



# pathways to parity



## A Workforce Strategy for Gender Parity

2019 - 2021



# Contents

Acknowledgement of Country .....	3
Copyright statement.....	3
Disclaimer.....	3
Message from the Director-General .....	4
Vision .....	5
Background.....	5
Department of Education context .....	5
Our approach.....	7
We all play a role .....	7
Key objectives .....	7
Priority areas.....	7
Priority area 1 - Create employment and career pathways to parity .....	8
Priority area 2 - Build capability and awareness to balance work and life commitments and participate fully in the workplace.....	9
Priority area 3 - Embed inclusive policies, practice and language .....	10
Policy context .....	11
The legal context.....	11
Governance and measuring success .....	11
Further reading.....	12
References.....	12



# 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 all employees, regardless of gender. Gender parity 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 women and men have the same rights, access and opportunities to employment and career pathways enabling them to balance work and life commitments and participate fully in our workplaces.

This strategy sets out a clear plan on how the department will achieve increased gender parity and demonstrate the value we place on the diversity of our staff.

### **MR TONY COOK**

Director-General

Department of Education



## Vision

The Department of Education (the department) has a vision whereby all students succeed. When students are understood and have role models like them they have the best chance of succeeding. Our workforce is pivotal to accomplishing this, as students form gender stereotypes based on their observation of role models within the school environment<sup>1</sup>. Creating inclusive, gender balanced workplaces are vital to delivering inclusive educational services and a better future for all Queenslanders.

*“Role models ... influence children’s, adolescents’, and young adults’ achievements, motivation, and goals by acting as behavioural models, representations of the possible, and/or inspirations.” (Morgenroth et al., 2015)*

Workplace gender equality is achieved when people are able to access the same resources and opportunities regardless of gender<sup>2</sup>. This is achieved by breaking down stereotypes of gendered occupations; transparency on equal pay; equity in career pathways, decision making and promotions, regardless of gender. Both women and men feel supported for the unique skills, knowledge and experience they bring to work.

The department aims for all women and men to thrive equally at work, having the same rights, access and opportunities to:

- employment and career pathways
- balance work and life commitments and participate fully in the workplace
- decision making
- attain financial independence.









## Background

The strategy is a key deliverable of the department’s Diversity and Inclusion Framework – We all belong. This framework 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.

Diversity and innovation are also critical to meeting the department’s strategic goals of building a capable and confident workforce. International research examining gender diverse teams suggests that gender-balanced teams cultivate an environment where innovation can flourish<sup>3</sup>.

## Department of Education context

There are factors that currently drive gender inequality in the department and illustrate our progress on workplace inclusion (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, DCA & KPMG).

					
<p><b>Industry</b></p>  <p><b>Industry</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 79 percent of all department staff are women and 21 percent are men<sup>4</sup>.</li> <li>• 96 percent of the workforce are school-based and 4 percent of the workforce non-school-based.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– School-based workforce: 80 percent are women and 20 percent are men.</li> <li>– Non-school-based workforce: 72 percent are women and 28 percent are men.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				<p><b>Career Progression</b></p>
<p><b>Occupation</b></p>  <p><b>Occupation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-based workforce: 14 percent more men apply for jobs in the department compared to women; women receive placements in jobs at a higher rate compared to men.</li> <li>• Non-school-based workforce: 21 percent more men apply for jobs in the department compared to women; men and women are placed in jobs at the same rate<sup>5</sup>.</li> </ul>				



 <p><b>Part-Time</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-based workforce: 39 percent are employed on a part-time basis; 36 percent women and 3 percent men.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1 in 4 primary teachers work part-time</li> <li>– 1 in 6 secondary teachers work part-time</li> <li>– 1 in 4 special school teachers work part-time</li> <li>– 1 in 5 primary-secondary teachers work part-time.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Non-school-based workforce: 12 percent are employed on a part-time basis; 11 percent women and 1 percent men.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Tenure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship between gendered occupations in the department and length of tenure for women and men.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Teacher aides, predominately a female occupation with 92 percent women, have an average service of 9 years compared to teacher aides who are men, with an average service of 6 years.</li> <li>– Schools officers, predominately a male occupation with 93 percent men, have an average service of 8 years compared to school officers who are women, with an average service of 5 years.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gendered casual employment in the department has an impact on the gender pay gap and superannuation.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– School-based workforce: 7 percent of casual staff are women and 2 percent are men.</li> <li>– Non-school based workforce: 1 percent are women and 0.2 percent are men.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>Interruptions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the last 4 years, on average, 150 teachers on maternity leave resign from the Department each year.</li> <li>• Non-school-based workforce: 36 percent of the workforce are involved in a caregiving role for a child under the age of 15 or another person. 17 percent of women are primary care givers and 17 percent share the role. 6 percent of men are primary care givers and 25 percent of share the role<sup>6</sup>.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Career Progression</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-based workforce:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Men are underrepresented in teaching classifications (23 percent of all teachers are men)</li> <li>– Women disproportionately under-progress through senior roles to Principal (55 percent of all senior roles to principal are held by women)</li> <li>– Gender pay gap has decreased from 4.8 percent in 2007 to 3.5 percent in Q2, 2018<sup>7</sup>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Non-school-based workforce:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Men are underrepresented in lower classifications (15 percent of AO2 level roles are held by men)</li> <li>– Women disproportionately under-progress through senior roles (59 percent of SO level roles are held by women).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Importantly, these insights tell us the department’s workforce participation in part-time work is gendered, potentially impacting promotional opportunities, the gender pay gap and superannuation for women, and men’s ability to contribute fully in communities and families<sup>2</sup>.

There can be a view that an employee’s ambition and career potential changes when taking on a part-time role. In Australia there is also a perception that part-time or flexible working arrangements are only for women returning from maternity leave<sup>8</sup>.

An Australian Human Rights Commission report found that two thirds of new mothers experienced negative comments from colleagues, employer or manager when pregnant or returning from maternity leave.

In schools, the expectations of parents and carers on teachers can affect decisions to approve flexible work, such as part-time or job share arrangements<sup>9</sup>. For the non-school-based workforce, men are granted less flexibility compared to women and are less likely than women to access or use flexible arrangements<sup>6</sup>.



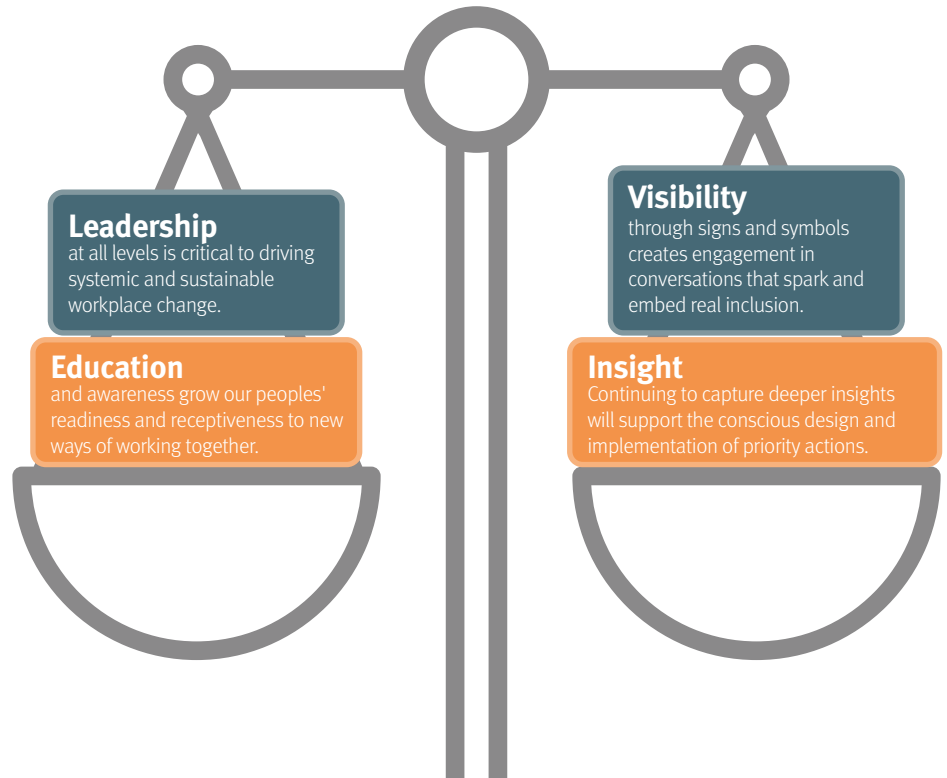
# Our approach

## We all play a role

Creating a positive and inclusive working environment where people are able to access the same opportunities and resources regardless of gender requires all departmental employees, managers and the department’s leadership team to play a role.

## Key objectives

The four key objectives to drive workplace cultural change are leadership, education, visibility and insight. Leadership at all levels is critical to driving systemic and sustainable workplace change. Education and awareness grow our peoples’ readiness and receptiveness to new ways of working together. Visibility through signs and symbols creates engagement in conversations that spark and embed real inclusion. Continuing to capture deeper insights will support the conscious design and implementation of priority actions.



## Priority areas

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





## Priority area 1

### Create employment and career pathways to parity

**Goal:** All employees access the same employment and career opportunities and resources, regardless of gender.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Visibility	Promote and encourage whole-of-department participation in key events such as International Women's Day, International Flexible Working Day, International Men's Day, Parents and Carer's week	Ongoing	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Leadership	Appoint and promote executive champion for pathways to parity strategy and champions of change for flexible work	February 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Visibility	Showcase men and women's career journeys, particularly in non-traditional roles and senior positions	February 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Insight	Understand the barriers to employment and career pathways informed by employee insights from the Working for Queensland and School Opinion Survey, and focus groups – to inform response	March 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Leadership	Report on progress against women in leadership workforce targets	Quarterly	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Public Service Commission
Leadership	Implement recommendations from the annual pay equity audit conducted in annually (PSC publish on the Queensland women's strategy website)	Annually in November	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Public Service Commission
Education	Co-design pilot financial wellbeing program to improve financial security and resilience	Completed	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Rural and Remote







## Priority area 2

# Build capability and awareness to balance work and life commitments and participate fully in the workplace

**Goal:** All employees have equal opportunity to balance work and life commitments and participate fully in the workforce.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Visibility	Refresh Flexible by Design online community, opening it to all and establish Parents and Carers online community of inclusion	March 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Leadership	Co-design and implement Flexible By Design workforce program including cultural change program on the benefits of flexible work & capability of HR staff	March 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Visibility	Showcase a range of men and women's flexible work arrangements including middle and senior management job share roles	May 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Establish return to work program for employees on parental leave	June 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement





## Priority area 3 Embed inclusive policies, practice and language

**Goal:** Workforce policies, practices and language enables opportunities for all employees to thrive and progress, regardless of gender.

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Leadership	Conduct a review of the inclusiveness of the language used in policies	March 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Leadership	Conduct a review of inclusive language used in recruitment, selection and career development policies and practices	December 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Publish the inclusive communication toolkit and promote to all staff	February 2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Education	Inclusive manager and leadership education for department senior leaders	June 2021	Learning and Professional Development
Leadership	Commitment to collecting and monitoring data	Ongoing	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Workforce Planning; Organisational Transformation and Capability



## Policy context

The strategy aligns to the Queensland public sector *Inclusion and Diversity strategy 2015–2020*, the *Queensland Public Sector Gender Equity Strategy 2015–2020* as well as *Queensland Government Women’s Strategy 2016–21*.

Gender inequality is not experienced in the same way by all women or men but as a result of a range of contributing factors, including but not limited to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, culture, ability, sexuality, gender identity, or age.

Pathways to Parity is one of six focus areas for delivery within the department’s *Diversity and Inclusion Framework – We all belong*. Implementation of the strategy also supports the department’s [Preventing workplace bullying, sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination](#) policy. This policy mandates the establishment and maintenance of a respectful workplace culture across the department, including sexual harassment, outlining expected behaviours of employees regarding the treatment of any other person in the course of performing their duties.

## The legal context

The rights of all employees to access and experience a workplace free of discrimination are outlined in the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, which prohibits direct or indirect discrimination of persons on the basis of sex, and the *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019*. At the *Commonwealth level*, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of sex. The *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* aims to improve and promote equality for both women and men in the workplace:

- Direct discrimination is treating another person less favourably on the basis of sex, than someone without that attribute would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.
- Indirect discrimination is imposing, or proposing to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that has, or is likely to disadvantage people on the basis of sex, and which is not reasonable in the circumstances.

Employees are able to make complaints to either the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission, 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 sex.

## Governance and measuring success

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

To support and demonstrate our goals, we will:

- Appoint an official Executive Champion for the strategy by end 2019
- Observe and report on results in the School Opinion Survey and Working for Queensland Survey
- Commence pilot job sharing platform by end 2019
- Ongoing engagement and feedback opportunities with key stakeholders
- Continue to report to the Public Service Commission on progress against our workforce targets and gender pay gap.



## Further reading

- Queensland Public Sector Gender Equity Strategy
- We All Belong Framework
- Queensland Government Women's Strategy
- Carers Queensland
- Parents and Carers online community of inclusion (OnePortal)

## References

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pathways  
to parity

Part of the  
**we all belong**  
initiative