Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy

2023–2027

City of Newcastle

Acknowledgment

'Niirun Yalawa Awabakal and Worimi burrei'
We all sit on Awabakal and Worimi land.

City of Newcastle acknowledges its Local Government Area sits within the Country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient relationships. We acknowledge the custodianship of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples and the care and stewardship they have performed in this place since time immemorial.

'Wunyibu wunyibu warra wunyibu wunyibu gkuuba Aboriginal burrei'
Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

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Message from the Lord Mayor

City of Newcastle's Community Strategic Plan that envisions Newcastle will be a liveable, sustainable, and inclusive global city by 2040. We want to embrace and champion inclusion so that Newcastle really does become a city for everyone.

Newcastle is a proud community that has been shaped by our shared history. But it's also increasingly made up of people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse identities and lived experiences.

As one of the biggest employers in the region and the key service provider for the Newcastle community members, we need to ensure that we reflect the diversity of the community we serve. We recognise that an inclusive workplace with a diverse workforce provides the best possible outcomes for our people and our city.

We have many wins to be proud of. We were the first Australian Council to fly the Aboriginal flag in 1977. We were the first Australian Council to popularly elect a female Lord-Mayor in 1974. Almost 75 per cent of the Newcastle electorate voted "yes" in the Federal Government Survey on marriage equality in 2017, highest of any non-capital city in Australia and well above the state and national averages.

Our *Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Strategy 2023–2027* will provide a framework for us to ensure that we continue on this journey and that we reflect internally who we seek to represent externally and what we seek to achieve for our community into the future.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this strategy. I look forward to championing its implementation.

Nuatali Nelmes

Message from the CEO

Our community is made up of people with diverse experiences and perspectives – and quite obviously then so should our organisation! We want to be an employer of choice for people from all walks of life, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it makes business sense.

According to research, inclusive workplaces are[1]:

- Twice as likely to meet or exceed their (financial) targets
- Three times more likely to be high-performing
- Six times more likely to be innovative and agile
- Eight times more likely to achieve better business outcomes.

City of Newcastle (CN) is committed to making Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (IDE) in the workplace a priority. We want to create an inclusive workplace culture where everyone feels respected, safe, and valued so they can be themselves and fully contribute their perspectives and have equitable access to opportunities. That is what equity and inclusion mean to us. And we know that diversity doesn't work without inclusion.

Before embarking on this journey, CN wanted to make sure that it has a good understanding of its baseline as an organisation. That's why we conducted an audit in 2021 to assess our organisational maturity in IDE. We ran focus groups and information sessions, we interviewed a broad range of individuals across the whole organisation, we included IDE related questions in the Employee Engagement Survey, and we shared the draft Strategy with the whole organisation to make sure we capture the perspectives of everyone who wanted to provide input. Our people told us that IDE is about having a supportive, safe, welcoming, and fair environment defined by equal opportunities, trust, and respect. We listened.

Our *Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Strategy 2023–2027* outlines the steps we now need to take over the next five years to remove barriers to inclusion, equity and participation of everyone in the workplace. The Strategy replaces our existing Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and is aligned with our CREW (Collaboration, Respect, Excellence, Wellbeing) values, our Blue Bus behaviour and the principles of inclusivity outlined in our Newcastle Community Strategic Plan 2040.

The world is changing, and we need to change with it! We are dealing with increasingly complex challenges and issues that require more than one or two or three ways of thinking. To successfully transform Newcastle into a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city by 2040, we need the strength of many minds!

IDE is about how we do our work and how we treat each other every day. It's a shared responsibility of everyone in the workplace. We all need to play a part in making CN an even greater place to work, and Newcastle an even greater city to live in.

Jeremy Bath

City of Newcastle

Introduction

Our Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (IDE) Strategy outlines the steps we need to take over the next five years to remove barriers to inclusion and participation of everyone in the workplace.

The Strategy will replace our existing Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and is aligned with the principles of inclusivity outlined in our Newcastle Community Strategy Plan 2040.

This Strategy is internal-facing and is designed to bring about a culture change within the workplace. However, we acknowledge that there are significant overlaps between internal- and external-facing IDE initiatives. We believe that our internal efforts will help to create positive outcomes for the community through more inclusive, equitable and accessible service delivery and behaviour of staff.

We are committed to the principles of co-design, as outlined by the NSW Council of Social Service[2]. We will work closely with our internal and external stakeholders and partners (including the Access & Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee) on the implementation of relevant action items to ensure that the perspectives and voices of people with lived experience are heard.

Our Compass – What do we stand for?

Our vision

Newcastle is a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city. These themes work together in harmony to deliver our vision for Newcastle as a place for everyone.

"Inclusion" and "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture" as well we "Social justice principles" (Equity, Access, Participation, Rights) are listed as three of six non-negotiable commitments we have made under the *Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan*.

The IDE Strategy will play a critical role to enable CN to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the *Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan*, by building an inclusive workplace culture with a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve.

Plan on a page

NEWCASTLE 2040
it's our *future*

Newcastle is a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city

Our commitments

Inclusion	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture	Supporting local
Our planet	Innovation	Social justice principles

1. Liveable

1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places
1.1.1 Great spaces
1.1.2 Well-designed places
1.1.3 Protected heritage places

1.2 Connected and fair communities
1.2.1 Connected communities
1.2.2 Inclusive communities
1.2.3 Equitable communities
1.2.4 Healthy communities

1.3 Safe, active and linked movement across the city
1.3.1 Connected cycleways and walking networks
1.3.2 Road networks
1.3.3 Managed parking
1.3.4 Effective public transport

1.4 Innovative and connected city
1.4.1 Emerging technologies
1.4.2 Digital inclusion and social innovation

2. Sustainable

2.1 Action on climate change
2.1.1 Towards net zero emissions
2.1.2 Know and share our climate risk
2.1.3 Resilient urban and natural areas

2.2 Nature-based solutions
2.2.1 Regenerate natural systems
2.2.2 Expand the urban forest
2.2.3 Achieve a water sensitive city

2.3 Circular economy
2.3.1 Design out waste
2.3.2 Localised supply chain and sustainable procurement

3. Creative

3.1 Vibrant and creative city
3.1.1 Vibrant events
3.1.2 Bold and challenging programs
3.1.3 Tourism and visitor economy
3.1.4 Vibrant night-time economy

3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation
3.2.1 Inclusive opportunities
3.2.2 Skilled people and businesses
3.2.3 Innovative people and businesses

3.3 Celebrating culture
3.3.1 Nurture cultural and creative practitioners
3.3.2 Promote Newcastle as a major arts and cultural destination
3.3.3 Culture in everyday life

3.4 City-shaping partnerships
3.4.1 Optimise city opportunities
3.4.2 Government relations and advocacy

4. Achieving Together

4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning
4.1.1 Financial sustainability
4.1.2 Integrated planning and reporting
4.1.3 Aligned and engaged workforce

4.2 Trust and transparency
4.2.1 Genuine engagement
4.2.2 Shared information and celebration of success
4.2.3 Trusted customer experience

4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach
4.3.1 Collaborative organisation
4.3.2 Innovation and continuous improvement
4.3.3 Data innovation and insight

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Strategic Objectives in the CSP – Delivering Newcastle 2040	Strategies to achieve key objectives	IDE Strategy outcomes
1. Liveable Liveable Newcastle is about creating a great city for our community to live in and supporting all members of our community to succeed and live well.	**1.2. Connected and fair communities** 1.2.1 Connected communities 1.2.2 Inclusive communities 1.2.3 Equitable communities	1. Increased engagement in IDE 2. Increased awareness of IDE 3. People's diverse lived experiences are visible and included in decision-making 7. Liaison with key external stakeholders
3. Creative Creative Newcastle is about creating a city full of opportunities for enjoyable experiences, economic success, innovation and celebration.	**3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation** 3.2.1 Inclusive opportunities 3.2.2 Skilled people and businesses 3.2.3 Innovative people and businesses	11. Progress towards diverse representation at leadership levels is tracked 12. Progress towards increased representation of people from diverse backgrounds 13. Fair and equitable recruitment practices 14. Improved retention and career progression for people from diverse backgrounds
4. Achieving Together Our people come together to collaborate, share great ideas and opportunities, and co-create positive change for our organisation and city.	**4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning** 4.1.3 Aligned and engaged workforce	4. IDE is embedded into existing systems and processes 8. IDE is visibly championed by leaders across the organisation 10. Inclusive leadership is embedded into existing organisational frameworks
	4.2 Trust and transparency 4.2.1 Genuine engagement 4.2.3 Trusted customer experience	5. Strategic frameworks and structures to ensure accountability 7. Liaison with key external stakeholders
	4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach 4.3.1 Collaborative organisation 4.3.3 Data-driven decision-making and insights	6. Increased organisational IDE capability 9. Inclusive leadership capability is built across the organisation 11. Progress towards diverse representation at leadership levels is tracked

Our values

Our commitment to IDE is strongly aligned with our existing strategies and plans as well as our CREW values.

CREW

Cooperation	IDE enhances **Collaboration** because it increases empathy and encourages curiosity and understanding for other people's situation.
Respect	IDE fosters a culture of **Respect** for everyone's uniqueness, dignity, and different opinions.
Excellence	IDE leads to organisational **Excellence** because it improves performance and innovation, as shown in the research above.
Wellbeing	Inclusive workplaces with a diverse workforce are linked to improved mental **Wellbeing**, increased work satisfaction and better career development opportunities for everyone because they are based on understanding and appreciating everyone's worth and strengths and potentials.

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What CREW means to CN as an organisation

Cooperation	Respect	Excellence	Wellbeing
• We work together as an organisation, helping and supporting each other • We are accountable for delivering responsive and professional customer service • We communicate in an open and honest manner	• We respect diverse views and opinions and act with integrity • We are professional, respectful and courteous to our customers and work colleagues • We are accountable for our actions and words	• We strive for quality and improvement in everything we do • We show initiative and willingness to learn and change • We develop our people and acknowledge our achievements	• We develop a safe and supportive environment • We find a balance to manage work, life, personal and professional responsibilities • We aim for zero harm in the workplace

The Blue Bus Culture

IDE is also strongly aligned with our Blue Bus Culture which outlines a work environment characterised by **open communication, collaboration, and goal achievement**. The Blue Bus Culture highlights the importance of innovative problem-solving and creating positive outcomes for everyone in the workplace and in the community.
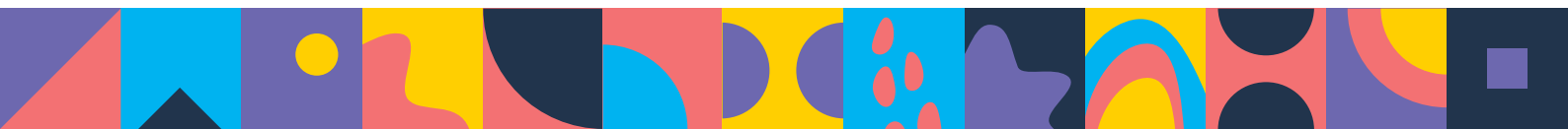
> "
>
> I went through a lot of hardship in my personal life recently as well as challenges from colleagues in the workplace because I am an Aboriginal man. I had great support from P&C and my leadership. They helped me get support from EAP and encouraged me to take on a leadership role even though it was hard. I wouldn't be where I am today if not for them.
>
> "
>
> – CN staff member

Our context

CN Reference	IDE link
Workforce Development Strategic Plan 2022–2026	The *Workforce Development Strategic Plan* points out the following challenges and opportunities, which the IDE Strategy will help to address: • Turning the "Great Resignation" into the "Great Retention" through workplace culture • Flexibility within a Framework to attract more employees from diverse backgrounds • Emerging skills and capabilities by building soft skills that will be in increasingly high demand in the future, including the ability to work with diverse people
Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025	The *Health & Wellbeing Strategy* outlines Equity, Access, and a Person-Centred Approach as its Guiding Principles, all of which are aligned with the underlying goals and anticipated outcomes of the IDE Strategy.
Local Social Strategy 2030	The *Local Social Strategy* provides a framework for CN and the community to remove barriers to inclusion and equal opportunity, encourage community connection and participation, celebrate our rich social and cultural diversity, and strengthen community health and wellbeing. The Local Social Strategy outlines Equity, Access, Participation and Rights as its Guiding Principles. Equitable, Inclusive, Connected and Healthy Communities have been identified as strategic priorities.
Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021–2025	The *Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)* outlines CN's commitment to advocate for the equal rights of all and to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our city and community. The actions outlined under the DIAP's priority areas "Attitudes and behaviours", "Employment" and "Systems and processes" are aligned with the overarching actions in the IDE Strategy.
Reconciliation Action Plan 2021–2024	CN's third *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* outlines Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance as its four key pillars. The actions under each pillar are strongly aligned with the actions in the IDE Strategy, including a strong emphasis on creating equitable employment opportunities, building awareness and engagement within CN, and focussing on building an inclusive and respectful workplace culture.

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CN Reference	IDE link
Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2021-2024	CN's second *Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES)* is strongly aligned with the IDE Strategy. The goals and actions under each of the four AES focus areas (Recruitment & Employment Pathways, Retention & Career Development, Culturally Safe and Inclusive Workplace, Accountable and Transparent Monitoring) support the same outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as the overall IDE Strategy aims to achieve for the overall workforce.
Customer Experience Strategy	CN's *Customer Experience Strategy* outlines 'Know and Care for Me' as its first strategic priority, emphasising the importance of building a culture that encourages empathy, understanding and willingness, to work alongside customers and colleagues. Employee connectedness has been identified as a target outcome under this strategic priority.
Leadership Capability Framework	A *Leadership Capability Framework* is currently being developed, which will take into consideration the importance of inclusive leadership.
Culture Strategy	A *Culture Strategy* is currently being developed, which will take into consideration the importance of an inclusive and psychologically safe workplace culture.

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The IDE Strategy is aligned with the following relevant State and Federal frameworks and legislation:

- Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031
- Public Sector Commission NSW Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- Public Sector Commission NSW Belonging and Inclusion Strategy 2022
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025
- NSW Women's Strategy 2018-2022
- Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan 2021-2025
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Commonwealth Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009
- Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Local Government Act 1993, Section 345
- NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- NSW Government Sector Employment Act 2013
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

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Our Perspective – What does Inclusion, Diversity & Equity mean to us?

Inclusion

Inclusion is what makes diversity work. It's what happens when people feel that their uniqueness is valued and respected, that they have fair access to opportunities and resources, and that they are safe to speak up and contribute their ideas and talents to the success of the organisation (Diversity Council of Australia). Inclusion is the key to leveraging employee diversity in the workplace.

Inclusion is also about acknowledging and addressing the systemic barriers that exist in the workplace for people who belong to marginalised and underrepresented groups.

Diversity

At CN, we define diversity as the combination of differences and unique attributes that make us who we are. It includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences, perspectives, and beliefs, but also other factors like communication style, career path, educational or socio-economic background, geographic location, family circumstances. Diversity is made up of both visible and invisible aspects of our identities that shape our view of the world and our approach.

Diversity is also about respecting differences based on protected attributes under Australian anti-discrimination law, such as gender identity, age, ethnicity or cultural background, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or caring responsibilities, and recognising the additional challenges some people face in the workplace because they belong to a marginalised group.

Equity, equality and privilege

Equality means giving everyone the same treatment, regardless of people's circumstances or requirements. But treating everyone the same can only result in fair outcomes if we all start from the same place in life, and we know that this is not the case.

Equity, on the other hand, implies giving everyone what they need to be successful, taking their circumstances and requirements into consideration. Equity is therefore aiming for equal outcomes rather than equal treatment.

When committing to equity, we need to acknowledge 'privilege'. Sometimes bestowed at birth and sometimes earnt, privilege refers to the special rights, advantages, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it and gives individuals and organisations a large portion of the power they experience in relation to others.

To promote inclusion, we need to acknowledge our own privilege as well as the unequal starting place others may have. Only then can we actively work towards removing some of the systemic barriers that have created privilege in the first place.

At CN, we are committed to ensuring that everyone in our organisation and our community has access to the same opportunities to be the best they can be and to progress. We will actively strive to address barriers and create an inclusive and accessible culture, systems, and processes.
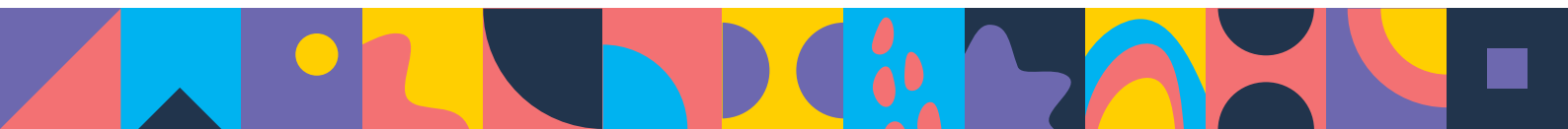
Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the way people's experiences are shaped by overlapping aspects of their identity, such as their gender identity, age, cultural background, socio-economic background, caring responsibility, or sexuality. This combination of different perspectives and experiences makes up a person's unique and multi-dimensional identity.

Intersectionality is also about understanding the privileges as well as the types of discrimination or exclusion people can experience simultaneously at any given time because of the different aspects of their identity (for example, sexual orientation and cultural background together).

At CN, we understand that attitudes, systems and structures in our organisation as well as in the wider community can interact to create systemic bias, which in turn can result in exclusion. This puts some people at a greater risk of experiencing disadvantages and barriers to participation at work, often leading to social and workplace isolation.

We recognise that people from diverse backgrounds often experience additional disadvantages and barriers in the workplace, and that we therefore don't all start from the same place. That is why we focus on equity rather than equality. Our overall aim is to level the playing field and to provide everyone with the same access to opportunities.

Psychological safety

Psychological safety is about enabling honest and courageous conversations. A psychologically safe organisation is one where team members believe they can speak up, challenge the status quo, and share their diverse ideas as well as questions, concerns, and even mistakes, without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety supports people to thrive at work and is a vital ingredient that leverages the benefits of diversity because it helps make inclusion a reality. It is a key enabler for innovation and performance.

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Our Diverse Community – Who are we serving?

Newcastle is located about 160 km north of Sydney. It is Australia's seventh-largest city and is the centre of the Greater Newcastle Region, the largest regional centre in NSW. Newcastle is the economic hub of the Hunter Region and accounts for approximately 30% of the Hunter's developed industrial space and 80% of its office space.

NSW
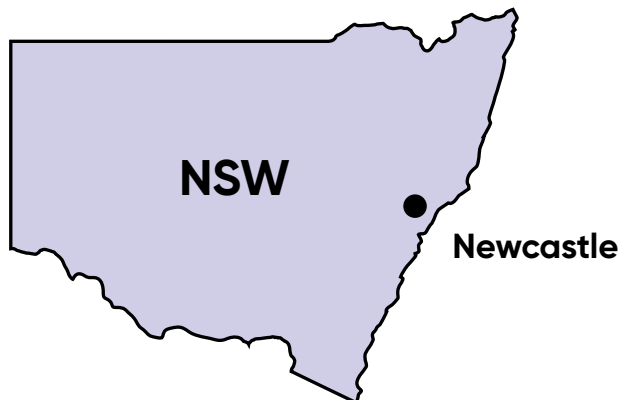
Newcastle

167,481
Newcastle
population 2021

201,668
Projected
population by 2041

19.7%
Identified as having
a disability (ABS, 2018)*

11.2%
Identified as
carers (ABS, 2018)*

4.4%
Identified as
Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander
(ABS, 2021)

12.4%
spoke a language
other than English
(LOTE) at home
(ABS, 2021)

19.2%
were born overseas
(ABS, 2021)

18.5%
had both parents
born overseas
(ABS, 2021)

Based on data from the Australian Human Rights Commission from 2014, on a national level, up to **11%** of Australians may have a diverse sexual orientation, sex, or gender identity. In Newcastle, this would equate to approximately **20,000** people.**

Based on data from the NSW Gender Equality Dashboard, the gender pay gap in NSW was **14.5%** in 2021. Workforce participation in NSW was **70.2%** for men, compared to **60.9%** for women,

*   *Please note: 2021 data for the Newcastle LGA had not been released at the time this Strategy was published.*
** *Please note: State or regional data as well as more up-to-date data for this group is not available.*

Our Business Case – Why do we do this work?

As a public sector organisation, the purpose of City of Newcastle (CN) is to serve the community which is made up of people with diverse experiences and perspectives.

Why is Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (IDE) important to CN as an organisation?

CN wants to be an employer of choice for people from all walks of life and is committed to making IDE in the workplace a priority. CN wants to create an inclusive workplace culture where everyone feels respected, safe, and valued so they can be themselves and fully contribute their opinions and perspectives to the success of the organisation. This is what unlocks people's discretionary efforts and lifts the organisation from performing to high performing.

CN aspires to turn Newcastle into a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city. This can only be achieved if the organisation attracts and retains the best talent from 100% of the population, which means reflecting the diversity of the community we serve – excluding no one in the process.

If CN wants to be a Local Government leader and move past the traditional perception of "Roads, Rubbish and Rates", we need to be at the forefront of IDE so we can show that we are going beyond the fundamentals by building a vibrant and innovative city that attracts people from diverse backgrounds to the region.

CN is one of the largest employers in the Hunter region and the closest tier of government to the community. It's important that it reflects inwardly what it is saying outwardly. CN can only deliver the best and most relevant outcomes for the community if staff understand and respond to the community's diverse needs, which are ever-changing and therefore require adaptation and connection. IDE can be an enabler for this connection and adaptation.

CN is a very diverse organisation in terms of the services it provides. It makes sense to have a diversity of people delivering those services to the community. Equally important is that the members of the community need to see themselves reflected in the organisation to build trust and acceptance. Including a diversity of voices will ensure stronger policies and processes to deliver better outcomes for the community.

Why is Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (IDE) important for all employees?

Feelings of exclusion and even seemingly minor acts of unfair treatment at work, especially if experienced over prolonged periods of time, can have detrimental effects on people's mental health. Everyone has been impacted by inclusion or exclusion at some point in their lives, whether it be through their own experiences or through someone they care about.

Research[3] tells us that inclusion has positive effects on everyone in the workplace, regardless of whether they directly benefit from any targeted IDE initiatives. Inclusive workplaces with a diverse workforce are linked to improved mental wellbeing, increased work satisfaction and better career development opportunities for everyone because they are based on understanding and appreciating everyone's worth, strengths and potentials.

Key to this is for you to feel comfortable about being and expressing yourself at work and knowing that you won't be punished, rejected, or humiliated because of who you are. This is known as "psychological safety" – see definition on page 17.

Why do Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (IDE) initiatives work?

On average, we spend more time at work than we do at home. So, it makes sense that people want to feel comfortable and safe to be themselves at work. That is what makes them more productive and more engaged. Simply speaking, IDE makes people happy which helps to unlock discretionary efforts and to boost retention rates, in turn leading to reduced recruitment costs.

It can be dangerous when a homogenous group makes important decisions about a heterogenous group. Diverse organisations are less likely to be blind-sighted. A diversity of opinions leads to creativity and better problem solving as well as risk mitigation – all immensely important in today's VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) world.

Our Priorities – How do we make the biggest difference?

Strategic pillars

The foundation of our Strategy and the starting point of our efforts is a focus on inclusion, which relates to everyone in the organisation. We want to create a sense of belonging for everyone in the workplace. We work on the assumption that by being inclusive of all, we embrace the diversity of all.

The below pillars will enable us to build the capabilities of our staff and our leaders to not only deal with and manage difference, but to turn it into our asset.

1. Inclusive and welcoming workplace culture

To foster a workplace culture where people feel respected, safe, and valued to share their diverse perspectives and talents to contribute to CN's success

2. Inclusive leadership

To build leaders that are authentic, empathetic, self-aware, flexible, curious, and emotionally intelligent to successfully manage diverse teams and help people reach their full potential

3. Diverse and representative workforce

To become an employer of choice for the best talent from 100% of the working age population and to reflect the diversity of the community we serve
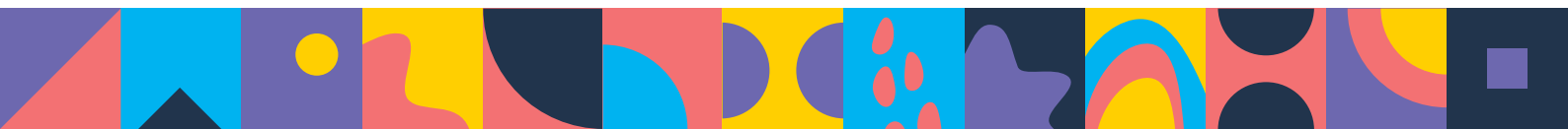
Focus Areas

Research[4] shows that the members of some groups continue to face systemic barriers and disadvantages in the workplace. These are cohorts who are traditionally prioritised in organisational IDE efforts. They are summarised under the following Focus Areas (in alphabetical order):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement
- Accessibility
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- Gender equity
- LGBTIQ+ inclusion

Refer to '**Definitions and Key Facts**' for more information about each of the Focus Areas.

An inclusive workplace culture benefits everyone, regardless of whether people belong to our Focus Areas or not. The intention behind prioritisation is for us to be able to offer equal opportunities to people who have traditionally had limited or no access to these opportunities. It also takes into consideration the level of maturity of CN and the limitations in terms of resources. It also allows us to track progress for target groups.

Our Baseline – Where are we now?

We acknowledge that organisational change takes time. We therefore understand that CN will undergo a gradual maturity process to enable and embed IDE into our organisational culture. The model on page 25 illustrates the stages organisations typically move through during this process.

In 2021, CN commissioned an audit to assess the organisational maturity in terms of IDE, including research into what IDE means for CN and why it's important.

Based on the audit, CN overall was assessed to be at Level 1 (Compliance), heading towards Level 2 (Programmatic). This means that the current IDE focus is largely on complying with equal employment opportunity legislation and the centre of gravity is the People & Culture/IDE team who are expected to lead and drive IDE on behalf of the organisation.

It's important to note that there is great variability across the organisation, with some Service Units and teams as well as individual leaders more advanced than others.

City of Newcastle

Figure 1: Deloitte Diversity & Inclusion Organisational Maturity Model

The Deloitte diversity and inclusion maturity model

Mandate — Transition point — Movement

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	COMPLIANCE	PROGRAMMATIC	LEADER-LED	INTEGRATED
Focus	Compliance with equal opportunity/ affirmative action goals	Increasing the representation of specific demographic groups (e.g., women)	Leveling the playing field for all employees by addressing systemic cultural barriers	Leveraging difference to create business value
Center of gravity	Leagal/HR/D&I team	HR/D&I team	Business leaders	Whole organization
Illustrative characteristics	• Largely homogeneous workforce • Diversity seen as a problem to be managed • Legacy clubs/ cliques and other passive exclusions exist • Actions are largely reactive; any additional focus is on the recruitment of diverse talent	• Business case is articulated • Diversity seen in terms of demographic numbers and targets in place • Ad-hoc and/or stand-alone initiatives such as mentoring, unconscious bias training, employee resource groups and events • Resistance from the majority is nascent • Minority employees adapt or leave	• More sophisticated understanding of D&I and link to business strategy • D&I a personal priority for the CEO and exectuive team • Systemic cultural barriers surfaced • Strategy for culture change created and growing resistance managed • Leaders/managers are committed, role model inclusion, and are held accountable for actions/outcomes • Talent systems reset • Progress monitored relentlessly	• Workforce is demographically and cognitively diverse • Shared sense of purpose (i.e., diversity of thinking) and meaning • Integration into all aspects of the organization – e.g., behaviors, structures, and systems • Flexibility mainstreamed • Focus on high-performing, diverse-thinking teams • External brand matches internal one

Our Roadmap – How will we get to the next level?

CN's current level of maturity provides us with a rare opportunity to create solid foundations so that our IDE efforts are not only sustainable, but so that we can also measure our progress and hold ourselves accountable.

2022
Baseline & Foundations

2023-2024
Awareness & Engagement

2024-2025
Embedding & Systems

2025-2026
Monitoring & Evaluation

IDE Governance
Data baseline
IDE Strategy

IDE Training Initiatives
Communications
Networks

Policies
Processes
Programs

Data monitoring
Evaluation
Strategy review

Strategic pillar #1

Inclusive and welcoming workplace culture

We want CN to be a great place to work for everyone. We know that an inclusive workplace culture is necessary to leverage the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Creating a truly equitable and inclusive workplace culture requires unpacking privilege, in teams, in workplaces and in the community. There will be no equity or accountability if people's experiences are minimised, avoided or denied. This starts with acknowledging the effects of discrimination, stereotypes and assumptions, bias, and stigma.

Implementing and embedding IDE into CN's workplace culture is a change process. If we want to make this change last, we need to be prepared to have honest and courageous conversations about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour at CN, challenge it when we see it, and ensure there are consequences for transgression. We all need to take responsibility to eliminate and counteract discrimination and exclusion in our everyday behaviour, our organisational culture and our systems and processes.

Allies and champions will play a crucial role in supporting and promoting IDE at CN. An ally is someone who does not necessarily identify as a member of a Focus Area or a marginalised group of people. Instead, they amplify the voices of people from diverse backgrounds and advocate on their behalf, thereby doubling the collective impact. Allies consciously create safe spaces for colleagues, call out exclusion and discrimination and lead by example across all divisions.

Our journey towards IDE will require us to develop a new way of interacting with each other. We know that a diverse workforce can only result in benefits if it is combined with a workplace culture that welcomes diverse perspectives and empowers all employees to participate and contribute their opinions and talents, regardless of their identity or background.

Ultimately, it is the actions and behaviours of all employees that will determine our success.

Goal #1:

Inclusion, Diversity & Equity is embedded in CN's workplace culture and considered to be Business-as-Usual rather than an additional thing to do.

Goal #2:

At CN, psychological safety is just as important as physical safety, and diverse opinions and perspectives are not only welcomed but actively encouraged.

Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Increased engagement in IDE	1.1 Establish Staff Networks (Employee Resource Group) for all Focus Areas and actively encourage staff to join and get involved	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Leadership Team	FY 23/24 – FY 25/26
	1.2 Encourage IDE conversations and considerations to be part of regular Team/Service Unit and/or other recurring meetings	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT; Leadership Team	FY 23/24 – FY 25/26
	1.3 Explore options to offer people a variety of pathways and channels (including private/anonymous) to provide input into IDE and to share personal experiences	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 23/24
	1.4 Expand on existing recognition mechanisms (e.g. Blue Bus, Rewards) to highlight work that enhances IDE across CN and people who go above and beyond in demonstrating inclusive behaviour	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 24/25
2. Increased IDE awareness	2.1 Develop a communications campaign to drive IDE awareness and engagement across CN	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 22/23
	2.2 Regularly communicate IDE updates via internal and external media to keep momentum and engagement	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Major Events & Corporate Affairs	FY 22/23 – FY 25/26

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
2. Increased IDE awareness	2.3 Create list of Days of Significance to be officially acknowledged throughout the year via communication through Novo News and external media	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion (development); Major Events & Corporate Affairs (integration), Community Planning & Development (integration, collaboration)	FY 22/23
	2.4 Develop IDE resources (e.g., inclusive language guide, accessible content guide) and make available to all staff in a variety of formats	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion, Community Planning & Development	FY 22/23 and 23/24
	2.5 Develop a customised IDE e-learning that covers CN's strategic approach to IDE and the business case as well as legislation, and make this mandatory for all staff	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 23/24
	2.6 Encourage staff to incorporate inclusive practices into their everyday behaviour (e.g., asking for people's accessibility requirements before any meetings or engagement activities)	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT; Leadership Team	FY 24/25 – 25/26
3. People's diverse lived experiences are visible and included in decision-making	3.1 Explore opportunities to engage storytellers and advocates (both external and internal) to speak about diverse lived experiences (e.g. SPARKS), as they relate to CN's activities and objectives	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Major Events & Corporate Affairs; Learning, Planning & Engagement; Safety & Wellbeing, Community Planning & Development	FY 23/24 – FY 25/26
	3.2 Explore additional opportunities for people to contribute their ideas and have more impact in IDE (e.g., "IDE Innovation Hub")	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
3.People's diverse lived experiences are visible and included in decision-making	3.3 Explore opportunities for exposing staff to different work areas to experience their colleagues' realities and build empathy and understanding, in collaboration with the CX Strategy	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT; Customer Experience	FY 25/26
4. IDE is embedded into existing systems and processes	4.1. Incorporate IDE into corporate induction process, and inform new employees of IDE training, resources, support programs and ways to participate in IDE (incl. the Employee Resource Group) as part of the orientation program and onboarding	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement; Business Partnering; Safety & Wellbeing	FY 22/23
	4.2. Update Equal Employment Opportunity (Workplace Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment) Policy	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 22/23
	4.3. Explore options to enable systematic reporting of issues and risks that concern inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and psychological safety (similar to reporting physical safety risks)	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Safety & Wellbeing	FY 23/24
	4.4. Embed IDE into CN's mission and commitment statements, values, and Ways of Working	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; all of P&C; ELT	FY 24/25
	4.5. Integrate IDE into internal planning processes to enable SUMs to plan ahead and understand how to approach IDE reporting, including setting targets for Service Units	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Corporate Planning & Performance	FY 25/26
5.Strategic frameworks and structures to ensure accountability	5.1. Actively promote the aims and activities in this Strategy across CN	All of P&C	FY 22/23 – FY 25/26
	5.2. Explore options of conducting an audit of CN facilities to assess accessibility and inclusion (e.g., bathrooms, access, lighting, signage)	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Facilities Management; Property Services	FY 22/23

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
5. Strategic frameworks and structures to ensure accountability	5.3. Report biannually to the ELT on progress and the delivery of the IDE Strategy	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24
	5.4. Explore options to develop a Family and Domestic Violence Policy	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26
	5.5. Review internal policies/processes, identify gaps, and develop new policies as required to align with the IDE Strategy	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26
	5.6. Review IDE Strategy and Focus Areas to evaluate impact and assess potential reorientation of priorities	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26
	5.7. Explore participation in external benchmarking indexes	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
6. Increased organisational IDE capability	6.1. Develop and deliver pilot training programs in Inclusion, Diversity & Equity foundational awareness (e.g. covering topics such as unconscious bias, inclusive language, workplace adjustments, and bystander action), as well as specific training for the five Focus Areas	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement, Community Planning & Development	FY 22/23 – FY 25/26
	6.2. Offer training to Staff Networks on specific areas of interest	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 23/24
	6.3. Partner with Safety & Wellbeing team to deliver integrated training and information sessions on the link between IDE and S&W, e.g., psychological safety	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Safety & Wellbeing	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24
	6.4. Research and identify additional IDE skill gaps and provide contemporary learning solutions	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 24/25 – FY 25/26
7. Liaison with key external stakeholders	7.1. Create and maintain an IDE best practice support network through partnerships with the community, peak body organisations and Advisory Committees	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 23/24 – FY 25/26

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> **We will measure our progress by monitoring and tracking the following indicators, which provide insights about a number of the actions outlined above:**

IDE is actively championed and promoted by the Executive Leadership Team and the Leadership Team (e.g., through email updates, video promotions, attendance at events)

Increased levels of awareness and support for IDE objectives through feedback and engagement surveys

Staff Networks are created and have opportunities to contribute to IDE priorities, policies, and initiatives

Increased interest in people joining the Staff Networks

Increase in response rate for IDE-related questions in Employee Engagement Survey

IDE-related feedback in exit interviews

Improved data reliability through increased voluntary sharing of demographic diversity information

Progress towards equal retention and turnover rates of staff belonging to Focus Areas compared to overall organisation

Participation rates in IDE training and participant feedback, with specific targets to be determined by the ELT

Participation in IDE awards or indexes (e.g., AWEI, AND's Access and Inclusion Index, etc.) with progressive improvement in performance score overtime

CAMMS reporting against action items outlined in this Strategy

Increased access of resources (e.g., tracking the number of people accessing an EDM)

Tracking the number of complaints raised about discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, or vilification

Strategic pillar #2

Inclusive leadership

Research[5] tells us that diverse teams can significantly outperform homogenous teams. However, we also know that they can be less effective. Diversity can only lead to better results if it is managed in an inclusive and consistent way. After all, it is much easier to lead a team of people with similar thinking and working styles. The key is therefore having an inclusive leader that can advocate for and leverage the differences within their diverse teams to achieve better outcomes.

We expect our leaders to understand and demonstrate the business case for a more diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. We will support our leaders to manage their own biases, role model inclusive behaviours and challenge their own as well as others' stereotypes and assumptions which may hinder equitable decision-making or may exclude colleagues or members of the community.

We acknowledge that with greater positional power comes greater accountability. All our Executive Leaders, managers and team leaders will be expected to lead by example by encouraging their teams to engage with the initiatives identified in this Strategy.

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The results of the IDE audit suggest that say-do consistency of leaders makes a significant difference to whether people feel that IDE is a priority for the organisation. The more people feel included, the more they speak up, collaborate, and unlock discretional efforts — all of which ultimately contributes to organisational excellence.

We need to invest in developing the capability and skills of our leaders to support them to boldly lead our organisation in our commitment to IDE and in adapting to diverse colleagues, community members, ideas and talent.

The below model by Korn Ferry outlines the traits and competencies of inclusive leaders.

Figure 2

Korn Ferry Inclusive Leadership Model

City of Newcastle

Goal #3:

Our leaders actively promote and encourage Inclusion, Diversity & Equity and are visible role models for inclusive and equitable behaviour.

Goal #4:

Our leaders have the courage and capabilities to challenge unacceptable behaviour in the workplace (e.g. through education) and ensure adequate consequences.

Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
8. IDE is visibly championed by leaders across the organisation	8.1. Appoint Executive Champions at Executive Leader level for each of our Focus Areas	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT	FY 22/23
	8.2. Create strong communication narrative for ELT as well as targeted leader communication strategy for IDE (e.g., messages from Directors where they share their personal IDE stories to make them more relatable and authentic)	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT	FY 22/23
	8.3. Provide training and/or briefings to Executive Champions about IDE and their designated Focus Area	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 23/24
	8.4. Advocate for strong senior leadership representation on the Staff Networks	All of P&C, ELT; Leadership Team	FY 24/25 – FY 25/26
9. Inclusive leadership capability is built across the organisation	9.1. Schedule information sessions for Service Unit Managers to inform them about the IDE Strategy and their role in implementing it	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Business Partnering	FY 22/23
	9.2. Develop resources (e.g., toolkit) for managers to facilitate inclusion in their areas and teams	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
9. Inclusive leadership capability is built across the organisation	9.3. Develop and deliver a pilot training program for all people leaders to help them develop inclusive leadership skills (including upholding a zero–tolerance towards, and taking all reasonable and proportionate actions to eliminate any forms of discrimination, harassment, abuse, or victimisation in the workplace)	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 24/25 – FY 25/26
	9.4. Explore options to offer targeted coaching sessions for leaders across CN to help build skills in approaching difficult situations related to IDE	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 24/25 – FY 25/26
10. Inclusive leadership is embedded into existing organisational frameworks	10.1. Integrate inclusive leadership as a key capability into the CN Leadership Capability Framework	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 23/24
	10.2. Explore options to strengthen leadership accountability and engagement through performance management system, e.g., by adding IDE-related key performance indicators to senior leaders' PDPs/KPIs	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26
	10.3. Develop a framework (e.g., Statement of Commitment, Leadership Expectations or Charter) that reflects CN's focus on IDE, and the related expectations on leaders	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26
11. Progress towards diverse representation at leadership levels is tracked	11.1. Establish a mechanism to monitor and track progress of diverse representation in leadership positions	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Workforce Development	FY 24/25

We will measure our progress by monitoring and tracking the following indicators, which provide insights about a number of the actions outlined above:

Gradual increase in representation of people belonging to our Focus Areas across leadership levels

Feedback from staff and community members about leadership at CN (e.g., community perception research, Employee Engagement Survey)

Increased communication (e.g., email updates, team meetings) from leaders about IDE

Leader participation rates in IDE training or workshops and participant feedback, with specific targets to be approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Feedback from Staff Networks about Executive Champions

Performance feedback in relation to IDE-specific KPIs and targets

CAMMS reporting against action items outlined in this Strategy

Strategic pillar #3

Diverse and reflective workforce

We know that a diverse workforce will help foster greater innovation, problem-solving, creativity and agility to address the challenges of tomorrow[6]. Organisations that concentrate on IDE initiatives lead within their respective sector, because they understand that the creation of a psychologically safe and inclusive workplace culture is necessary for fostering ideation and innovation.

We know that employees of diverse and inclusive organisations report being more satisfied, more engaged, and more productive. Research also tells us that diverse teams – if managed well – are better at decision-making, problem-solving and detecting risks before they occur because they challenge their own assumptions and take multiple perspectives into consideration.

Furthermore, we also need to create a trusting relationship with the community. Trust is built through familiarity. Community members need to see themselves reflected in the internal make-up of CN for them to trust that we will deliver the best possible outcomes to them.

We are committed to embedding IDE at all stages of the employee lifecycle. We want to attract, develop, and retain the best talent by supporting and enabling our employees to be the best they can be.

We are currently in the process of establishing a baseline and a consistent data collection process to measure and track our progress over time.

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Goal #5:

We are an employer of choice for staff from diverse backgrounds by recruiting, retaining, and developing a talented workforce that reflects the Newcastle community – with particular focus on increasing the participation of underrepresented groups.

Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
12. Progress towards increased representation of people from diverse background	12.1. Develop resources and educational materials for Hiring Managers to build understanding of inclusive recruitment practices	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; P&C Business Partnering	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24
	12.2. Establish data baseline and metrics to measure progress towards community representation, and encourage employees to share their diversity data for the purpose of tracking progress	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24
	12.3. Explore options to include IDE requirements in procurement activities with external providers (e.g., reviewing and updating relevant procurement policies and templates, updating weightings, providing visibility to the business when selecting vendors)	Talent Diversity & Inclusion; Procurement	FY 22/23 – 25/26
	12.4. Explore options to set organisational employment targets for Focus Areas.	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT	FY 23/24
	12.5. Explore options to increase visual representation of diverse people and groups in CN marketing and communications materials, both external and internal	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Major Events & Corporate Affairs, Community Planning & Development	FY 23/24

Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
12. Progress towards increased representation of people from diverse background	12.6. Work with our partners to include IDE requirements and guidelines in specifications when using employment agencies	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; P&C Business Partnering	FY 25/26
	12.7. Monitor workforce metrics to track retention and career progression within Focus Areas	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 24/25 – FY 25/26
	12.8. Include IDE metrics in Annual Report	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Corporate Planning & Performance	FY 24/25 – FY 25/26
	12.9. Explore options to gather community feedback on IDE to ensure CN is representative of the community's needs and expectations	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Community Planning & Development	FY 25/26
	12.10. Develop new approaches to talent acquisition advertising that use a wider range of platforms to reach diverse communities	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
13. Fair and equitable recruitment practices	13.1. Review talent acquisition process and systems to identify and remove barriers for inclusion (e.g. including a diversity of panel members during all talent acquisition activities)	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24
	13.2. Develop and deliver pilot training program (face-to-face or e-learning) in unconscious bias for all TDI staff as well as P&C Business Partners	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; P&C Business Partnering, Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 22/23 and FY 23/24
	13.3. Trial bias-proofing mechanisms (e.g., blind resumes) in our talent acquisition process to assess the impact of unconscious bias on outcomes	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 25/26
	13.4. Explore options to develop an e-learning on fair and equitable recruitment practices that is mandatory for all staff who are involved in talent acquisition	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26
14. Improved retention and career progression for people from diverse backgrounds	14.1. Draft Workplace Adjustments Framework and provide pilot training to P&C staff	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion	FY 23/24
	14.2. Assess opportunities to implement "special measures" (targeted) positions for Focus Areas to increase representation of and equity for underrepresented groups	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; ELT	FY 24/25
	14.3. Prioritise the inclusion of underrepresented groups in our existing employment programs	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 24/25
	14.4. Explore potential collaboration with external service providers (e.g., Disability Employment Services) to provide employment and engagement opportunities for people from underrepresented groups	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26

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Outcomes	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
14. Improved retention and career progression for people from diverse backgrounds	14.5. Identify and implement pipeline activities that allow for greater diversity across all Directorates, e.g., by creating a central register with all entry-level programs (Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Program or Intern Program) with a diversity component to help identify new talent	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26
	14.6. Explore the development of an inclusive mentoring program for Focus Areas. Monitor participation and effectiveness and assess after pilot program	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26
	14.7. Explore options to include IDE-related considerations into succession planning	Talent, Diversity & Inclusion; Learning, Planning & Engagement	FY 25/26

We will measure our progress by monitoring and tracking the following indicators, which provide insights about a number of the actions outlined above:

Gradual increase in representation of people belonging to our Focus Areas across all levels of the organisation

Feedback at the end of recruitment process indicating that there are no barriers to inclusion

Progress towards equal retention rates of people belonging to our Focus Areas compared to overall organisation

Progress towards a percentage of job applications from Focus Areas that is equivalent to or exceeds our employment targets (once set)

Career progression of people belonging to Focus Areas compared to overall organisation

Intake in talent pipeline programs prioritises Focus Areas and there is increased percentage of diverse candidates offered further employment at CN post-program

Gradual increase in response rate for IDE-related questions in Employee Engagement Survey

Increase in employee participation in diversity data collection process by 50% by 2026

Improved IDE-related feedback in exit interviews

CAMMS reporting against action items outlined in this Strategy

Our Engagement Framework – How will we ensure employee input and hold ourselves accountable?

5x Staff Networks (ERG)
Employee Resource Group, (ERG), made up of five individual networks with identified membership of people belonging to our Focus Areas or their allies. Appointed Network Representatives to report into the ERG Steering Committee.

IDE at CN

ERG Steering Commmittee
- Executive Champions
- Network Representatives
- D&I Team

P&C
- Strategic Partnering
- Strategy & Workforce Planning
- Safety & Wellbeing

CN will establish **Staff Networks** for the Focus Areas which will act as specialist internal reference groups for that Focus Area. The Networks will be made up of staff who identify as belonging to one of the Focus Areas and/or consider themselves as allies. The Networks provide support and advocacy to employees from diverse backgrounds and offer a "safe space" of like-minded people who may share experiences, concerns, and insights. This builds a sense of trust and engagement as well as psychological safety for people who may feel like they are part of a minority group. Together, the Networks will form an **Employee Resource Group (ERG)** for IDE at CN.

A **Network Representative** will be appointed for each Network. Their main role will be to provide input on behalf of and advocate for the interests of the Network, while ensuring alignment with the IDE Strategy.

An **Executive Champion** will be appointed for each of the Focus Areas and their main role is to be a visible figurehead and advocate for their allocated area, to remove barriers wherever possible, and to champion organisational IDE initiatives.

An **ERG Steering Committee** will combine the insights and recommendations from the five networks and provide regular reporting to the ELT. The ERG Steering Committee will consist of the Executive Champions, the Network Representatives, and the D&I Team.

Our Shared Responsibility – How can you support the strategy?

Building an inclusive workplace culture is a shared responsibility of everyone. It cannot be achieved or driven by one team or one Directorate alone. We therefore rely on everyone in the organisation to play an active role in supporting and championing IDE at CN.

How can staff support the strategy?

Support colleagues by being inclusive and report, or constructively challenge, non-inclusive behaviour.

Participate in our IDE surveys and initiatives to provide us with information on IDE at CN which helps us measure our progress and identify priority areas.

Participate in training and learning opportunities to find out more about IDE, and our Focus Areas.

Consider getting involved in IDE by joining one of our Staff Networks, and by taking on an active role in driving initiatives.

Share personal stories or experiences of IDE with colleagues at CN and advocate for change. Get in touch with the Diversity & Inclusion Partner if you would like to share your story.

Listen objectively and embrace the different perspectives of others.

Try not to judge your colleagues' personal situation based on your own experiences, as you are probably not aware of all the complexities of the situation.

Remember that words and language have a lot of power, so be mindful of your words to describe people and their situations. Use inclusive language and seek out information about how to show support for our Focus Areas and IDE in general.

Always ask whether people have dietary or accessibility requirements when you organise meetings, workshops, training sessions or events. Adjustments can often be as easy as providing the agenda or documents to be discussed in an electronic version beforehand so that people who may be using screen reader software can access the documents during the meeting.

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In addition, how can managers support the strategy?

Be a positive role model for your team by demonstrating inclusive behaviour and using inclusive language.

Consider how to actively include everyone in your team and encourage people to share their opinions openly.

Regularly talk about IDE during your team meetings, e.g., by sharing IDE stories or examples of where someone has shown particularly inclusive or exclusive behaviour and what the effect was.

Actively build an environment where staff feel safe and valued enough to speak up when they have differing opinions or to challenge the status quo.

Encourage your team to set development goals related to IDE, e.g., by attending training.

Show vulnerability by sharing your own IDE story, or an example of when you might have made a mistake or a biased decision and how you mitigated the situation.

Give people visible recognition for demonstrating inclusive behaviours, e.g., by giving an "IDE shout-out" at the start of your team meetings.

Have regular conversations with your team members about workplace adjustments and flexible work arrangements.

Take action to address non-inclusive behaviour and set expectations of your team.

Support and touch base regularly with colleagues if they discuss a difficult situation or issue with you. Refer them to EAP for professional support if appropriate.

Support staff to actively participate in IDE initiatives, e.g., by encouraging them to get involved in the Staff Networks or attend training.

When making decisions, ask yourself whose perspective has not been heard yet, whose voice is missing.

Invite constructive feedback from your team about your skills as an inclusive leader.

Learn about unconscious bias and how your own biases influence your decision-making processes.

City of Newcastle

In addition, how can senior leaders support the strategy?

Be a visible role model for inclusive behaviour and set the tone and expectations from the top.

Share your own experiences of IDE in the workplace. Consider showing some vulnerability and humility by admitting when you might have gotten it wrong.

Frequently communicate the importance of IDE for the organisation and individual employees.

Hold your teams and fellow leaders accountable.

Call out non-inclusive behaviour and ensure there are consequences when people's actions are not in line with our values and this Strategy.

Actively encourage and enable staff to participate in IDE initiatives, such as the Staff Networks.

The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.

– David Morrison

Definitions and Key Facts

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first inhabitants of Australia and comprise of diverse nations, each with their own language and traditions. Aboriginal people have an interconnected relationship with land and strong kinships.

Outdated definitions based on skin colour or percentages of Aboriginal blood have been replaced by modern definitions which stress ancestry and identification.

The Federal Government defines an Aboriginal person as someone who:

- Is of Aboriginal descent
- Identifies as an Aboriginal person and
- Is accepted as an Aboriginal person by the community in which they live.

This Strategy seeks to address the impacts of colonisations and generations of discriminatory practices that still resonate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Some important statistics:
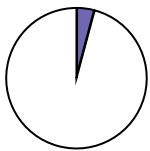
4.4%
in Newcastle

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are **3.2%** of the Australian population, **3.4%** of NSW population and **4.4%** of the Newcastle population. In the first pass of the recent census the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has increased by **25%**, making it the fastest growing population in Australia.

City of Newcastle

Accessibility

This refers to the equal access to services, buildings, systems, processes and employment opportunities for people with disability, noting that this includes both visible and invisible disabilities.

The old way of thinking about disability focused on an individual's impairment as a medical condition to be treated, fixed, or cured.

This has changed in recent years and the focus has now shifted towards an individual's interaction with their environment: Disability arises from the physical barriers, digital barriers and barriers of attitudes and communication that individuals encounter, which impact on their ability to equitably participate in society. This perspective takes into consideration that disability can be exacerbated by an environment that creates barriers. So the focus is on removing barriers and implementing adjustments that provide an equitable experience for people with disability – enhancing accessibility for all. This Is also known as the social model of Disability.

The legal definition of disability, in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, is:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour

It includes disability that:

- presently exists
- previously existed but no longer exists
- may exist in the future
- is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not).

Some important statistics:

Over 4.4. million people in Australia have some form of disability that is 1 in 5 people (around 20% of the population).

80%
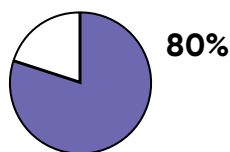
An estimated 80% of all disabilities are invisible.
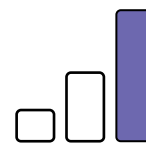
Disability discrimination accounts for the highest volume of complaints across the board to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the Diversity Council Australia, cultural diversity is defined as "having a mix of people from different cultural backgrounds – it can include differences in cultural/ethnic identity (how we identify ourselves and how others identify us), language, country of birth, religion, heritage/ancestry, national origin, and/or race."

Australia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world. Collectively, we identify with over 250 ancestries and speak over 200 languages. All people who migrate to Australia bring with them some of their own cultural and religious traditions, as well as taking on many new traditions. The collection of all of these customs have enriched our nation.

Some important statistics:

49%
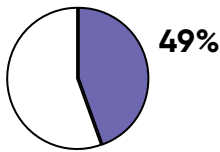
Almost half of Australia's population (49%) has either been born overseas or has at least one parent who was born overseas.

24.8%
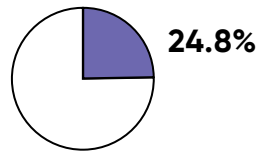
A quarter of all Australian households (24.8%) speak a language other than English at home.

18%
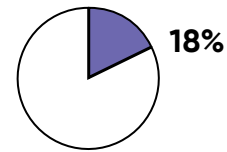
Up to 18% of Australians have experienced discrimination because of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion, 39% of those people experienced this discrimination at work.
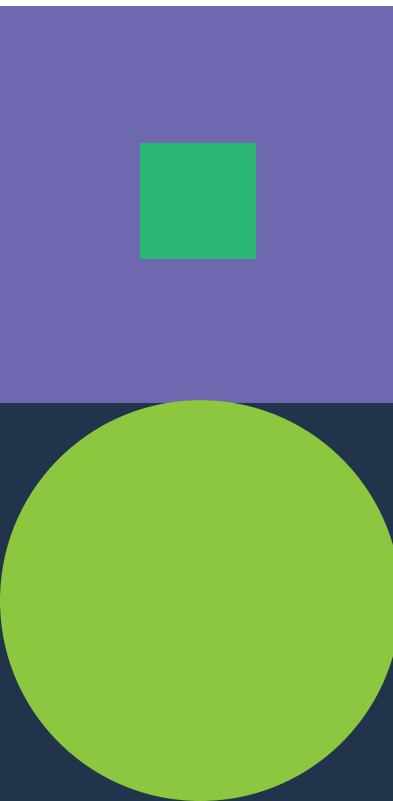
Gender equity

Gender equity in the workplace refers to a state when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of their gender. This means that people of different gender experiences can achieve broadly equal outcomes, but not necessarily exactly the same outcome. To achieve this, workplaces are required to:

- Provide equal pay for work of equal or comparable value
- Remove barriers to the full and equal participation of people of all genders in the workforce
- Provide access to all occupations and industries, including leadership roles, regardless of gender; and
- Actively eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender, particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities.

Gender equity is not just about women. Research suggests that gender equity in the workplace and in society benefits men as much as it benefits women.

Some important statistics:

Men still dominate higher paid roles in the NSW Government sector, but are less able to access flexible working and caring support arrangement
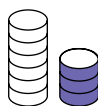
86%
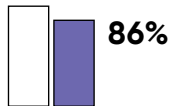
In 2020, women's full time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings were 86% of those of men

1 in every 2 mothers experiences discrimination during pregnancy, on parental leave or when returning to work

Women do nearly twice as much unpaid work as men

Women retire with half the superannuation savings of men

Women experience significantly more sexual harassment at work than men

LGBTIQ+ inclusion

The acronym "LGBTIQ+" stands for:

L = Lesbian: A person who identifies as a woman who is attracted romantically, physically, or emotionally to another woman.

G = Gay: A person who identifies as a man who is attracted romantically, physically, or emotionally to another man. Sometimes the term may also be adopted by a same-sex attracted woman, but it's best to check with the individual regarding their preferred terminology.

B = Bisexual: Individuals who are romantically, physically, or emotionally attracted to individuals of their own gender and other genders. Pansexual refers to people who are romantically, physically, or emotionally attracted to people of all genders.

T = Trans or Transgender: An umbrella term used to refer to individuals whose biological sex is different than the gender with which they identify. A person who is trans may have transitioned to their gender identity medically, and/or socially, or may not have. Trans as an umbrella term may also include people who are non-binary or gender non-conforming, where a person may identify as neither a man nor a women or their identity moves along the gender spectrum.

I = Intersex: The individual is born with physical sex characteristics, hormones or genetic features that don't fit medical and social norms for female and male bodies. Many forms of intersex exist; it is an umbrella term, rather than a single category. At least 30 - 40 different variations are known to science.

Q = Queer: An umbrella term used by some people to describe their sexual orientations or their gender identities.

"+" represents other diverse gender identities and sexual orientations that are not represented already in the acronym. Some of these include Pansexual, Asexual, Agender, Aromantic. There are countless ways a person may describe their identities, all of which are valid.
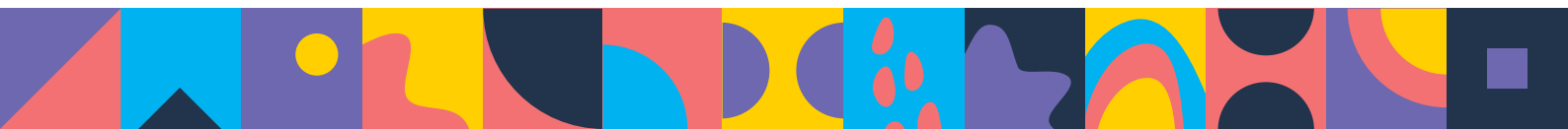
It's important to bear in mind five dimensions of human diversity when thinking about LGBTIQ+-related concepts:

Legal Sex: The marker or classification recorded when a child's birth is registered. This will usually be M or F. This marker can be amended to either M, F or X.

Sex Characteristics: Physical parts of the body that are related to body development/regulation and reproductive systems. Primary sex characteristics are gonads, chromosomes, genitals and hormones. Secondary sex characteristics emerge at puberty and can include the development of breast tissue, voice pitch, facial and pubic hair etc. Based on sex characteristics an individual may be assigned at birth either Male, Female or Intersex.

Gender Identity: A person's internal sense of gender which may or may not align with their birth sex. Common options include man, woman, both man and woman, and gender queer.

Gender Expression: A person's outward manifestation of gender, including how they dress and their mannerisms. Common options include masculine, feminine, non-binary, or gender neutral.

Sexual Orientation: Who a person is attracted to physically and emotionally. Common options include opposite-sex attracted or "straight", same-sex attracted or "gay or lesbian", attracted to men and women or "bisexual", and attracted to an individual person regardless of gender or "pansexual".
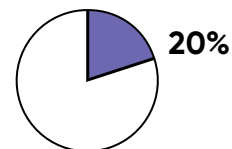
Some important statistics:

11%
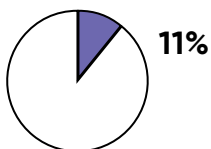
Nationally, about **11%** of the Australian population identify as LGBTIQ+

50%
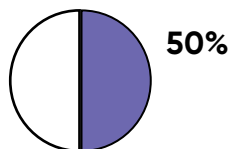
Approximately **50%** of LGBTIQ+ Australians hide their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status at work for fear this could impact negatively on their careers

20%

Workplaces lose approximately **20%** productivity from those who are not "out" at work, mainly due to the "self-editing" that many LGBTIQ+ people feel they have to do to "fit in"

"

In my previous workplace I have experienced firsthand how "light-hearted banter" was really a cover for bullying and harassment of other employees. The culture of the workplace was to have a thick skin and just grin and bear it. It was very demoralising; I hid a lot of myself away as I did not want to be the subject of or be included in the "light-hearted banter".

[...] Nowadays, I am proud to identify as a gay man (pronouns he/him). By not hiding who I am, I feel great. I am not asking for a parade through the front foyer; however, I do appreciate how normal the reaction is when I talk to my peers about my world as they share theirs with me.

– CN staff member

"

References

Figure References

Figure 1:   Bourke, J., Dillon, B., (2018) *The diversity and inclusion revolution – Eight powerful truths*, Deloitte Review, Issue 22, January 2018

Figure 2:   Tapia, A. T., Polonskaia, A., (2018) *The 5 Disciplines of Inclusive Leaders – Unleashing the Power of Us All*, Korn Ferry Institute, 2018

Endnotes

1   Bourke, J., Dillon, B., (2018) The diversity and inclusion revolution – Eight powerful truths, Deloitte Review, Issue 22, January 2018

2   NSW Council of Social Service (2017), *Principles of Co-Design*. Available at https://www.ncoss.org.au/sector-hub/sector-resources/principles-of-co-design/

3   Diversity Council Australia (O'Leary, J. and D'Almada-Remedios, R.) *DCA-Suncorp Inclusion@Work Index 2019–2020: Mapping the State of Inclusion in the Australian Workforce*, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2019

4   Diversity Council Australia (O'Leary, J. and D'Almada-Remedios, R.) DCA-Suncorp Inclusion@Work Index 2019–2020: Mapping the State of Inclusion in the Australian Workforce, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2019

5   Tapia, A. T., Polonskaia, A., (2018) *The 5 Disciplines of Inclusive Leaders – Unleashing the Power of Us All*, Korn Ferry Institute, 2018

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Safe and Strong - A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy.
Available at https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality

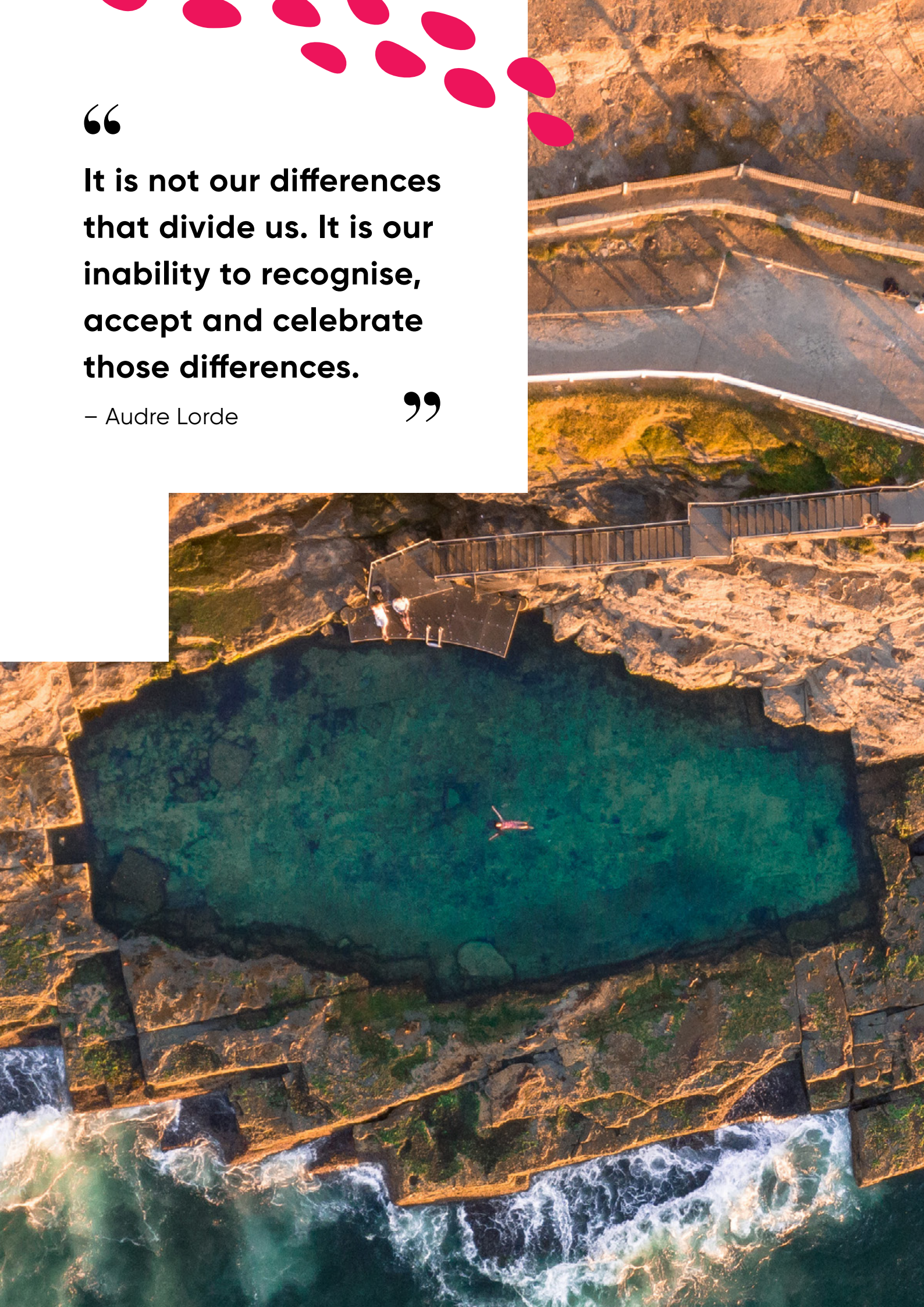Workplace Gender Equality Agency
https://www.wgea.gov.au/

> "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognise, accept and celebrate those differences.
>
> – Audre Lorde

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