



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Workplace Diversity Programme 2015-19

RESEARCH *for a creative, innovative and productive Australia*



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Statement of support from the Chief Executive Officer

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Research Council (ARC), I am pleased to present to you the ARC Workplace Diversity Programme 2015–19.

All ARC employees have a responsibility to make sure that our workplace is one that respects, recognises, encourages, values and utilises diversity. The programme relies on the active support of all of you for its ongoing success.

The objectives and desired outcomes of the programme are intended to support employees as well as the ARC's corporate vision. The implementation of the programme strengthens and emphasises the commitment to diversity made in the ARC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14.

In providing a workplace that is respectful of diversity, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination and that supports employees to develop their full potential, the ARC is not only a better place to work, but is also able to better service the needs of the Australian community.

I encourage all of you to make yourselves familiar with the Programme and to contribute to making it a success.

***Professor Aidan Byrne
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Research Council***

February 2015

Revision History

This document will be reviewed and it will be assessed in line with any changes to legislation as covered therein.

VERSION	DATE	AUTHORISATION NAME	AUTHORISATION POSITION	NEXT REVIEW
1.0	December 2014	Lesley Nelson	Director People and Services	September 2018

Introduction

The diversity of ARC employees is one of our greatest strengths. Not only does diversity in the workplace enhance our ability to provide excellent services to our stakeholders and the Australian community, but it also ensures employees are working in a safe and harmonious atmosphere.

The ARC strives to provide a workplace that is rewarding for all employees. We value the contributions that people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives bring to the workplace as a way of demonstrating our commitment to the Australian Public Service (APS) Values.

By respecting, and even inviting, diversity, the ARC enables individual employees to achieve successful results in a supportive environment that also encourages a balance between work and personal responsibilities.

The ARC Workplace Diversity Programme (WDP) is a tangible way of demonstrating the ARC's ongoing commitment to workplace diversity.

What is workplace diversity?

Workplace diversity at the ARC is about recognising the ways in which people are different and seeing these differences as a positive factor in creating the best workplace for all employees, for the ARC and for the APS.

While workplace diversity does include the principles of equal employment opportunity (EEO), it is more than these alone. EEO policies address the disadvantage experienced by particular groups of people in the workplace including; women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with a disability and those who may experience disadvantage on the basis of race or ethnicity. These policies continue to remain an important foundation for the Programme.

Workplace diversity also encompasses; age, language, cultural background, sexuality, religious belief, political belief and family responsibilities. Additionally workplace diversity also recognises the other ways in which we are different from each other, such as level of education, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background, personality, marital status and personal commitments.

A workplace that recognises and engages diversity, values and utilises peoples' different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives to achieve its objectives, is able to be innovative and generate new ideas. Ultimately this helps the ARC to provide the most creative, relevant and exciting solutions to the Government, the Minister and the community. Finally, a key aspect of workplace diversity is the contribution that we all make to a workplace that is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Legislative framework

The legislative framework that applies to workplace diversity is reflective of the Government and community expectations about a fair, inclusive and productive public service.

Section 18 of the *Public Service Act* requires an Agency Head to establish a workplace diversity programme to assist in giving effect to the [APS Employment Principles](#).

The [Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013](#) provide more detail about implementing diversity in the workplace, and includes legally binding directions to Agency Heads about the WDP requirements, including reporting measures.

In upholding and promoting APS Employment Principle 10A(1)(g), an Agency Head must put in place measures in the Agency directed at ensuring that:

- a) the diversity of APS employees is recognised, fostered and made best use of within the workplace, taking into account the organisational and business goals of the Agency and the skills required to perform the relevant duties
- b) APS employees are helped to balance their work, family and other caring responsibilities effectively.

The [APS Values](#) are central to management in the APS, and under Section 12 of the *Public Service Act 1999* an Agency Head must promote and uphold the APS Values.

The Values that are particularly relevant to diversity are:

- merit-based employment *section 10(b)*
- non-discrimination and diversity *section 10(c)*
- fair, flexible, safe and rewarding workplace *section 10(j)*
- equity in employment *section 10(l)*.

Section 10(g), which requires sensitivity to the Australian public when delivering services, is also relevant to the management of the ARC.

The [APS Code of Conduct](#) Section 13 of the Act outlines responsibilities that all APS employees have, and those most relevant to workplace diversity are:

- an APS employee, when acting in the course of APS employment, must treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- an APS employee must at all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS.

The following Commonwealth Acts provide the general legal framework to support diversity in the workplace:

- [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Work Health & Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)
- [Workplace Relations Act 1996](#).

Finally, the [ARC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14](#) commits the ARC to promoting diversity in the workplace and discouraging harassment and discrimination.

The ARC Workplace Diversity Programme is the overarching programme for the following ARC diversity policies and plans:

- Discrimination and Harassment-free Workplace Policy
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP).

Workplace Diversity Programme Strategies

Strategy 1:

Improve our ability to attract, recruit and retain people of diverse backgrounds and targeted under-represented diversity groups.

Strategy 2:

Strengthen a respectful and positive work environment and culture through awareness, promoting diversity events and work life balance.

Strategy 3:

Improve our understanding of workplace diversity issues through consultation, leadership and teamwork.

Diversity Working Group

As a part of the WDP, the ARC will form a Diversity Working Group (DWG). The DWG will bring together a diverse range of ARC employees including but not limited to: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Champion and Multicultural Access Plan (AMP) Champion from the Executive level of the agency. The DWG must represent different styles, viewpoints and jobs to achieve a common goal: improving the work culture at the ARC.

The DWG's objectives will be to integrate diversity and equity concerns into workplace practices and provide leadership for changing the work culture.

The DWG will also:

- form the RAP Working Group and work in conjunction with Reconciliation Australia.
- form the Multicultural Access and Equity Action Group for the AMP
- integrate diversity and equity concerns into workplace practices and provide leadership for changing the work culture
- sustain and support work culture changes that are consistent with evolving business goals
- maximise agency opportunities for motivating and rewarding employees and supervisors/managers to think about diversity and equity in the work environment.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the DWG will be made available on the intranet after the first meeting. The members of the DWG must agree to the TOR before they come into effect. The TOR may change at the first meeting or when a change is proposed and accepted by the majority of members.

Ensuring success of the programme

Implementing the ARC's WDP and its strategies is the responsibility of all ARC employees. Each of us has a role in ensuring that workplace diversity is not only recognised and respected, but also embraced.

Individual responsibilities

- Contribute to the consultation processes within the ARC so that all diverse experiences, background and perspectives are reflected in decisions we make.
- Recognise that others have skills to offer and seek ways to use them.
- Treat others with respect and courtesy.
- Listen to the views of others without prejudice.
- Act in a friendly manner in the workplace and provide support to colleagues.
- Recognise the non-work related responsibilities of others.
- Commit to eliminating all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination from the workplace.

Supervisor responsibilities

In addition to the above:

- Lead by example in fostering a culture where the diversity of the workforce is recognised and valued.
- Share ideas and experiences with colleagues.
- Encourage flexible work practices.
- Ensure decisions are consistent with the principles contained within this document.
- Make use of workplace diversity by consulting with, seeking a range of views from and encouraging all team members to contribute positively to team outcomes.

Agency responsibilities

- Develop policies and practices to promote workplace diversity.
- Raise and maintain awareness of these policies and practices with all employees.
- Ensure the services we provide to our stakeholders reflect our commitment to diversity.
- Ensure the ARC's employment practices and procedures are merit-based and fair and equitable for all people seeking employment at the ARC.
- Support the development of all employees to achieve their work goals and reach their full potential as part of a diverse workforce.

Assistance and advice about Workplace Diversity

The ARC is committed to and highly values diversity in the workplace. APS employees are bound by the APS Code of Conduct to "treat everyone with respect and courtesy and without harassment" and as such, the ARC will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind.

If you believe that you are being harassed, bullied or discriminated against on the basis of your diversity, or that you have witnessed this kind of behaviour in others, then there are places and people you can go to for help and support:

- Your supervisor should be the first place you seek assistance or advice. If you are uncomfortable talking to your supervisor, or if you believe they are part of the problem, you should consider talking to your next level manager about the issue.
- Building respectful workplace information is available on the intranet to help you identify your responsibilities and the responsibilities of others in the workplace.
- Trained Harassment Contact Officers (HCOs) are available to assist you in understanding what harassment is and support you through a complaint process. The list of HCOs can be found on the intranet.
- In addition to your line supervisors/managers, the Director People and Services can provide advice and information about, and is able to receive, formal complaints of bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- The ARC's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may also be a source of support. This free, confidential service is available to all employees by calling 1300 360 364, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Monitoring and Reporting

To ensure that we are meeting our goals and to evaluate our progress, the ARC will:

- report against the WDP in our annual report
- provide information on workplace diversity to the public service commissioner for inclusion in the State of the Service report
- in line with the [Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013](#), review the WDP every four (4) years to ensure it continues to give effect to the APS Values and achieves its outcomes.

Further Assistance

Further information about workplace diversity can be obtained from the Human Resources (HR) Team and the intranet.

STRATEGY 1

Improve our ability to attract, recruit and retain people of diverse backgrounds and targeted under-represented diversity groups.

STRATEGY	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Attract and recruit employees to ensure a workforce capable of responding to diversity in the community it serves	Diversity information is requested from all applicants and new ARC employees	Compile and analyse data on recruitment and engagement demographics in Aurion	Human Resources (HR); Senior HR Advisor Recruitment to report to Director People and Services
Attract and recruit employees to ensure a workforce capable of responding to diversity in the community it serves	When possible, advertise positions in appropriate media to attract diverse candidates	Utilise diversity networks and appropriate media to advertise suitable vacancies	HR; Senior HR Advisor Recruitment to report to Director People and Services
Attract and recruit employees to ensure a workforce capable of responding to diversity in the community it serves	Recruit employees who reflect a range of backgrounds in the Australian community from a diverse range of backgrounds and capabilities	Merit-based recruitment practices recognise and effectively utilise employees who have diverse skills, cultural values and backgrounds	Senior HR Advisor Recruitment and the Chair of all selection panels
Physical environment is supportive of employees with a range of needs	Employees that require special equipment or workplace modifications are catered for	Resources, support and reasonable adjustments to the work environment are made to ensure employees can carry out their duties	Facilities Manager
Employees with a disability are supported	Disability APS-wide networks are made available and promoted to employees	Networks are promoted to identified employees and are available on the intranet	Senior HR Advisor Learning and Development (L&D)
Indigenous employees are supported	Indigenous APS-wide networks are made available and promoted to employees	Networks are promoted to identified employees and are available on the intranet	Senior HR Advisor L&D
Indigenous employees are supported	Indigenous Employment Policy is developed and implemented	Policy is promoted to all employees and considered in all ARC People Management and Recruitment policies and guidelines. Policy is made available on intranet for ARC employees and the internet for anyone interested in working for the ARC	Senior HR Advisor L&D

STRATEGY 2

Strengthen a respectful and positive work environment and culture through awareness, promoting diversity events and work life balance.

STRATEGY	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Update and provide employee training to help ensure awareness to diversity issues	The ARC corporate training calendar includes learning for a range of diversity topics	ARC employees are expected to attend annual Corporate training covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Diversity Getting the most out of Diversity Enhancing Mental Health & Wellbeing 	Senior HR Advisor L&D
Integrate relevant policies and whole-of-government best practice with management and HR policies and guidelines	Ensure diversity related policies and guidelines are integrated with ARC People Management, Recruitment and Learning and Development policies and guidelines	Annual review of diversity related policies and guidelines are undertaken to ensure integration with best practice	Senior HR Advisor L&D
Encourage an inclusive workplace culture and promote a range of diversity events in the workplace	Manage an internal communication strategy to promote awareness of appropriate cultural diversity events	Calendar of upcoming diversity events available on the intranet and promoted to employees in newsletters, all-staff emails and morning teas	Senior HR Advisor L&D and Communications Team
Maintain an effective Harassment Contact Officer (HCO) network	Support and training provided for HCOs	Maintain ongoing support for HCO network, ensure training is up-to-date and HCOs are promoted to all employees including contractors	Senior HR Advisor L&D
Mental health and wellbeing initiatives are available to and reflect the interests of all employees	Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is developed and implemented	Policy is promoted to all employees and considered in all ARC People Management policies and guidelines	Senior HR Advisor L&D
Mental health and wellbeing initiatives are available to and reflect the interests of all employees	Wellbeing events are promoted to all staff and information is readily available to all employees on the intranet	Employees are surveyed annually to ensure ongoing relevance of mental health and wellbeing programs promoted	Senior HR Advisor L&D

STRATEGY 2 *continued*

Strengthen a respectful and positive work environment and culture through awareness, promoting diversity events and work life balance.

STRATEGY	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Promote the use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	EAP promotion is included in orientation packs and reiterated in employees induction for all new employees	Participation by all new starters in induction training	Senior HR Advisor L&D
Promote the use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	EAP usage and trends monitored	EAP is promoted to all employees through the intranet, posters, HR and by supervisors and trends monitored	Senior HR Advisor L&D

STRATEGY 3

Improve our understanding of workplace diversity issues through consultation, leadership and teamwork.

STRATEGY	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Value and respect employee contributions	Provide opportunities for employees to reflect on their individual diverse backgrounds when providing input to policies, programs and services	Consult employees, through their People Management and Development Committee (PMDC) representatives, on workplace matters that affect them	Director People and Services and PMDC Committee
Value and respect employee contributions	Implementation of APS 6 and EL1 Forum to share experiences in people management	Created to specifically target supervisors and provide a dialogue of day-to-day experiences in managing diversity issues	Assistant Director HR
Ensure a safe working environment for employees by appropriately handling bullying, harassment and discrimination reports	Assistant Director HR will report significant incidents related to diversity directly to the Director, People and Services	Employees are supported to identify and report bullying, harassment, discrimination or insensitive work practices appropriately	All ARC employees and Assistant Director HR
Ensure a safe working environment for employees by appropriately handling bullying, harassment and discrimination reports	Employees are encouraged to be involved in making sure their workplace is safe for everyone	Employees are supported to identify and report bullying, harassment, discrimination or insensitive work practices appropriately	All ARC employees and Assistant Director HR
Maintain people management frameworks that support work/life balance	Flexible working arrangements are available to support employee work/life balance	Advice about flexible working arrangements is available to all employees on the intranet and from HR	Senior HR Advisor Payroll
Maintain people management frameworks that support work/life balance	Supervisors are encouraged to support employees to manage their work/life balance utilising flexible work arrangements where appropriate	Advice about flexible working arrangements is available to all employees on the intranet and from HR	Senior HR Advisor Payroll