

many cultures

One workforce. Working together.



Our many cultures
workforce strategy

2020 – 2023



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands and seas across Queensland, and pays respect to Elders, past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation.

This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.

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Message from the Director-General

The Department of Education is committed to creating harmonious and inclusive workplaces where staff of all cultural backgrounds can thrive. The rich diversity of culture and languages in our Queensland communities is reflected in our workforce.

Celebrating difference and leveraging the diverse knowledge, skills and experience of our multicultural workforce, enables us to deliver responsive services that meet the needs of our students and school communities.

The Many Cultures workforce strategy provides a way forward for all employees to grow, progress and feel a sense of belonging regardless of cultural background.

TONY COOK

Director-General

Department of Education



Vision

The Department of Education (the department) is creating workplaces where culturally diverse staff can feel safe, valued and supported to thrive.

To achieve the department's vision whereby all students succeed, it's vital our workforce represents the many cultures in our Queensland communities. Creating harmonious and inclusive workplaces where everyone works together, with our stakeholders, industry and communities is vital to delivering a better future for all Queenslanders.

"Inclusive, harmonious and united communities are where people understand, appreciate and celebrate difference; recognise the vast potential and benefits that diversity offers us as individuals and as communities; embrace new perspectives and develop together" (Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019-20 to 2021-22).

It's important that culturally diverse staff are able to participate fully, grow and progress at work. Workplaces inclusive of diverse cultures are critical to maximising our organisation's potential and being an employer of choice. Reaching this potential requires each of us to address our unconscious bias and break down stereotypes to leverage the benefits of diverse teams, such as innovation and creative problem solving.

We are also fostering greater representation of multicultural staff in leadership positions through challenging our assumptions about what leadership looks like. This will cultivate better decision-making and diversity of thought.

Background

The Many Cultures strategy (the strategy) is a key deliverable of the department's Inclusion and Diversity Framework – We all belong. This approach recognises that diversity and diverse experiences amongst our employees are critical to understand and connect with all Queenslanders – so we can better meet their needs.

A workforce that reflects the multicultural Queensland communities we serve allows us to deliver relevant and responsive services to those communities. In 2016, almost 1 in 2 Australians were born overseas, or had a parent born overseas². In Queensland, 1 in 3 Queenslanders were born overseas or had a parent born overseas³. Australia is linguistically diverse with over 300 languages spoken, including Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages; languages from around the world; and sign language².

Culturally diverse employees may experience challenges in progressing their careers due to traditional views of leadership attributes, perceived barriers and bias⁴. Research shows us that there is a connection between diversity of leadership teams and improved innovation⁵. Creating a workplace that is inclusive of all employees is vital to leveraging diversity of perspective and better decision-making that aligns with principles in our Strategic Plan 2019-2023 of improvement, agility, collaboration and inclusion. Diversity and innovation are also critical to meeting the department's strategic goals of building a capable and confident workforce that meets students' needs.



Department of Education context

Representation	<p>There is opportunity to increase representation of culturally and linguistically diverse employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 percent of total staff are from a non-English speaking background⁶. Of those: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 59 percent are teachers; – 19 percent are teacher aides; – 13 percent are public servants; and – 8 percent are cleaners⁶. • School-based workforce: 8 percent are from a non-English speaking background⁶. • Non-school-based workforce: 13 percent are from a non-English speaking background⁶.
Leadership	<p>Representation in leadership positions is not proportionate to the overall representation of staff from a non-English speaking background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based workforce: 3 percent are in leadership positions - predominately in Metropolitan Region, South East Region and North Coast Region⁶. • Non-school-based workforce: 5 percent are in senior roles - predominately in Central Office⁶.
Perceived lack of opportunities	<p>Working for Queensland results indicate staff whose first language is a language other than English perceived significantly less opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge, compared to the rest of staff (5 percent lower)⁷.</p> <p>Staff born in a country where English is not a primary language felt more strongly than the rest of staff that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is a barrier to success in the department (9 percent lower)⁷. • Responsibilities outside of their work restrict their opportunities for promotion (11 percent lower)⁷.
Barriers to workplace inclusion	<p>Working for Queensland results indicate staff born overseas were less inclined than staff born in Australia to perceive that their workplace had an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and respected (3 percent lower)⁷.</p> <p>Staff whose first language is a language other than English, felt less included by their co-workers, compared to staff whose first language is English (4 percent lower)⁷.</p>



Our approach

We all play a role

All leaders, managers, teams and individuals play an active role in choosing their mindset and actions to create inclusive workplaces.

Action at all levels

To achieve the department’s vision of inclusive workplaces, there needs to be action across all levels of our organisation at state, regional and local level.



Governance

State level
Many Cultures – Executive Champion

The Many Cultures Executive Champion leads cultural change, promotes awareness and accountability from within the top levels of the department.

Many Cultures Steering Committee

The Many Cultures Steering Committee provides strategic direction and advice to inform strategy implementation. The committee consists of employees who are committed to leading cultural change through building understanding and creating an inclusive workplace.

Regional level
Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLO)

The purpose of the MLO is to build awareness, understanding and capability in workplace multicultural inclusion; to support the implementation of the department’s Many Cultures workforce strategy; and provide referral information if required.

The roles and responsibilities of a MLO are to:

- Promote and provide information on the Many Cultures strategy deliverables and creating inclusive work environments.
- Attend training and deliver Many Cultures 101 awareness sessions at a local and regional level to staff.

Local level
Many Cultures online staff community

The Many Cultures staff community is an online community on the Learning Place that connects staff and provides information on the Many Cultures workforce strategy and its deliverables.

Employees from across the state can promote local awareness; and show support by creating inclusive workplaces, and celebrating multicultural diversity.



Key objectives

The three key objectives to drive cultural change within our workforce are identified as education, visibility and leadership. Education and awareness grow our peoples’ readiness and receptiveness to new ways for working together. Visibility creates engagement in conversations that spark and embed real inclusion. Leadership at all levels is critical to driving systemic and sustainable workplace change.

Priority areas

The department will focus on the following three priority areas in order to deliver the vision of the strategy.

In delivering the following actions, the responsible owner leads the action with support and contribution from other relevant areas within the department.



Priority area 1 Build awareness and capability

Goal: Provide programs, awareness and events to build the capability and understanding of all staff on multicultural diversity.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Education	Deliver capability and awareness raising activities and develop a supporting toolkit for teams and individuals.	2020-2023	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Visibility	Engage staff in significant days and events to increase understanding of cultures and inclusion.	2020-2023	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Promote the Multicultural Queensland charter to staff.	2020-2023	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Deliver and implement the Australian Human Rights Commission Racism - <i>It stops with me</i> campaign.	2020-2022	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Deliver inclusive leadership education for managers and leaders.	2021	Learning and Professional Development





Priority area 2 Create employment, career pathways and support

Goal: Develop opportunities for employees from diverse cultural backgrounds to connect. Co-design solutions to create support mechanisms and remove barriers for employees from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Leadership	Facilitate focus groups to better understand the barriers in employment and career pathways for employees from diverse cultural backgrounds and develop evidence-based solutions.	2020-2021	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Leadership	Develop career pathway and leadership development opportunities for aspiring culturally diverse leaders through a human-centred design approach to promote access to leadership development.	2021-2023	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Visibility	Launch a Many Cultures Online Community of Inclusion for staff to provide, information, support and to create connections.	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement



Priority area 3 Embed inclusive policies, practice and language

Goal: Foster inclusive workplaces where everyone feels valued, are able to be themselves and are able to contribute and progress at work.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Leadership	Conduct a review of the inclusiveness of language used in policies.	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Leadership	Inclusive recruitment review: undertake an internal review of inclusivity in recruitment, selection and career development processes; and implement evidence-based responses.	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Publish the inclusive communication toolkit and promote to all staff.	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement



Measuring success

The department will monitor its progress in meeting the milestones and deliverables of this strategy and workforce targets as part of our inclusion and diversity program.

The Public Service Commission target, set by the CEO Leadership Board, aims to increase the representation of all employees from a non-English speaking background across the Queensland Government to 10 percent by 2022. In addition to this target, the department aims to increase the belief that cultural background is not a barrier to success and provide opportunities for all employees.

We will measure our progress through:

- Working for Queensland Survey
- School Opinion Survey
- Many Cultures Steering Committee
- Equal Employment Opportunity Census

Legal context

Multicultural Recognition Act

Demonstrated by the passing of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, Queensland is committed to recognising the benefits of diverse cultural heritage to Queensland communities.

The *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* established the [Multicultural Queensland Charter](#) to promote Queensland as a unified, harmonious and inclusive community.

Human Rights Act

The rights of employees to be treated fairly and to not be discriminated against are protected by the *Human Rights Act 2019*. This Act places obligations on public entities, which includes government departments and public servants to act and make decisions which are compatible with human rights. It protects 23 human rights and makes it unlawful for actions or decisions to be made in a way which is incompatible with those human rights and to fail to consider relevant human rights in decision making.

Employees are able to make complaints to either the Queensland Human Rights Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission if they believe they have been directly or indirectly discriminated against on the basis of their cultural background.

Policy context

The Queensland Government has a vision in the *Queensland Multicultural Policy* for “an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland”⁸. The *Queensland Multicultural Policy* is a deliverable of the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016, and is supported by the *Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019-2022*.

The Many Cultures workforce strategy is an outstanding action from the first *Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2016-2019*. In 2018, the department released an overarching inclusion and diversity framework - We all belong. The Many Cultures Workforce Strategy will address specific priority areas for multicultural inclusion. The new *Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019-2022* includes specific actions for agencies to take in relation to workforce.



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Part of the
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initiative