



Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026

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Bundaberg Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Country of the Taribelang Bunda, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, and Bailai Peoples and recognises that this Country has always been and continues to be of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise the thousands of generations of continuous culture that have shaped this Country and the people on it.

We pay respect to Elders, past and present. Bundaberg Regional Council further acknowledges other neighbouring traditional owner groups within the Wide Bay-Burnett Region.



“Our priority is to create a work environment that is safe and inclusive for everyone who is a part of, or interacts with Council”

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

I am proud to be presenting Bundaberg Regional Council’s revised Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy for 2024-2026.

Our priority is to create a work environment that is safe and inclusive for everyone who is a part of or interacts with Council. We strive to create pathways for professional growth, ensure equitable access to opportunities and maintain a culture of respect and inclusion.

As a leading employer within the region we look to the future to plan for the skills and knowledge required to provide services to our community. As our community becomes more diverse so too must Council’s workforce in order to fully understand and address the community’s changing needs.

We have made positive progress as a diverse and inclusive organisation over recent years including:

- Increased female representation at the senior leadership level;
- Introduction of Council’s First Nations Strategy;
- Embracing a variety of flexible working arrangements over and above legislative requirements;
- Introduction of Council’s first Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Action (IDEA) working group.

While we have made significant progress there is more that we can achieve. It is an exciting and rewarding journey for our organisation and one that I am proud to lead.

Steve Johnston

Chief Executive Officer

Our approach

The primary purpose of Council's Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026 is to strengthen Council's commitment to creating a work environment that is diverse, equitable and inclusive for everyone who is a part of or interacts with Council. It acknowledges and celebrates the unique backgrounds, perspectives and talents of its employees while providing them with support to reach their full potential.

This foundational document supports our *Corporate Plan, Values and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Focus areas*.

It serves as the guiding framework through which Council will act and illustrates Council's ongoing evolution in terms of DE&I maturity.

Corporate Plan 2021-2026

The Strategy is critical in delivering our workforce and cultural objectives that align with our Corporate Plan 2021-2026 through our organisational services:

- 3.2.1 Ensure our workforce is suitable, trained and supported to competently manage themselves and their work.
- 3.2.2 Provide friendly and responsive customer service, in keeping with corporate values and community expectations.
- 3.2.4 Exercise whole-of-Council adherence to and compliance with Council's policies and procedures, in keeping with our corporate values and community expectations.

Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026

Corporate values



DE&I Focus areas



Annual Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan

Driven by our values

Our approach is not standalone but interwoven with our corporate values. These values are the foundation of our strategy, steering us toward a culture where diversity, equity and inclusion are not just goals, but a lived experience for all.



Communication and leadership

We are committed to embedding DE&I principles in our governing documents and every day interactions. We are driven to achieve recognition as a leader in DE&I. Our leaders are champions of this cause, advocating and modelling inclusive behaviours, ensuring that our message and methods are clear and that accountability is held at all levels.



Teamwork

In the spirit of Teamwork, we recognise that collective effort and shared understanding are vital. We provide focused learning that supports inclusive behaviours, tailored to different roles within the Council, ensuring our teams are cohesive units that value and respect every member's contribution.



Customer (employee) focus

True customer service excellence is achieved when we celebrate and understand the diversity of both our employees and the community we serve. By acknowledging and embracing the variety of cultures, experiences, and needs, we tailor our services to effectively meet the unique requirements of each individual.



Respect

Respect is at the core of our DE&I strategy, with a clear focus on nurturing an environment where every individual feels valued and respected. This is reflected in our efforts to ensure our workforce is representative of the community we serve, embracing different perspectives and experiences.



Sustainability

Sustainability in our DE&I efforts means building long-term structures that support diversity and inclusion. By refining our systems, tools, and processes to be accessible and inclusive, we ensure that our commitment to DE&I is enduring and integrated into every aspect of our operations.



Innovation

Innovation thrives on the diversity of thought. By valuing the unique perspectives and experiences each individual brings, we not only foster a culture of continuous improvement but also drive innovation that resonates with our evolving and growing community. Our commitment to diversity is a catalyst for creativity and new ideas that keep us at the forefront of serving our community's needs.



Safety and wellbeing

The wellbeing of our employees is paramount, and our DE&I goals reflect this by providing a supportive and inclusive work environment. We celebrate diversity and aim to provide the necessary support for all employees to feel safe and empowered to achieve their full potential.

Building from our DE&I focus areas

Expanding upon the nine focus areas from our inaugural Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2023, we chart the course for broader objectives.

This strategy evolves from a firm foundation, advancing towards a deeper and more comprehensive diversity and inclusion framework within Council, all while maintaining these core focus areas as the essence of our planning and initiatives.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Focusing on cultural awareness and developing a specific First Nations Strategy and Reconciliation Action Plan, the Council aims to ensure that the First Nations communities are integral to building a more inclusive and equitable regional community while respecting their unique connections to land and cultural identity.

Generational Diversity

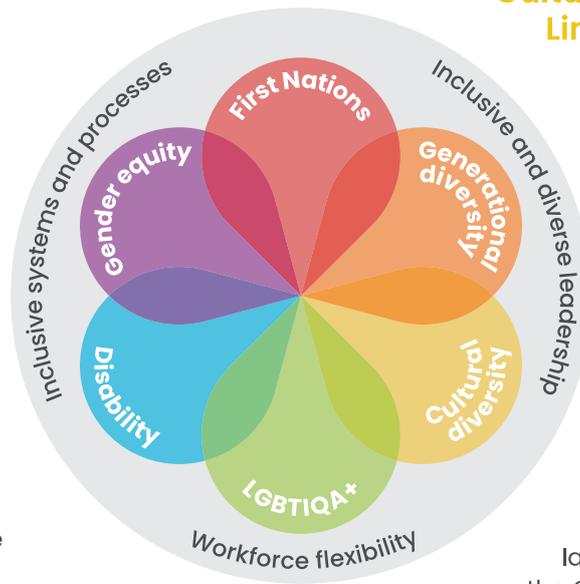
Council focuses on supporting people of all ages, recognising the unique challenges at each life stage, from parenting to elder care. We are committed to breaking down age barriers and promoting knowledge sharing across generations as a key part of workforce planning. This approach aims to build a fair, inclusive workplace that reflects our community and benefits everyone.

Gender Equality

Council's commitment to gender equity is rooted in the principles of fairness, inclusivity, and the removal of gender-based biases and barriers. By fostering an environment where women and men have equal opportunities and where contributions are valued without regard to gender, the Council aims to create a more diverse, balanced, and inclusive workforce that benefits all employees and the organisation as a whole.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

By embracing cultural and linguistic diversity within its workforce, Council seeks to create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive environment that benefits both its employees and the diverse community it serves. This approach ensures that policies, programs, and services are tailored to meet the needs of people from various cultural backgrounds and languages, ultimately enhancing the Council's ability to serve its constituents effectively.



People Living with Disability or Neurodiversity

Council's commitment to supporting employees with disabilities and neurodiversity emphasises awareness, accessibility, and inclusivity. By promoting an environment that respects the diverse abilities and challenges of individuals, Council aims to provide the necessary support and adjustments for employees to excel in their roles. This approach contributes to a more inclusive and equitable workplace culture where all employees, regardless of their abilities, can thrive and make valuable contributions to the organisation.

LGBTQIA+

Council's commitment to supporting LGBTQIA+ employees in the workplace is focused on awareness, inclusivity, and addressing discrimination and bias. By actively promoting inclusion and support Council aims to create a work environment where all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, can fully participate, excel, and feel valued and respected. This commitment is aligned with the broader goal of fostering a more inclusive and equitable workplace culture.

Our goals and objectives

Council's strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion contains a clear set of goals and objectives to guide our efforts.

Annual action plans that define the approach, key actions and what success looks like. These action plans serve as practical guides for the effective delivery of the strategy and the attainment of the goals.

Council also recognises the importance of keeping its workforce informed about progress and success through internal communication channels.

Additionally, Council aims to enhance awareness of its commitment, goals, and achievements in the broader community through external communication channels.

These elements collectively guide the Council's efforts to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and community.

Goal 1:

Commitment



Embed our commitment to DE&I in our governing documents and achieve formal recognition as a diverse and inclusive organisation.

Our objectives:

- Showcase our dedication by actively pursuing recognition for our diversity and inclusion initiatives from recognised programs and authorities.
- Adopt inclusive language and communication in official documents, policies, and interactions.
- Successfully implement Council's DE&I Strategy and Annual Action Plans ensuring that initiatives are effectively carried out and integrated into the organisation's operations.
- Communicate our commitment externally to enhance community awareness of our values, goals and achievements.

Goal 2:

Learning



Take purposeful action to cultivate awareness and understanding of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and why it is critical to Council's success.

Our objectives:

- Cultivate a collaborative culture that values diverse perspectives and knowledge exchange.
- Acquire a comprehensive understanding of our workforce and their need to guide informed actions.
- Enhance knowledge, understanding and awareness of DE&I principles and integrate these into the Council's operations.
- Actively engage with underrepresented communities to ensure their voices and needs are represented.

Goal 3:

Celebration



Our workforce celebrates the diversity of its employees and supports all employees to achieve their potential.

Our objectives:

- Amplify diverse voices and stories.
- Recognise and honour a variety of cultural traditions, holidays, celebrations and milestones.
- Support employees to reach their full professional potential through workforce flexibility and inclusive systems and processes.
- Create a supportive and welcoming environment that enables individuals to develop and contribute while maintaining their own identity.

Goal 4:

Leadership



Our leaders at all levels advocate and take accountability for inclusion and diversity.

Our objectives:

- Inclusive representation in leadership positions across all organisational levels.
- Empower leaders with the knowledge and tools necessary for inclusive leadership.
- Leaders are visible and active participants in DE&I initiatives and actively encourage staff participation.

Goal 5:

Representation



Our workforce is reflective of the community that we serve.

Our objectives:

- Achieve a workforce composition that reflects the diversity of the broader community, enhancing representation across all levels and departments.
- Establish recruitment strategies that remove barriers to engage with and draw talent from various community groups ensuring a broad and inclusive talent pool.
- Identify and implement initiatives to improve the participation, progression and retention of underrepresented groups in the Council workforce.
- Offer development programs tailored to various career stages to promote relevant skill-building and professional growth across generations.

How you can help implement the strategy

Executive Management

What executive management will do

- Exemplify inclusive and respectful behaviours and set the tone from the top.
- Actively pursue opportunities to increase diversity and inclusion in the workforce.
- Reward inclusive behaviours and share good news stories.
- Hold leaders and peers to account.

How executive management are supported

- Access to workforce demographic data to understand their workforce composition and drive informed decision making.
- Access to training and learning solutions with a focus on improving and promoting inclusive behaviours.
- Encouragement of participation in forums and discussions that foster DE&I understanding and advocacy.
- Clear guidelines and protocols to ensure equitable decision-making in all managerial processes.

Managers and supervisors

What managers and supervisors can do

- Set a positive example for teams by demonstrating inclusive behaviours.
- Take action to address behaviour that is not in line with Council values and the Code of Conduct.
- Support staff in actively contributing to DE&I initiatives.
- Support an environment where staff can share ideas and speak up when they have differing views.

How managers and supervisors are supported

- Access to training and learning solutions with a focus on improving and promoting inclusive behaviours.
- Encouragement of participation in forums and discussions that foster DE&I understanding and advocacy.
- Clear guidelines and protocols to ensure equitable decision-making in all managerial processes.
- HR support – provision of additional coaching and advice on DE&I matters

All employees

What employees can do

- Support colleagues by being inclusive and report, or safely call out non-inclusive behaviour.
- Update your DE&I details in our HR systems to allow us to understand our workforce and tailor support and services.
- Participate in learning opportunities to build understanding and capability relating to diversity and inclusion.
- Share stories and experiences where you feel comfortable and safe to do so.

How employees are supported

- Access to employee networks with improved opportunities to shape diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Policies, facilities and systems that reflect a more diverse range of needs.
- Opportunities to provide feedback, allowing us to better understand employee experience.
- Increased support to develop understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion.

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