# generational diversity

## inclusion across all generations

### Workforce strategy 2020 – 2023

Queensland Government

# Contents

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# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, seas and waterways from across Queensland where our schools and offices are located.

We honour and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

## Copyright statement

## Disclaimer

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# Message from the Director-General

Through our inclusion and diversity framework – We All Belong, the Department of Education has committed to inclusion and the right to equity, fairness and respect for all employees.

While there is nothing new about having multiple generations in the same workplace, more than ever a workplace with inclusive practices is better equipped to respond to shifts in the working environment, now and in the future.

Creating inclusive work cultures for people at all stages of their career, maximises their performance, wellbeing and engagement, encouraging them to thrive as their work continues to evolve in the future.

This foundation of inclusion empowers our multi-generational workforce to better serve the communities of Queensland.

The strategy sets out a clear plan on how the department will achieve inclusion for all employees regardless of age and demonstrate the value we place on the diversity of our staff.

**TONY COOK**
Director-General
Department of Education

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# Vision

People of all ages bring different and valuable perspectives and insights to each other and our customers. Being one of the largest and most diverse employers within the Queensland public sector, the Department of Education (the department) aims to provide workplaces where our people feel empowered, valued and supported. We value diversity of thought, experience and perspective and recognise that an inclusive workplace culture contributes to our success.

*"Inclusion elevates all."*

– Elaine Hall

The future of work will involve longer and more dynamic career stages, digitised and global environments and the need for greater flexibility and choice for employees.

This strategy aims to prepare our multi-generational workforce for the future, recognise and respect the needs of individuals at every life stage, and encourage workplace cultures where every employee feels they belong and are valued regardless of age.

Prepare our workforce for the future:

- enabling workplace environments where employees are agile, adaptive and responsive
- providing consistent opportunities for learning and professional development to acquire key work capabilities for an evolving work landscape – such as technology, new media literacy, collaboration and managing information load.

Recognise and respect the needs of individuals at every life stage:

- re-imagining the traditional career stages
- continuing to enhance the virtual work environment and equipping our people with a new set of capabilities for working flexibly and sustaining engagement and motivation.

Encourage workplace cultures where every employee feels they belong and are valued regardless of age:

- busting myths on generational stereotyping
- utilising both a top down and bottom up approach to cultivate inclusive culture change.

# Background

## Attraction

Due to increasing student numbers, curriculum changes and career mobility trends[1], there is continued focus on attracting top talent. Being an inclusive employer of choice is essential to improving attraction and retention.

## Retention

The stages of working life are changing and what used to be a linear progression "up the chain" now contains horizontal career shifts, longer working lifespans and break periods for life experiences (such as study, travel) and family responsibilities (such as caring for children and/or aging parents[2]). This change coincides with the digital era, where up to 40 per cent of jobs are moving towards automation and most employees are seeking technological literacy[3].

## Engagement into the future

Australians are enjoying longer lifespans and increased health[4]. The median age of an Australian in 1976 was 28, compared to 38[5] today and in less than a decade it will be 40[6]. With greater employee longevity, technological advances, continuing globalisation, and shifts in mindset and outlook[7], we need to support and promote:

- life-long learning,
- the development of new types of skills; and
- flexible working options across life stages.

Multigenerational employees are more alike than different and have a similar want and need to deliver results. 2017 national research shows that regardless of generation, the majority of employees are looking to make an impact by performing meaningful work and all see learning as a priority[8]. As the department's current workforce ranges from late teens to early 80s, research shows that debunking generational stereotypes can increase cohesion of the workforce[9].

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# Department of Education context

To build inclusive workplaces, it is important to understand the current state:

**Representation**

Across all staff, the cohort between 41 and 50 years of age is the largest. The majority of the workforce is between 31 and 60, indicative of Australia's aging population[10]. Non-teaching staff in schools (teacher aides, cleaners, grounds people and administration staff) and non-school-based staff are slightly older, on average than teaching staff. Teaching staff over the age of 50 and 59 leave the department at a greater rate than non-school based staff.

**Non-Teaching and Non-School Based Staff**

| 15-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1% | 8% | 13% | 29% | 33% | 15% | 1% |

**Teaching Based Staff**

| 15-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0% | 15% | 26% | 28% | 23% | 7% | 1% |

**Longevity**

Over the past decade the average age of retirement within the department has increased steadily. In 2010 the average retirement age for teachers was 59 while in 2020 it is 62. For the same period, principals were retiring slightly earlier on average at 57 but are now also retiring on average at 62. Non-teaching staff had the highest average retirement age of 62, a trend which has continued into 2020 with their average retirement age reaching 65[10].

Departmental employees are staying in the workforce longer than the average retirement age for Australians at 55[11].

With longer lifespans and increased health, national workplace participation rates among staff aged 65 and over are projected to increase from 13% in 2014 - 2015 to 17% in 2054 - 2055[12]. Over time the length and characteristics of career stages are changing.

**Perception of inclusion and career development**

The 2019 Working for Queensland data[13] shows that as the workforce ages, intentional inclusion initiatives are important for employees, as:

- on average, 76% of corporate employees under the age of 30 believe that age is not a barrier to success in the department, in comparison to 62% for corporate employees 55 and over; and
- Non-school-based staff between 50 and 60 feel 14% less encouraged to pursue career development than the average respondent.

This data is important to note, as national research[9] indicates that:

- 84% of employees over 53 prefer exploring new ways of working.

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# Our approach

## We all play a role

Creating a positive working environment, where our people are provided with the opportunity to access resources, professional development, and recognition regardless of age requires managers and leaders to play a role in developing inclusive workplaces.

Whilst there are specific actions for different levels across our organisation, impact will be achieved through the combination of activities at all levels of the agency and commitment to bring about change.

**1**
**State level**
Diversity, Culture and Engagement Team
Executive Champions

**2**
**Regional level**
Departmental Reference Group
Generational Liaison Officers
Regional Human Resource Teams

**3**
**Local level**
Generational Diversity Online Communtiy

# Priority areas

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

1. Build awareness and capability
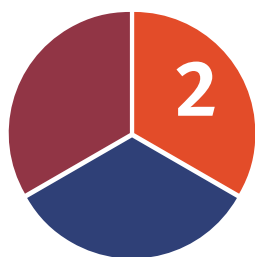2. Create future career pathways
3. Embed inclusive policies and practice

**1**
**Build awareness and capability**

**2**
**Create future career pathways**

**3**
**Embed inclusive policies and practice**

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## Priority area 1
## Build awareness and capability

**Goal:** Building awareness and capability will assist in breaking down stereotypes and enable connection between employees of multiple generations.

| Key Objective | Action | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capability | Establish a reverse mentoring program | 2020 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Capability | Release myth-busting factsheet | 2020 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Capability | Develop a generational inclusion toolkit | 2021 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Visibility | Leverage days of significance for awareness, visibility and myth busting | 2020-2023 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Leadership | Build capability in Principals, Managers and Supervisors in applying flexible work arrangements | 2020-2023 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Capability | Offer learning that gives prominence to soft skills - such as the ability to collaborate, work in groups, manage information overloads and respond adaptively | 2020-2023 | Delivery of Training Solutions |

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## Priority area 2
## Create future career pathways

**Goal:** Regardless of age, clear career direction and lifelong learning provides employees with the opportunity to steer their career and maximise their potential for all stages of life.

| Key Objective | Action | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | Facilitate focus groups to understand the barriers in employment and career pathways for employees of diverse age ranges | 2020-2021 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Visibility | Launch a Generational Diversity Community of Inclusion for staff | 2020 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Education | Release a departmental traineeship guideline | 2020 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |

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

**Goal:** With inclusive policies, practice and language, all employees are provided the opportunity to access resources, professional development and recognition regardless of their age.

| Key Objective | Action | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | Co-create inclusivity in recruitment, selection and career development processes | 2020 | Recruitment Services |
| Awareness | Publish the inclusive communication toolkit and promote to all staff | 2020 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |
| Education | Inclusive leadership education for managers and leaders | 2021 | Learning and Professional Development |
| Leadership | Conduct a review of the inclusiveness of the language used in our policies | 2022 | Diversity, Culture and Engagement |

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# Governance and measuring success

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

To support and demonstrate our commitment, we will:

- appoint an official Executive Champion for the strategy;
- observe and report on results in the Working for Queensland Survey and School Opinion Survey;
- establish and report to an employee reference group on our progress; and
- continue to report to the Public Service Commission on progress.

# The Policy context

This strategy aligns to, the Queensland Government Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. Generational inclusion is also one of the focus areas for delivery within the department's workplace inclusion and diversity framework – We All Belong.

Implementation of this strategy also supports the department's Diversity and Inclusion Policy. This policy encourages the establishment and maintenance of a respectful workplace culture across the department, outlining expected behaviours of employees regarding the treatment of any other person in the course of performing their duties.

# The Legal context

The rights of all employees to access and experience a workplace free of discrimination are enshrined in state law through the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)* which prohibits direct or indirect discrimination of persons on the grounds of age, this includes older workers, younger workers, and those in between.

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

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

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

# References

1.  Teaching Queensland's Future Data Analysis, 2019

2.  The corporate lattice, rethinking careers in the changing world of work

3.  Human capital outlook and roadmap

4.  Australian Treasury Intergenerational Report 2016

5.  Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Cat. 1340.0 Table 4

6.  Projected Median Age in 2016, Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Social Trends

7.  Apollo Research Institute - Future work skills 2020

8.  Robert Waters White Paper - Generation Gaps? Mythbusting assumptions about age in the workforce

9.  Journal of Managerial Psychology Issue 0268-3946, Generational differences in personality and motivation: Do they exist and what are the implications for the workplace?

10. Queensland Department of Education Workforce Data

11. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Key Statistics, Retirement Data 2018 - 2019

12. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population Projections Cat. 3222.0

13. 2019 Working for Queensland Survey (non-school-based staff)

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*Part of the*
**weallbelong**
*initiative*