working
Increased representation of women in operational and/ or field-based roles (Key insight 4)	Ongoing support for the Possum Drey committee	Programs to support gender equity in QPWS&P including programs such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional support • Induction and welcome pack resources • Cultural change programs 	Lead: QPWS&P	Ongoing	Percentage of women in operational/ field-based roles by division Percentage of women in regional areas per division

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Starting in	Measure/Tracking guide (Annual audit)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace Flexibility Career development opportunities 			
	Support for equity committees and grassroots groups within divisions	Leadership support for divisions to hold equity and diversity committees, similar to Possum Drey for continued engagement in this space.	All divisions	From July 2023	Perceptions of equity and diversity through WfQ results
		Assess retention rates of women in operational roles to inform culture responses	All divisions	2024	Workforce data

2. Diversity

Our goal: To develop workforces that represent the diverse views, experiences, and backgrounds of the people of Queensland.

Objective	Key Strategy/Policy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
Better understand the diversity of the workforce through increasing the response rate of the EEO Census (Key insight 1)	Improve the validity of workforce data through increased response rate	<p>Communication campaign, including tailored Divisional Diversity presentations for SMT, team meetings or other group forums.</p> <p>Communique, ESR TV, and intranet comms to iterate the 'why' behind EEO Census data</p> <p>Provide context of completing EEO data in onboarding procedures</p>	<p>Lead: People and Culture</p> <p>Div HR, Managers and Leaders</p>	Ongoing	<p>Percentage of employees who complete the EEO Census</p> <p>Consistency in data between EEO Census and WfQ demographic data</p>
Increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across all Divisions of DES and across classification	First Nation Employment and Development Action Plan	<p>First Nations Gap Year Program</p> <p>Each division commits to onboarding at least one Gap Year Participant annually.</p>	<p>Lead: People and Culture</p> <p>All Divisions</p>	Annual	<p>DES Target: 8 percent representation by 2026</p> <p>Measure:</p> <p>Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees by Division</p>

Objective	Key Strategy/Policy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
levels (Key insight 6)					and by classification level
		Continue to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Policy	All Divisions	Ongoing	
		Continue to promote the Career Pathways program Managers/ Supervisors support employees in participating in the career pathways program and development opportunities	People and Culture All divisions	Ongoing	
		Encourage participation in the Connecting to Country opportunity	All Divisions	Ongoing	
	Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diversity targets at Divisional level	Investigate blockers that prevent these employees from progressing into higher classification levels. Incorporate divisional targets into DDG Performance Agreements	All Divisions	July 2023	
Increase the representation of People with a Disability across all Divisions of DES and all classification levels (Key insight 6)	Disability Services Plan	Continue to promote Diverse Ability Recruitment policy	All divisions	Ongoing	DES Target: 12 per cent Measure: Percentage of People with Disability by Division and by classification level
		Jigsaw initiative development Identification of suitable roles and provision of supportive workplace environment	People and Culture All Divisions	Ongoing	
		JobAccess partnership and utilisation of JobAccess services	People and Culture Hiring Managers	Ongoing	
	Include People with Disability diversity targets at Divisional level	Incorporate targets into DDG Performance Agreements	All Divisions	July 2023	

Objective	Key Strategy/Policy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
Increase the representation of people who were born overseas or who speak a language other than English at home (Key insight 6)		Investigate blockers that prevent employees from progressing into higher classification levels Incorporate targets into DDG Performance Agreements	All Divisions	From July 2023	DES Target: 12 per cent Measure: Percentage of CALD2 by Division and by classification level
Improve attraction and retention of women in under-represented areas (Key insight 4)	Include diversity targets at Divisional level	Support Divisions to set up Inclusion and Diversity groups (for example Possum Drey project)	All Divisions	From July 2023	Measure: Percentage of women by Division, Classification level and Occupational groups Gender Pay Gap by Division
		Investigate programs for attracting women into unique roles that are under-represented through programs such as Unique YOU	Lead: People and Culture	2024	
Increased representation of women across all SES levels (Key insight 3)	Leadership development	EZRA Coaching Program Investigate blockers that prevent these employees from progressing into higher classification levels	Lead: People and Culture All Divisions	Ongoing	Gender Pay Gap by Division
	Attraction	Investigate talent attraction tools to boost number of females in senior applicant pools	All Divisions and Hiring Managers	Ongoing	
Increased representation of all diversity target groups across all levels (Key insight 7)	Strategic workforce planning and cascading operational plans focused on creating a talent pipeline and supporting/developing diverse employees to reach higher levels	Leading at DES – Planning for the Future module	Lead: People and Culture All Divisions	Ongoing	Percentage of employees in diverse groups across classification levels
Increased retention of women to improve gender diversity among those aged 60 and over (Key		Investigate blockers that prevent these employees from progressing into higher classification levels	Lead: People and Culture	From July 2023	Target: 50 per cent men/women representation across all age groups Measure: WfQ Survey and EEO Census data

Objective	Key Strategy/Policy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
insight 5)		Understand motivations behind separations and how this intersects with a safe and inclusive workforce	Lead: People and Culture	From July 2023	DES Exit survey feedback

3. Inclusion

Our goal: to foster a respectful and inclusive workplace culture in which all employees feel safe, valued, accepted, and supported at work and can participate equitably; and create a workplace free from unlawful discrimination.

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
Respectful, safe and inclusive workplaces (Key insights 7 & 8)	Respectful workplaces	Respectful workplaces program	Lead: People and Culture	Ongoing	Change to number of employees who identify in DES as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations • With Disability • Gender diverse • CALD1 or CALD2 • LGBTIQ+ Increase in the positive scores of safety and inclusion in the WfQ survey for all employees. Review WFQ measures of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived respect • Perceived psychological safety • Inclusion (including cultural identity, disability, sexual identity and gender identity). Number of reports to Employee Alternative Reporting Service (EARS) EEO Census and WfQ data aligns
		MATE Bystander (Domestic	Lead: People	Ongoing	Number of employees who have

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
		Violence Prevention) Program	and Culture		attended training WfQ Survey data on DFV confidence and support provided over the last 12 months (employee perceptions)
		MATE Creating Respectful Workplaces Program	Lead: People and Culture	August 2023	Number of employees who have attended training Review WfQ measures of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived respect Perceived psychological safety Inclusion (including cultural identity, disability, sexual identity and gender identity).
		White Ribbon Accreditation	Lead: People and Culture	Ongoing	WfQ Survey data on DFV confidence and support provided (employee perceptions)
		Leading at DES	Lead: People and Culture	Ongoing	WfQ Survey data on employee perceptions on leadership, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance management Professional development Equitable treatment
	A Disability confident workplace	Promote Disability Awareness Programs including: SBS online modules Face to face sessions as per the L&D calendar	Lead: People and Culture	Ongoing	Perceptions of employees with disability as per WfQ survey data
	Build Cultural capability and safety	Review Cultural Capability programs in DES to continue maturity and including role and place-based options	Lead: People and Culture Managers/ Leaders	July – Dec 2023	Perceptions of Aboriginal employees and Torres Strait Islander employees as per WfQ survey data Number of employees engaging in

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
		Managers encourage all employees to continue on their cultural capability journey, completing one development opportunity per year, or self-led research in Jawun Resources Hub			ongoing Cultural Capability development, assessed through the use of training records as well as PDP content.
		Promotion of Jawun Resource Hub	Lead: Partnerships Branch People and Culture	Ongoing	
		Provide opportunity to celebrate and reflect in Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week Increase awareness of events in locations, providing employees with time and space to participate in events	People and Culture Managers/ Supervisors	Annually	
	Build a workplace where everyone feels safe and able to bring their whole selves to work	Development of an LGBTIQ+ Allyship Program	ERG in collaboration with Gender Equity Champion	2024	WfQ question: Number of people who identify as LGBTIQ+ WfQ question: I can achieve success in this organisation as my authentic self WfQ question: I feel confident that my colleagues support LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion
		Support Divisions to set up Inclusion and Diversity groups (for example Possum Drey project)	All divisions	Ongoing	Actions and achievements of the ERG during the period
Employees are able to share their voice and contribute to a more	Inclusive culture	Self-directed awareness raising program for diverse and inclusive days of celebration	All divisions	Ongoing	WfQ Survey Inclusion and Diversity questions and experiences of diverse employees

Objective	Strategy	Key programs/initiatives	Responsibility	Timeframe/Starting in	Measure/Tracking Guide
diverse and inclusive DES (Key insights 7 & 8)		Policy reviews and ability to provide diverse perspectives to DES work	All divisions	Ongoing	
		Provision of resources and advice on workplace safety, mental health, and psychosocial risk.	Lead: People and Culture	Ongoing	
		Promoting workplace safety, mental health, and workload management by sharing resources, managing and discussing psychosocial risks	Managers/ Supervisors		

A note on measures: DES will measure progress of these actions through the annual Equity and Diversity Audit, which uses a combination of MOHRI data and Working for Queensland Survey data.

Related Strategies and Plans:

- DES Gurra Gurra Framework
- DES Disability Services Plan
- DES Reframing the Relationship Plan

DEFINITIONS

	Definition	Source
Equity	Equity refers to fair treatment for all people, so that the norms, practices, and policies in place ensure identity is not predictive of opportunities or workplace outcomes. Equity differs from equality in a subtle but important way. While equality assumes that all people should be treated the same, equity takes into consideration a person's unique circumstances, adjusting treatment accordingly so that the end result is equal.	McKinsey
Diversity	Diversity refers to all the differences between people in how they identify in relation to Social Identity, that is their Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, race, disability, gender, faith/no religion, LGBTIQ+ status, and social class and their professional identity, that is their profession, education, work experiences, and organisational role.	Diversity Council of Australia
Inclusion	Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people are respected, connected, progressing and contributing to organisational success.	Diversity Council of Australia