



Able. Valuing talent
in all abilities

Our all abilities workforce strategy

2019 – 2022



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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 diversity and the right to equality, fairness and respect for employees of all abilities. Able. Valuing talent in all abilities is an important focus area in the department's diversity and inclusion framework – We all belong.

The department aims to provide a working environment where people of all abilities have the same rights, access and opportunities to employment and career pathways, enabling everyone to participate fully in our workplaces.

The Able. Valuing talent in all abilities workforce strategy sets out a clear plan on how the department will achieve inclusion for people of all abilities and demonstrate the value we place on the diversity of our staff.

TONY COOK

Director-General

Department of Education



Vision

The Department of Education has a vision whereby all students succeed. Our plan for students with disability ensures they are included and welcomed in every state school. We acknowledge that students with disability feel they belong when they have role models in the workplace.

“We have a belief that as a workforce we are letting our students with disability down by not having members of staff with disability for them to look up to.” (Cultural Assessment Report, 2019).

The department is committed to ensuring that people of all abilities are able to participate fully in all aspects and all pathways of employment. This includes being purposeful in the design of facilities, roles, recruitment, and ensuring rewarding career pathways for all employees.

Able. Valuing talent in all abilities (Able - All Abilities) – is the department’s workforce strategy to increase the opportunity, inclusion and support provided to existing and potential employees. The department aims to create a positive workplace where all employees are valued and feel like they belong.

Department of Education context

Almost 1 in 5 Australians (18.3%) report living with disability; it is estimated that only 1 in 25 departmental employees (4.4%) identify as having a diverse ability. The department aims to increase the number of staff comfortable identifying as having a diverse ability to 8% by 2022. This can include people who have different sensory, social/emotional, physical or cognitive traits, different styles of thinking, psychological differences, or employees who may require an adjustment in the workplace.

As one of the largest employers in Queensland there is opportunity to employ a workforce that reflects the community we serve.

Background

In 2006, the Queensland Government introduced the [Disability Services Act 2006](#) which requires all Queensland Government departments to develop and implement a [Disability Services Plan](#). The Disability Services Plan outlines the actions each department will take to improve services for people with diverse abilities.

In 2017, the [Queensland Disability Review](#) recommended the department conduct a review of its workforce selection, retention and promotional model as part of an integrated workforce strategy.

The policy context

In July 2018, the department launched its workforce Diversity and Inclusion Framework – [We all belong](#). The framework outlines a number of areas for delivery, including the commitment to focus on all abilities as a specific area of capability development.

The Able – All Abilities strategy is a key deliverable of We all belong. It sets out both the practical activities the department will undertake as well as the experience that it will leverage in order to improve social and employment outcomes for people of all abilities.

This strategy aligns to the Queensland public sector’s [Inclusion and Diversity Commitment](#) and incorporates the workforce initiatives outlined in the department’s [Disability Service Plan 2017-2020](#), as well as the response to workforce recommendations within the Queensland Disability Review.



Our approach

We all play a role

Creating a positive working environment where people of all abilities are able to participate fully in all aspects and all pathways of employment, requires all departmental employees, managers and the department’s leadership team to lead and champion inclusive workplaces.

Action at all levels

The department is committed to ensuring all employees feel a sense of belonging in the workplace. To achieve this, there needs to be activity and consistency across all levels of our organisation at state, regional and local levels.



Governance

State level

Able – All Abilities Executive Champion

The Able – All Abilities Executive Champion leads cultural change and promotes awareness, ensuring accountability from within the top levels of the department.

Able – All Abilities Steering Committee

The Able – All Abilities 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

Able Liaison Officers (ALOs)

The ALO builds awareness and understanding across the workforce providing advice and referral information to be inclusive of all abilities.

The roles and responsibilities of an ALO are to:

- Promote and provide information on Able – All Abilities, accessibility and inclusive work environments
- Attend training and deliver Able – All Abilities 101 awareness sessions at a local and regional level to staff.

Local level

Able – All Abilities Communities

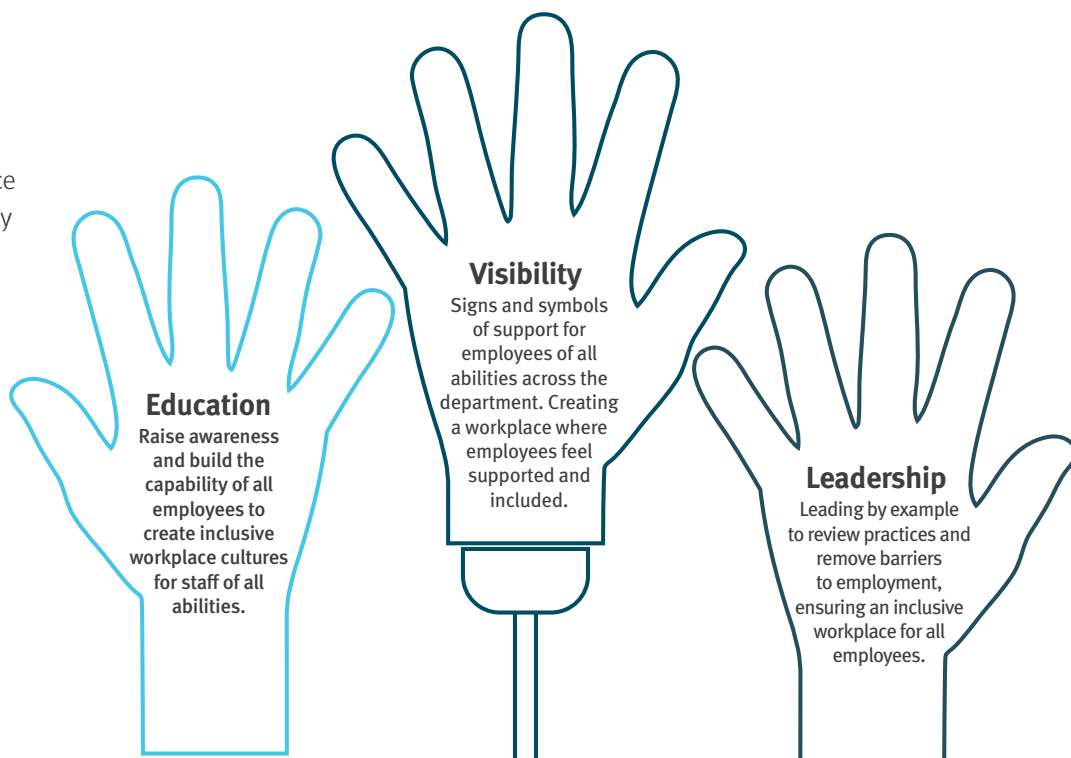
Able –All Abilities Communities will be established across the state to work on local awareness, events and support for employees. Individual employees can show support and celebrate people of all abilities within their workplace.



Key objectives

The three key objectives to drive cultural change within our workforce are identified as education, visibility and leadership.

Through education, increased visibility and strong leadership, the department aims to provide rewarding and productive careers for employees of all abilities.



Priority areas

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



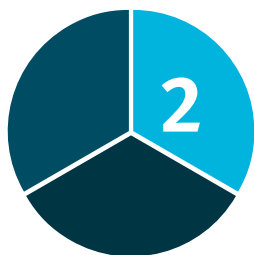


Priority area 1 Create cultural change through building understanding

Goal: Create workplaces where people of all abilities feel safe and supported in the workplace by building the capability and understanding of all staff.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Education	Reduce stigma and ensure employees feel safe and supported to share information regarding, or identify as having a disability. Not every disability is visible campaign. Modify the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Census form.	Completed	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Visibility	Collaborate with Organisational Safety and Wellbeing to create positive messaging about mental health and reduce stigma associated with the term.	October 2019 and ongoing	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Leadership	Establish an Able – All Abilities Steering Committee. The steering committee provides strategic direction and advice to inform strategy implementation.	March 2020	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Visibility	Establish Able – All Abilities Online and Ally Communities to raise awareness, promote events and support employees.	March 2020	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Education	Establish the Able Liaison Officers across the state to build awareness and understanding across the workforce.	March 2020	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Visibility	Collaborate with HR Business Partners to promote awareness, events and support employees.	2019-2021	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Education	Provide specialist awareness information sessions on learning differences (ADHD, dyslexia, language processing, vision impairment). In conjunction with the All Kinds of Minds neurodiversity pilot.	2020-2021	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Visibility	Actively represent the agency as an inclusive employer of choice at promotional and recruitment events	2019-2021	All





Priority area 2 Provide rewarding and productive careers

Goal: Develop opportunities for employees of all abilities to access rewarding and productive careers.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Education	Develop and embed 'Recruiting for all abilities fact sheet' and 'Workplace passport'.	Completed	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Education	Develop and embed the 'Thinking ahead 5-year career plan toolkit' into existing performance development processes.	Completed	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Leadership	Establish the All Kinds of Minds neurodiversity pilot.	January 2020	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Education	Deliver training for managers to understand the inherent strengths within disabilities for targeted recruitment as part of the All Kinds of Minds neurodiversity pilot.	2020-2021	Diversity, Culture & Engagement





Priority area 3 Embed inclusive policies, practices and language

Goal: Embed workforce policies, procedures and resources to promote opportunities for employees of all abilities.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Education	Deliver training to recruiters and managers to assist with understanding how to remove barriers for people of all abilities. (Provided by Job Access)	Completed	Diversity, Culture & Engagement
Education	Undertake a culture assessment and recruitment review and integrate findings into the strategy.	Completed	Diversity Culture & Engagement
Leadership	Conduct a review of the inclusiveness of the language used in policies in conjunction with the We All Belong Framework.	March 2020	Diversity Culture & Engagement
Leadership	Develop a strategic workforce Accessibility Action Plan – intention and plan to address access and inclusion for disability-friendly workplaces.	May 2020	Diversity Culture & Engagement
Education	Develop face-to-face training for Able – All Abilities.	June 2020	Diversity Culture & Engagement
Education	Develop a 101 training Able – All Abilities online learning program.	September 2020	Diversity Culture & Engagement
Education	Develop a Manager’s Guide which includes information about workplace reasonable adjustments (toolkit).	November 2020	Diversity Culture & Engagement



Measuring success

The department reports on the activities under the Disability Services Plan to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. The Queensland Disability Review recommendations are also monitored and overseen by the department's Every student with disability succeeding board.

The Public Service Commission target, set by the CEO Leadership Board, aims to increase the representation of employees of all abilities across the Queensland Government to 8% by 2022. In addition to this target the department aims to increase the belief that disability is not a barrier to success and provide opportunities for employees of all abilities.

We will measure our progress through:

- Diversity and workforce data
- Working for Queensland Survey
- School Opinion Survey
- Equal Employment Opportunity Census
- The Able Steering Committee
- Identification, implementation and sharing of workplace reasonable adjustments

We will know that we are making progress when:

- Employees are confident to talk about their differences in the workplace including in surveys such as the employee Equal Employment Opportunity Census, School Opinion Survey and Working for Queensland.
- Employees who identify as having a diverse ability feel supported and included in the workplace and feel they are able to perform at their best.
- Employees at all levels and in all roles identify as having diverse abilities and our recruitment processes and career pathways enable this to occur.

The legal context

The rights of all employees to access and experience a workplace free of discrimination are outlined in, and employment is protected under State and Commonwealth law through the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* which prohibits direct or indirect discrimination.

The rights of employees to be treated fairly and to not be discriminated against are also 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 disability.



Further reading

International

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

National

[National Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

State

[State Disability Plan 2017-2020 – All Abilities Queensland](#)

[Queensland disability review 2017](#)

[Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2015-2020](#)

[Disability Service Plan 2017-2020](#)

[Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#)

[Human Rights Act 2019](#)

[Queensland Human Rights Commission](#)

[Disabling the barriers to employment implementation plan 2019-2020](#)

Departmental

[We All Belong Framework](#)

[Department of Education Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Department of Education Reasonable Adjustment Procedure](#)

[Every student with disability succeeding plan](#)

References

1 Australian Government Australian, Bureau of Statistics Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2015.

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Part of the
weallbelong
initiative