

Our Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Plan

2022–2025

VAGO



Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Victoria.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their continuing culture, and to Elders past and present.

Artwork: *Yaalingbu, Yirramboi – Nallei Jerring (Today, Tomorrow – Adjoin)*
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Message from the Senior Management Group

Our vision for VAGO is a truly inclusive workplace that fosters diversity and actively addresses intersectionality in our culture and business practices.

This plan outlines bold objectives and the targeted strategies we will implement to foster a culture where we celebrate our differences: an environment where employees feel safe and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work and feel that they truly belong.

We recognise that an organisation performs at its best when it understands, respects and celebrates the diverse qualities of its people.

Since we released VAGO's first diversity and inclusion plan in 2019, we have made great progress maturing our capability as an organisation. We have done this by raising awareness, providing education, engaging with external partners and introducing new practices.

However, we must continue to integrate diversity and inclusion into our business practices, systems and behaviours.

The *VAGO Strategic Plan 2022–2025* outlines our commitment to building a diverse, safe and inclusive workplace. To realise this, it is important that our workforce reflects the community we serve, and that our environment and the way we work is inclusive.

As VAGO's senior leaders we are focused on promoting values-based behaviour and business practices that support all employees to feel valued, supported and equipped to achieve their full potential.

Intersectionality

This term, first coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

vic.gov.au/understanding-intersectionality

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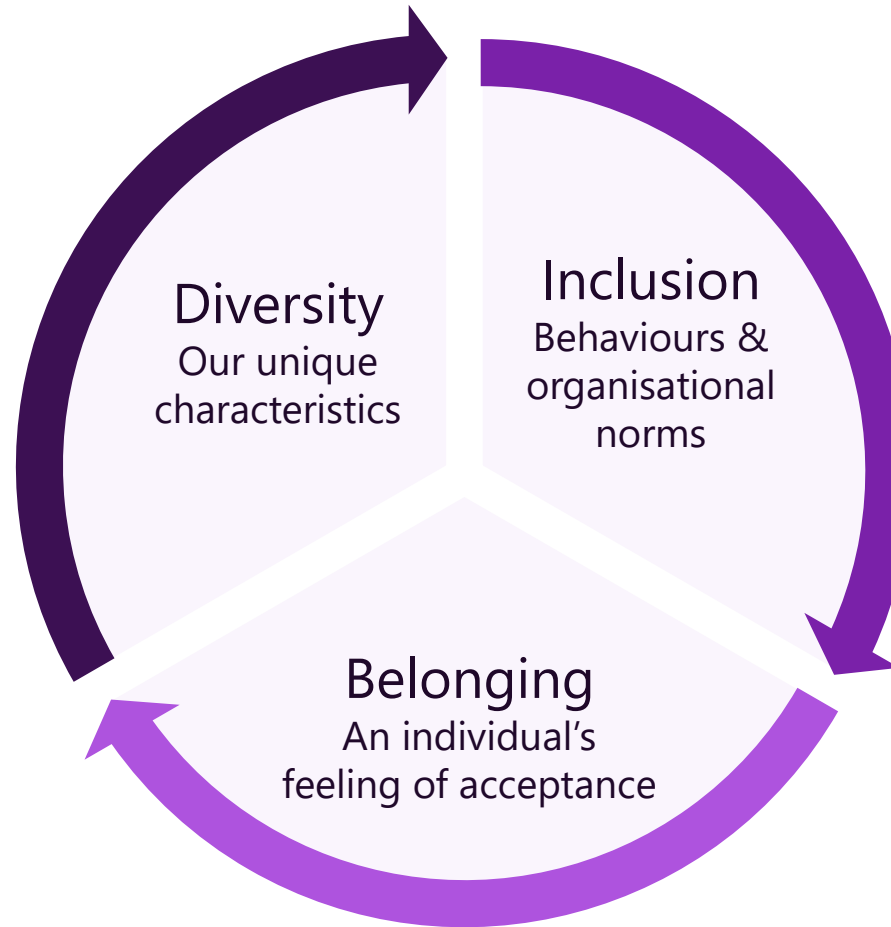
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Introduction

What do diversity, inclusion and belonging mean to us?

Diversity refers to the varied characteristics of our employees and stakeholders. These characteristics may include, but are not limited to:

- ethnicity, cultural and religious beliefs
- gender and sexual orientation
- age
- education
- physical and mental ability.



Inclusion means that all people are respected, valued, and invited to take part in a meaningful way with equitable opportunity, free from discrimination and workplace harm.

Belonging means that all people are truly accepted and valued for being their authentic selves.

Who is VAGO?

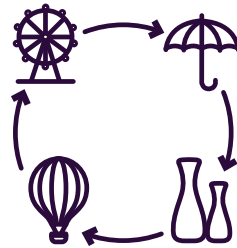


Our role

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) provides assurance to Victoria's Parliament and community about the performance and accountability of the state's public sector. We achieve this by auditing and reviewing the finances and performance of state and local government entities.

VAGO helps to hold the Victorian Government accountable by conducting financial audits, performance audits and assurance reviews of public sector agencies and reporting the results to Parliament.

VAGO is part of Victoria's integrity system. The office of the Auditor-General is independent—it is not controlled or directed by Parliament or the government.

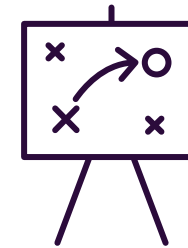


Our values

The VAGO values shape our work and culture and how we grow as an organisation. They are:

- respect
- innovation
- collaboration
- accountability.

To learn more about our values see page 38.



Our strategic plan

The *VAGO Strategic Plan 2022–2025* sets out our objectives, the directions we will take to achieve them and what success looks like.

Our diversity and inclusion journey

Our journey so far

Since we launched our inaugural diversity and inclusion plan in 2019, we have focused on making changes and embedding them in a meaningful way.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far, including increasing awareness about the value of inclusion and diversity, and creating better employment experiences.

Since 2019 we have trained staff to build professional capability and maturity. This has helped our team develop the skills and knowledge they need to engage with diverse communities and colleagues.

We have also reviewed and refined our compliance training modules and introduced new work practices to improve inclusion. We have engaged with external partners from diverse groups to inform and refine our approaches and our business practices.

Where to from here?

To help inform this 2023–2025 plan we reviewed the relevant literature on best practice, connected with colleagues across the Victorian Public Sector, and reviewed our 2021 People Matter Survey data. We also engaged 5 employee working groups.

These groups, drawn from across VAGO, consulted and advised us on areas including:

- cultural inclusion
- disability inclusion and accessibility
- gender equality
- LGBTQIA+ inclusion
- reconciliation (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion).

As we implement our new plan, these working groups will become our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and inclusion and diversity champions, making this a living document and a true journey.

Want to find out more?

View our 2021 People Matter Survey results here:

audit.vic.gov.au/how-we-are-accountable



Measuring our success

Achieving our goals

We will know we are achieving our goals if:

- the diversity of our workforce more closely reflects that of the broader Victorian population
- our staff feel supported to bring their whole self to work
- we are better able to attract and retain staff from diverse backgrounds

Seeing real change

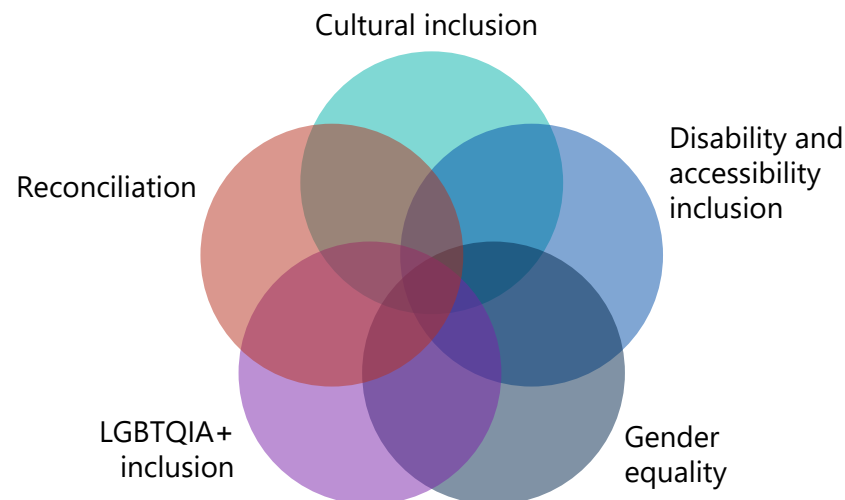
Raised awareness, ongoing conversations and more action on diversity and inclusion will show our commitment to continually making VAGO a more inclusive workplace. This will be reflected in a workplace culture that values and celebrates staff diversity and where all staff are treated equally (which is key to improving intersectionality).

Monitoring and evaluating

Human Resources will oversee the delivery of this plan. We will regularly monitor and evaluate our success through:

- feedback and information we receive from the annual People Matter Survey
- regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders, via our 5 employee working groups
- our diversity-focused people metrics and benchmarking.

The 5 critical focus areas, reflected by our 5 working groups



“A culture where employees can bring their whole selves to work, without the distraction of trying to be something they are not, leads to an environment where individuals can be at their most productive and creates cohesive and effective teams.”

— Michelle Fullerton¹

1. Michelle Fullerton, (2013) *Diversity and inclusion—LGBT inclusion means business*, Strategic HR Review, Vol. 12 Issue: 3, pp. 121–125

Part A: Cultural Inclusion Action Plan

Cultural inclusion

Our goal: To be an organisation where employees of all cultural heritages are valued, supported and celebrated and feel that they truly belong.

“The failure to reflect and value Australia’s cultural diversity in our workplaces is experienced by employees in many ways. For some, it means invisibility or leaving parts of themselves ‘at home’, for others the effects can be much more harmful, resulting in discrimination, vilification, or hate at work.”

— Chin Tan, Australian Race Discrimination Commissioner, June 2022

We’re proud that our VAGO workforce is representative of Victoria’s diverse multicultural community.

We value this diversity as an asset that helps us serve Victoria.

We strive to be a workplace that understands, supports, respects and celebrates employees’ cultural identities and unique cultural characteristics.

Our 2021 People Matter Survey found that 32 per cent of respondents were born in a country other than Australia, and

34 per cent of respondents speak a language other than English at home or within their family or community. This closely reflects the Victorian population at 35 per cent and 32.8 percent respectively.¹

The survey found that 93 per cent of our staff who were not born in Australia felt that there is a positive culture at VAGO in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds.

Through this plan, we aim to leverage the feedback and experiences from our staff to further recognise and celebrate the value of cultural, ethnic and

religious diversity, both within our organisation and in the wider Victorian community.

Success will include:

- continued creativity and innovation due to diverse cultural perspectives
- ability to attract and recruit highly skilled employees
- improved productivity and team cohesion
- improved ability for VAGO to better understand and meet the needs of the Victorian community.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Snapshot of Victoria, accessed 24 July 2023, <https://pwd.org.au/resources/models-of-disability/>

Cultural Inclusion Plan

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Increase awareness of culturally diverse staff at VAGO	A1.1	Human Resources will continue to raise awareness of the value of having a culturally diverse workplace by sharing stories/data on days of cultural and religious significance and in standard communications (such as the annual report, strategic plans, business unit forums).	Ongoing	Human Resources, Cultural Inclusion Working Group (CIP WG)
Train and empower staff and managers	A2.1	Human Resources will arrange for a guest speaker (and subject matter expert) to inform and empower staff and managers to improve cultural and linguistic inclusion at VAGO. Staff from culturally diverse backgrounds and identities will also be provided an opportunity to share their own experiences if they chose.	FY2024	Human Resources, CIP WG
	A2.2	Human Resources will update the existing Appropriate Behaviour training, policies and resources to reinforce constructive behaviour, language and interactions in the workplace. This will include responsibilities of bystanders and will reiterate VAGO's zero tolerance for discrimination and other forms of inappropriate conduct.		
Use data to understand the experience of culturally diverse staff in the workplace	A3.1	Human Resources will use data from the People Matter Survey to better understand and improve the experiences of culturally diverse staff in the workplace, including informing culturally inclusive workforce initiatives and practices.	FY2024	Human Resources
	A3.2	When the functionality is available, Human Resources will deploy new optional fields in Success Factors so that VAGO staff can list characteristics such as cultural identity and faith, which will be used to inform new, and measure success against, future diversity initiatives in VAGO.		
Promote networking opportunities	A4.1	The CIP WG will continue to develop connections to and attend meetings of relevant cultural networks to gain contemporary and best practice knowledge around cultural inclusion.	Ongoing	CIP WG
Create culturally inclusive workspaces to improve attraction and retention	A5.1	Introduce a flexible public holiday procedure to enable staff from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to substitute certain public holidays to an alternative day to celebrate their days of faith.	FY2023	Human Resources, CIP WG
	A5.2	Provide VAGO employees access to a multi-faith room	FY2024	
Senior executive sponsorship	A6.1	Human Resources will invite a senior leader within VAGO to be the Senior Executive Sponsor for the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan, and support them with resources and coaching as appropriate.	FY2023	Human Resources

Part B:

Disability Inclusion & Accessibility Plan

Disability inclusion and accessibility

“The social model sees ‘disability’ as the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It therefore carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others.”

— People With Disability Australia, 2022¹

Our goal: To be an employer of choice where meaningful employment opportunities are equally accessible for people with disability and where we embrace unique skills and abilities in an inclusive, supportive and welcoming workplace.

17 per cent of Victorians identify as a person with disability. This plan builds on our work to foster a workplace that includes, welcomes and celebrates people with physical or non-physical disability.

Research tells us that people with disability aged 15–64 years experience lower levels of employment (47.8%) than those without (80.3%).²

Our 2021 People Matter Survey reported that 7 percent of VAGO staff live with disability and 6 per

cent said they would prefer not to say. Of the surveyed staff, 59 per cent agreed that disability is not a barrier to success at VAGO. While an improvement from 2019, and a more positive result than the comparator groups across the public sector, we know there is more work to do.

VAGO seeks to demonstrate best practice in the public sector. While we have made some exceptional strides in workplace flexibility through the ‘better normal’ principles, we see this as a start. We want to create a workplace that encourages and supports staff to feel comfortable in disclosing their

status so we can better understand the breadth of diversity across our workplace. Using this knowledge, we will endeavor to provide the best and most responsive work environment and inform future workforce strategies.

Success will include:

- increased representation of VAGO staff with a disclosed disability
- barriers to VAGO recruitment and employment for people with disability being removed
- managers having the tools and knowledge they need to sufficiently support staff with disability in the workplace.

1. People With Disability Australia (2022), Social Model of Disability, accessed 24 July 2023, <https://pwd.org.au/resources/models-of-disability/>

2. Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2023

Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Plan

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Increase awareness of people with disability and chronic conditions	B1.1	Human Resources will continue to raise awareness and increase visibility of people with disability by sharing stories/data on days of significance and in standard communications (such as the annual report, strategic plans, business unit forums).	Ongoing	Human Resources, Disability Inclusion Working Group (DIA WG)
Train and empower staff and managers	B2.1	Human Resources will arrange for a guest speaker (and subject matter expert) to inform and empower staff and managers to improve disability inclusion and accessibility at VAGO. Staff with disability (or who are carers for people with disability) will also be provided an opportunity to share their own experiences if they chose.	FY2024	Human Resources, DIA WG
	B2.2	Human Resources will promote and implement the VPSC Accessibility Guidelines to support accessible and inclusive work practices in VAGO.	FY2024	Human Resources
Promote networking opportunities	B3.1	Together with the DIA WG, Human Resources will maintain membership with the VPS Enablers Network to remain up to date on contemporary disability inclusion and accessibility issues and initiatives.	Ongoing	Human Resources, DIA WG
Use data to understand the experience of people with disability in the workplace	B4.1	Human Resources will use data from the People Matter Survey to better understand and improve the experiences of staff with disability in the workplace to support accessible workforce initiatives and practices.	FY2024	Human Resources
	B4.2	VAGO will work towards improving our collection of workforce disability and inclusion data to enable us to participate in the Australian Network on Disability Access and Inclusion Index		
Inclusive recruitment	B5.1	Human Resources will review existing recruitment process and advertising templates (including a statement on reasonable adjustments) through the lens of the social model of disability, to reduce barriers to employment for candidates and staff with disabilities.	FY2024	Human Resources, DIA WG
Senior executive sponsorship	B6.1	Human Resources will invite a senior leader within VAGO to be the Senior Executive Sponsor for the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan, and support them with resources and coaching as appropriate.	FY2023	Human Resources

Part C:

Gender Equality Action Plan

Gender equality principles

The following gender equality principles in the *Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020* (Part one (Section 6)) guided how we developed this plan:

- All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
- Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

Measuring our progress: 7 indicators of workplace gender equality

We structured our Gender Equality Action Plan around the 7 indicators of workplace gender equality in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Each action plan section on the following pages addresses one of these indicators.

Want to find out more?

View our unabridged Gender Equality Action Plan here:

[VAGO Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 .pdf](#)

Indicator 1**Gender composition at all levels of the workforce**

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Implement gender equality policies and practices across all levels of our workforce.	C1.1	Continue to collect intersectionality data, including data on gender, Aboriginality, disability and country of birth.	Ongoing	Human Resources
	C1.2	In line with contemporary practice, continue to engage with SAP to progress a SuccessFactors system change that allows staff to identify alternative gender options.		
	C1.3	Publish our workforce gender composition at each VPS level in our annual reports, which we will enhance by including analysis by business unit to better understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gender inequality drivers where we need to propose strategies to address areas of improvement. 		
	C1.4	Encourage employees to adopt the inclusion of their preferred gender pronouns in their email signatures.	FY2023	
	C1.5	Update SuccessFactors to allow us to collect sexual orientation data, which will help us to better understand the diversity of our workforce.	FY2024	
	C1.6	Develop a leadership program that will better support potential future leaders to transition into more senior roles. This will consider our continuing need for gender-equitable representation at these levels. HR will promote participation in this program as an internal pathway for advancement and career progression and ensure that program participation complements our gender equality principles and the <i>VAGO Gender Equality Action Plan</i> .	FY2025	

Indicator 2**Gender composition of governing bodies**

This indicator speaks to the gender composition of Boards of Management, which is not part of our governance framework. Since this indicator is not relevant to VAGO, we have not included it in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

Indicator 3

Gender pay equity

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Understand and address the gender pay gap.	C3.1	Analyse the previous 3 years of pay gap data to provide us with a more longitudinal perspective at a more granular level than the current mean gender pay gaps detailed in our annual reports.	FY2023	Human Resources
	C3.2	Enhance our annual report by including gender pay gap data by business unit to better understand drivers of gender pay inequality and, where needed, propose strategies to address areas of improvement.		
	C3.3	Continue to annually monitor VAGO's gender pay gap, as reported in our annual report, to understand drivers of gender pay inequity.	Ongoing	

Indicator 4

Workplace sexual harassment

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Maintain a workplace that is free from sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.	C4.1	Continue to reinforce professional workplace behaviours, expectations and standards through our mandatory Appropriate Behaviour training for all new employees and our annual mandatory Appropriate Behaviour e-learning module for all employees.	Ongoing	Human Resources
	C4.2	Continue to update our policies, procedures and approach in line with best practice, as recommended in our 2019 performance audit <i>Sexual Harassment in the Victorian Public Service</i> . Following this audit we developed our policy on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, which clearly outlines how to report sexual harassment, the support available and how Human Resources will respond to allegations.		
	C4.3	Communicate with staff every 6 months to remind them about the importance of being vigilant in fostering a workplace culture that rejects sexual harassment and supports people who wish to disclose and report sexual harassment.	FY2023–FY2025	
	C4.4	Continue to proactively monitor our progress on eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace through our employee relations work and the annual People Matter Survey results and take affirmative action as required.	Ongoing	

Indicator 5

Recruitment and promotion practices

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Engage processes that promote gender equality.	C5.1	Continue to make sure that all of our recruitment panels are gender diverse, as required by our recruitment and selection policy.	Ongoing	Human Resources
	C5.2	Continue to review the gender representation at each stage of our graduate recruitment process and use this data to inform our approaches to graduate attraction and recruitment in following years.		
	C5.3	Continue to use our existing diversity statements in all of our recruitment advertisements and enhance them as required.		
	C5.4	Add gendered recruitment statistics to our annual reports—such as the number of applications received, interviews held and appointments made—and use this to investigate and address any significant inequities in the following year.		
	C5.5	Use SuccessFactors' in-built gender neutrality software to review and update all existing job profiles with gender neutral contemporary language. These profiles automatically populate our job advertisements.	FY2024	
	C5.6	Develop an employee value proposition that considers our workforce composition and gender equality initiatives in support of our commitment to gender equal recruitment and promotion that considers intersectionality.		
	C5.7	Develop mandatory training for all panel interviewers to upskill them in contemporary methodologies with a deliberate focus on gender and diversity barriers and opportunities.		

Indicator 6

Leave and flexibility

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Increase support of flexible work arrangements.	C6.1	Continue to provide development opportunities through flexible means to give all staff an equal opportunity to participate.	Ongoing	Human Resources
	C6.2	Continue to be innovative through our commitment to our Better Normal principles by offering every employee exceptionally flexible work-life balance options. We will continue to provide best practice equipment and set-ups in employees' homes. We will monitor the impact of these changes on our employees through our 'better normal' review processes.		
	C6.3	Continue to work with employees to support them through perimenopause or menopause, such as by using the provisions within our Better Normal principles or broader flexible work policies to adapt their work schedule or role.		
	C6.4	Roll out our How to Work Remotely and How to Manage Remotely training as an already agreed action for our Better Normal principles project and People Matter Action Plan.	FY2023	
	C6.5	Undertake our People Manager Principles project. In the gender space, this will include topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging flexible working arrangements for all employees (not just employees who have parenting or care responsibilities) • career support • keeping in touch with employees who are on long-term leave to ensure their managers are equipped to support them in better-understanding career opportunities and accessing flexible work arrangements. 	FY2024	

Indicator 7

Gendered work segregation

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Increase gender and intersectionality awareness and support.	C7.1	Continue to engage with employees to support informal learning and build awareness of gender equality and intersectionality with our program of activities and events, including International Women's Day, LGBTQIA+ festivals and events, and significant cultural events including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.	Ongoing	Human Resources
	C7.2	Continue to stay connected with various Victorian Public Service (VPS) networks and promote opportunities for staff to participate where appropriate.	Ongoing	Human Resources, Gender Equality Working Group
	C7.3	Continue to deliver our mandatory Diversity and Inclusion—Unconscious Bias training.	Ongoing	Human Resources
	C7.4	Our Financial Audit (FA) and Performance Audit (PA) business units will continually engage with clients and audit service providers to promote the <i>Gender Equality Action Plan</i> and our expectations about client interactions.	FY2024, FY2025	Assistant Auditor General FA & PA
	C7.5	Review all of our HR policies, procedures and forms to ensure they contain gender-neutral language and are free from gender bias.	FY2023	Human Resources
	C7.6	As detailed in the actions under indicator 5 (specifically C5.2 on graduate recruitment), work to achieve a more gender-equitable talent pipeline in Financial Audit.	Ongoing	
	C7.7	As detailed in action C1.6 (leadership development) work to achieve greater gender equality at senior levels in Financial Audit.	FY2024	

Part D: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan

LGBTQIA+ inclusion

Our goal: To create an environment where employees can be their authentic selves at work, whatever their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Sexuality and gender identity are major parts of who we are as people. We aim to create a visibly inclusive and safe workplace where all our employees feel safe and encouraged to be their authentic selves at work.

Who we love, who we share our lives with, how we see ourselves, and how we express ourselves all contribute to how we interact with the world around us, including how we operate in professional settings.

LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual and other gender and sexuality diverse people) still experience discrimination and stigma in Australian society.

Australia's largest ever survey on LGBTQIA+ health and wellbeing, the 2021 [Writing Themselves in 4](#) report by La Trobe University, found that of the 3,866 LGBTQIA+ respondents, in the preceding 12 months only 45.8 per cent had felt able to openly identify as LGBTQIA+ in the workplace.

Our 2021 People Matter Survey showed that 8 per cent of our workforce is bisexual, gay or lesbian, asexual or pansexual. A further 11 per cent of our workforce preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation. One per cent of our staff identify as transgender, non-binary, or gender diverse, and 6 per cent preferred not to say.

The survey also found that only 62 per cent of respondents felt that there is a positive culture within VAGO in relation to employees who identify as LGBTQIA+. Whilst an increase of 6 points since 2019, our result was 9 points lower than the public sector overall. We aim to increase this metric over the next four years by implementing this diversity, inclusion and belonging plan.

"I am honoured to work with a Government that believes equality is not negotiable.

It's time to build on existing achievements by connecting more closely with LGBTQIA+ people, communities, and organisations, while recognising the many parts that make up who we are."

— Todd Fernando (he/him),
Commissioner for LGBTQIA+
Communities, 2021

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Plan

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Increase awareness of LGBTQIA+ staff	D1.1	Human Resources will continue to raise awareness and increase visibility of LGBTQIA+ people and employees by sharing stories and data on days of significance and in our standard communication platforms (annual report, strategic plans, and business unit forums).	Ongoing	Human Resources, LGBTQIA+ Working Group (LGBTQIA+ WG)
	D1.2	Set up an informal Pride Network within VAGO to provide a safe space for LGBTQIA+ employees to network and connect	FY2023	LGBTQIA+ WG
Train and empower staff and managers	D2.1	Human Resources will arrange for a guest speaker (and subject matter expert) to inform and empower staff and managers to improve LGBTQIA+ inclusion at VAGO. Staff who identify as LGBTQIA+ will also be provided an opportunity to share their own experiences if they chose.	FY2024	Human Resources, LGBTQIA+ WG
Promote networking opportunities	D3.1	The LGBTQIA+ WG will continue to develop connections with the VPS Pride Network to remain up to date on contemporary and best practice LGBTQIA+ inclusion.	Ongoing	LGBTQIA+ WG
Enhance our data collection	D4.1	VAGO will work towards improving our collection of LGBTQIA+ data to enable us to participate in the 2024 Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI).	FY2024	Human Resources
	D4.2	Human Resources will add new optional fields in Success Factors when available to allow staff to list their pronouns and characteristics, such as sexual orientation, to inform and support continuous improvement on VAGO LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategies.		
Review HR policy and practice for gender neutral and inclusive terminology	D5.1	Human Resources will review and update all policies and procedures to ensure gender-neutral language and inclusive terminology is consistently used.	FY2024	Human Resources
Senior executive sponsorship	D6.1	Human Resources will invite a senior leader within VAGO to nominate as the Senior Executive Sponsor for the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan, and support them with resources and coaching as appropriate.	FY2023	Human Resources

Part E:

Reconciliation Action Plan

Reconciliation Action Plan

Our vision for reconciliation is to work in partnership with Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, embedding their voices in our work so that we can improve the service of the Victorian public sector for all Victorians.

Our journey towards reconciliation draws upon our organisational values of collaboration, respect, innovation and accountability.

Our journey so far

The [Reconciliation Australia](#) process is made up of four steps: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate, or RISE.

During the 2021–22 financial year we took the first step in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) journey through the Reflect RAP, where we:

- introduced a RAP working group
- organised events and communications that celebrate the living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- implemented cultural awareness training for all VAGO staff
- commissioned an Aboriginal artwork
- implemented an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners plaque in our office space and on our website
- continued to forge meaningful and collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- became a Platinum Partner with [Kinaway](#).

Where to from here?

The next stage of our journey—the Innovate RAP— will further enshrine our commitment to respect, acknowledge and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. It sits as part of VAGO's *Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Plan 2022–2025*, as well being a standalone plan registered with Reconciliation Australia.

Our Innovate RAP will be implemented over 2 years and overseen by:

- Human Resources
- the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
- our Senior Executive Sponsor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion.

Reconciliation Australia's RISE steps

4 Elevate

3 Stretch

2 Innovate

1 Reflect

Reconciliation Action Plan: Innovate

Our goal: To strengthen partnerships with the Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and inclusion.

We proudly acknowledge Victoria's First Nations peoples and their ongoing strength in practicing the world's oldest living culture.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise the contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this continues to enrich our society more broadly.

Through the VAGO *Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Plan*, we will embrace reconciliation both within our organisation and the broader community. We hope these relationships will increase the impact of our audits for all Victorians, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While none of our current staff members have identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander the active engagement of Aboriginal consultants ensures that the implementation of our RAP includes First Nations voices. We sincerely thank Seona James, Liz Allen and Ian Hamm for their continued participation and guidance.

As of 1 January 2022, no current VAGO employee chose to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander through our HR system. Through our continued work, we hope to develop a culturally safe environment for existing or future employees who choose to identify.

"Here in Australia we are fortunate enough to have one of the richest and oldest continuing cultures in the world. This is something we should all be proud of and celebrate."

— Dr Tom Calma AO,
Reconciliation Australia
Co-Chair

Reconciliation Action Plan: Relationships

Our Innovate RAP guides us through deepening and expanding our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led businesses and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, enabling greater engagement and partnerships between VAGO and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These partnerships are critical to ensuring that our auditing work considers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities, cultural beliefs and practices, and leads to improved self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	E1.1	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	August 2023	Senior HR Partner; RAP Working Group (RWG)
	E1.2	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	April 2024	Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audit
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	E2.1	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week (NRW) resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May, annual commitment	Senior HR Partner
	E2.2	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May to 3 June 2023, 2024	Senior HR Partner
	E2.3	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May to 3 June 2023, 2024	RAP Executive Champion
	E2.4	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May to 3 June 2023, 2024	Senior HR Partner
	E2.5	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2023, 2024	Senior HR Partner

Reconciliation Action Plan: Relationships (continued)

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	E3.1	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	November 2023	HR Director; Employee Engagement Lead
	E3.2	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	June 2023	Auditor-General
	E3.3	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	April 2024	Assistant Auditor-General (AAG) Financial Audit; AAG Performance Audit
	E3.4	Promote the work of the First People's Assembly of Victoria and the Yoorrook Justice Commission to our workforce to build understanding.	July 2023	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E3.5	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	April 2024	HR Director; RWG
	E3.6	Increase staff awareness and understanding of the Uluru Statement from the Heart	May 2024	Senior HR Partner
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	E4.1	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	June 2024	Senior HR Partner; Senior Employee Development Partner
	E4.2	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	November 2024	HR Director; Senior HR Partner
	E4.3	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2024	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E4.4	Educate senior leaders on the affects of racism.	February 2025	Deputy Auditor-General

Reconciliation Action Plan: Respect

Our work touches the lives of all Victorians, and we will use our Innovate RAP to amplify the voices and presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our work and in our workplace, to equip our staff with the confidence to engage with First Nations stakeholders and clients.

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	E5.1	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2024	Senior Employee Development Partner
	E5.2	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	August 2024	Senior Employee Development Partner
	E5.3	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	October 2024	Human Resources Director; Senior Employee Development Partner
	E5.4	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	December 2024	Senior Employee Development Partner
	E5.5	Increase staff's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems to support culturally appropriate decision making at VAGO.	February 2025	Senior Employee Development Partner; RWG
	E5.6	Continue to maintain our online hub of cultural resources for VAGO staff.	November annually	Senior HR Partner
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	E6.1	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2023	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E6.2	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	June 2023	HR Director
	E6.3	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May 2023, 2024	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E6.4	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	June 2023	RAP Executive Champion
	E6.5	Develop, implement and communicate a data sovereignty document, including protocols for the collection and use of data and evidence from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and individuals to safeguard the rights and promote the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in VAGO.	February 2025	Senior Employee Development Partner; RWG

Reconciliation Action Plan: Respect (continued)

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	E7.1	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023, 2024	RWG
	E7.2	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	June annually	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E7.3	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2023, 2024	RAP Executive Champion

Reconciliation Action Plan: Opportunities

VAGO has come some way in addressing structural barriers to participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our workplace. This RAP continues that work, and seeks to create culturally safe employment pipelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whilst also seeking to make our workplace an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development	E8.1	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2023	Senior HR Partner
	E8.2	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2023	Senior Employee Development Partner; Talent Acquisition Partner
	E8.3	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	March 2024	
	E8.4	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	April 2024	Talent Acquisition Partner
	E8.5	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	September 2023	Talent Acquisition Partner; RWG
	E8.6	Investigate participation in the CareerTrackers program to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate auditors.	June 2023	Talent Acquisition Partner
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	E9.1	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	May 2024	Chief Financial Officer
	E9.2	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2023	
	E9.3	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	July 2024	
	E9.4	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	May 2024	Chief Financial Officer; RWG
	E9.5	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	October 2024	Chief Financial Officer
	E9.6	Maintain Platinum partnership with Kinaway.	April annually	Senior HR Partner

Reconciliation Action Plan: Opportunities (continued)

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate opportunities to increase the cultural accessibility and safety of our services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	E10.1	Investigate conducting a review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences interacting with VAGO to understand accessibility barriers and needs.	February 2024	Talent Acquisition Partner
	E10.2	Investigate opportunities to increase engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our auditing work.	April 2024	Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audit
	E10.3	Investigate opportunities to develop, promote and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within the auditing sector.	April 2025	Human Resources Director

Reconciliation Action Plan: Governance

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP	E11.1	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec annually	Senior HR Partner
	E11.2	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May 2023	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E11.3	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec annually	Senior HR Partner; RWG
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	E12.1	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2023	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E12.2	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 2023	RAP Executive Champion
	E12.3	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June 2023	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E12.4	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	May 2023	Deputy-Auditor General

Reconciliation Action Plan: Governance (continued)

Action	Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	E13.1	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	August, annually	Senior HR Partner
	E13.2	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Senior HR Partner
	E13.3	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Senior HR Partner; RWG
	E13.4	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, Sept, Dec annually	Senior HR Partner
	E13.5	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings each year.	October 2023, 2024	Auditor-General; Executive Officer, Office of the Auditor-General
	E13.6	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	March 2024	Senior HR Partner
	E13.7	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	April 2025	Senior HR Partner; RWG
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	E14.1	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	February 2025	Senior HR Partner

Our values



Respect

We celebrate diversity.

We seek out, listen to and understand other's perspectives.

We treat people with fairness and dignity, and protect confidentiality.



Innovation

We harness ideas to adapt and evolve.

We have the courage to take informed risks and challenge the status quo.

We embrace lessons from the new things we try.



Collaboration

We work well with colleagues and demonstrate support and trust.

We learn and develop, and give constructive feedback.

We share knowledge and insights.



Accountability

We empower others.

We meet agreed commitments.

We are responsible for, and transparent about, decisions and actions.

We make decisions that withstand scrutiny.

Glossary

Term	Definition/Explanation
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems	Traditional Knowledge including ecological knowledge, medicinal knowledge, environmental management knowledge and cultural and spiritual knowledge. It includes technical knowledge and know-how, agricultural knowledge, and astronomy.
Accessibility	The extent to which people with disability can access something like an office, worksite or public area.
Belonging	Means that all people are truly accepted and valued for being their authentic selves.
Culture	The customary beliefs, values systems, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group.
Disability	The experience of living with a physical, physiological, psychological condition or chronic illness, including conditions relating to mental health and mental illness, and persons who are neuro-diverse. Disability may be temporary or permanent.
Discrimination	When someone is treated badly or unfairly because of a personal characteristic or attribute that is protected by the law.
Diversity	Refers to the varied characteristics of our employees and stakeholders. These characteristics may include, but are no limited to ethnicity, cultural and religious beliefs, gender and sexual orientation, age, education, physical and mental ability.
Diversity champions	VAGO staff members that promote and drive support for the delivery of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the workplace.
Employee Resource Group (ERG)	A voluntary, employee-led group that is organised on the basis of common identities, interests, or backgrounds. ERGs aim to support employees by providing opportunities to network whilst creating a more inclusive workplace.
Equality	The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups.
Gender identity	Distinct from the term “sexual orientation,” refers to a person’s internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
Inclusion	Means that all people are respected, valued and invited to take part in a meaningful way with equitable opportunity, free from discrimination and workplace harm.
Intersectionality	The ways in which different aspects of a person’s identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and other gender and sexuality diverse people.
Person-first language	Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, <i>person with disability</i> as opposed to <i>disabled person</i> . Person-first language is used to emphasise a person’s right to an identity beyond their disability.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation is about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians talking, walking, and working together to overcome the division and inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.
Unconscious bias	Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that affect their understanding, actions and decisions.
Working group (WG)	Staff from across the organisation and external to the organisation, who may be selected for their expertise or experience, who collaborate together to achieve deliverables or action plans.

VAGO

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