As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19 Evaluation

Report prepared for:

Australian Public Service Commission

Wallis Market and Social Research achieved accreditation to the International Standard ISO20252 in September 2007. The Company is committed to maintaining administrative and operational procedures which comply with these accreditation requirements and to improving its performance in all aspects of the service it delivers to its customers.

Wallis is an active participant in the market research industry, with senior staff making significant contributions to the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) and the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO). As such we actively pursue the ethical objectives of the industry.

In addition to having attained the highest Industry accreditation, Wallis also participates in the Australian Achiever Awards, which recognises the customer service excellence of Australian companies. The Company has been awarded a high commendation every year since the inception of these awards in 1999.

Wallis is an acknowledged leader in data protection and privacy. Our systems are OWASP certified and we are Privacy Awareness Week partners – committed to sharing our knowledge with others.

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A note to readers on the interpretation of Qualitative findings

In the results which follow the reader is reminded that qualitative research seeks to develop insight and direction rather than provide absolute measures.

Given the sample sizes, the self-selection recruitment method adopted and the objectives of the study, it should be understood that qualitative research work is exploratory in nature.

There are no statistical degrees of confidence in qualitative findings and they are not necessarily representative of the broader population.

Qualitative findings should therefore be viewed as a frame of reference and indicative in nature.

Executive Summary

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) engaged Wallis Market and Social Research (Wallis) to evaluate the *As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19* (the Strategy) in October 2019. This report describes the findings and conclusions of the evaluation.

The four Action Areas of the Strategy were evaluated:

A.   Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

B.   Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

C.   Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

D.   Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

The outcomes of each action area were evaluated, where feasible, against four criteria:

- Progress

- Challenges in implementing the Strategy

- Identification of elements that are effective and sustainable

- Measurement of consistency of outcomes across categories of disability

The evaluation comprised:

- development of a program logic cooperatively with the APSC for the Strategy

- desk research of materials and data supplied by the APSC

- qualitative research

The qualitative research comprised:

- Two focus groups of APS staff who identified as having disability

- 12 interviews of APS staff who identified as having disability

- 6 interviews of APS staff who were managers of people with disability

- 5 interviews of HR Corporate staff

- 2 interviews of Disability Champions

Wallis and the APSC developed interviewer, focus group moderator guides and other collateral cooperatively. All interviews were conducted by phone while the focus groups were held in the offices of the APSC. Participants were advised that the research was confidential, and Wallis applied its protocol for interviewing vulnerable people. Participants were contacted by a range of means and they indicated that they would like to be involved in the research. Wallis then scheduled focus groups and interviews at convenient times between 31st October and 12th November 2019.

Because participants 'self-selected' for the research an important caveat applies to the findings; the research covered a small subset of all agencies in the Australian Public Service and judgement must be exercised in projecting the findings to the whole Strategy.

The conclusions for each Action Area arising from the evaluation are:

1.   Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

There is little evidence of an expansion in the range of employment opportunities for people with disability. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- There has been no change in the percentage of APS employees disclosing a disability in the last three years

- The percentage of staff with a declared disability declines consistently from APS 4 to EL level

- Many participants were unaware of the existence of affirmative measures disability

- Participants agreed that there is stigma associated with disability which reduces the number of staff who might apply for positions using the RecruitAbility scheme

- Some participants said there is a 'd-ceiling' similar in concept to the 'glass ceiling' associated with women in business

- Participants said that a person with disability might not seek promotion due to a concern that they may encounter a manager in a new role who is not empathetic or trained to support a person with disability

- Participants said that many managers are largely unaware of policies relating to workplace adjustments and flexible workplaces.

2.   Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

There has been progress in investing in developing the capability of employees with disability. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- The concept of the workplace/reasonable adjustment passport has been developed and utilised, which reduces barriers for people with disability to change roles

- Partnering with JobAccess is providing transportable workplace adjustments

- Disability Champions and networks supporting disability have been established. These initiatives provide forums for people with disability to develop their capability

- Some agencies have introduced wide ranging initiatives to support people with disability.

3. Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

There is no evidence that there has been an increase in representation of employees with disability in senior roles. The conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- There was no evidence that career development programs have been designed specifically for people with disability

- There was no evidence that programs have been developed to attract people with disability into senior roles

- Some participants said that there was a perception that people with disability are unsuited for senior roles

- Participants said that RecruitAbility was often not offered for advertised senior roles.

4. Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

There has been very little progress in fostering inclusive cultures in the workplace. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- Most participants said that there had been little or no substantive change in outlooks for people with disability over the last three years

- Most participants said that they would prefer not to disclose their disability because of stigma, reduced promotion opportunities or not wanting to appear as different. This finding is supported by the recognised difference between the percentage of people who disclose disability in the APS Employee Census and the percentage of people who record a disability on their HR record.

1　Introduction

1.1　Background

The *As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19 Strategy* (the Strategy) was published in 2016. It set the agenda for change in the Australian Public Service (APS) to improve employment opportunities for people with disability.

The goal of the Strategy was to increase representation of employees with disability across the APS, including Indigenous people with disability. To achieve this goal, it was recognised that people with disability needed to be offered multiple pathways into the APS and existing employees with disability needed better career opportunities.

The Strategy provides a roadmap for improving representation of people with disability within the APS.

APS departments and agencies have been responsible for improving representation of people with disability within their workforces. Employees within the agencies have an obligation to engage with, and contribute to, initiatives that support employment of people with disability in the APS. The initiatives also require agencies to support employees with disability.

APS departments and agencies have been required to implement feasible plans to deliver results across four key Action Areas:

- Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

- Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

- Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

- Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace.

1.2　Strategy Evaluation

1.2.1　Key stakeholders

APSC Stakeholders

APS Commissioner

APSC Diversity & Inclusion Policy

APSC Strategic Policy and Research Group

Networks

APS Disability Champions Network

Disability & Carers Networks (individual agency level)

Initiative owners

RecruitAbility – APSC is the initiative owner

BuyAbility – DSS is the initiative owner

APS Staff

Agency HR/Corporate functions

APS Managers

APS staff with disability

1.2.2　Program logic model

The Program Logic Model was developed in cooperation with the APSC. It summarises Wallis' understanding of the Strategy.

Inputs (APSC Inputs)

- Decentralised system with APSC providing strategy and advice

  - Staffing

  - No funding for the strategy

  - MoUs with agencies to fund certain activities

  - Reasonable adjustments

- Data Resource

  - Collection

  - Analysis

  - HR systems

  - Agency Survey

  - Employee Census

- Commissioners' Directions

  - Affirmative measures

Activities (APSC Activities)

- Resources

  - Creates recruitment guides and fact sheets

- Facilitation and participation of Networks

  - APS Disability champion network Secretariat

  - Participation in small agency forum

- Awareness

  - Post accessibility requirements on website

- Review plans/policies

  - Review policy on HR for disability in APS

  - Review agency plans

  - Review data collection to support the agencies better

- Pilot Programs

  - GradAccess

  - NextStep

Outputs (Agencies activities and what APSC activities generate)

Note that APSC has no comprehensive oversight of agency level activities to implement the strategy

Commitment statements by agencies

- Programs

  - Dandelion program

  - 10:10

  - Internship program for those with disabilities

  - Agencies run their own recruitment drives

  - Career Support Networks

  - Mental Health Capability Pilot

  - RecruitAbility

  - BuyAbility

- APSC Outputs

  - Expanded Affirmative Measures

  - Disability Champions Network materials (website, minutes, records of requests for information)

  - Recruitment guides and fact sheets

  - Policies

- Expanded coverage of disability in the State of the Service report

- Guidance relating to Disability Passports

Short-term Outcomes (end 2019)

- Awareness & Engagement

    - Increase in the number of requests for support

    - Increase in the reach of networks and forums

    - Stronger partnerships with external organisations

- Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

    - Apply the RecruitAbility* scheme to a broad range of vacancies, including graduate programs and Senior Executive Service roles, to maximise opportunities for people with disability.

    - Expand pathways into APS employment, including through the use of disability affirmative measures in the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013 and the use of internships.

    - Ensure recruitment and selection teams are disability aware and confident.

    - Partner with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS and to reach more job seekers with disability.

    - Promote government procurement from businesses that employ people with disability

- Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

    - Make the workplace accessible

    - Make workplace adjustments where required, including job design and flexible work arrangements, to maximise productivity.

    - Implement adjustments-including assistive technology-quickly to enable productivity.

    - Provide support for managers and colleagues of people with disability. For example, increase managers' uptake of Mental Health First Aid training and disability awareness training.

- Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

    - Ensure the inclusion of middle managers with disability in development programs for high performers.

    - Offer career development opportunities to middle managers with disability who demonstrate consistent high performance.

    - Provide senior mentors across the APS for employees with disability who have identified a desire to develop.

    - Attract people with disability at senior levels from the community and private sectors.

1.2.3 Purpose of the evaluation

APS departments and agencies have been implementing the Strategy for almost three years. This evaluation describes the outcomes of the Strategy against four criteria (where feasible):

- Progress against each Action Area

- Challenges in implementing the Strategy

- Identification of elements of the Strategy that are effective and sustainable

- Measurement of consistency of outcomes across categories of disability.

1.2.4 Key evaluation questions

The discussion guides were designed in collaboration with the Commission. There were for variants of the discussion guides to ensure that there were different questions asked for the focus groups/depth interviews and for managers/employees. However, the broad themes discussed were the same across the discussion guides. The discussion guide for people with disability consisted of seven sections which included:

- Introduction

- Background

- Pathway to the APS

- Awareness of support for employees with disability

- Views regarding four key Action Areas

- Nature of disability

- Final Comments

The other guides were variants of the above and copies can be found in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

1.3   Scope

1.3.1   Scope limitation

For this study, an opt-in process was adopted, where APSC employees who are interested to participate can write in to indicate their interest. With this process, only those who opted in were contacted. This resulted in a limited coverage of agencies which is not representative. While a large number of depth interviews and focus groups were conducted to ensure sufficient coverage of different cross-sections, state or metro/rural quotas were not put in place due to this limitation.

2 Design, Recruitment and Methodology

2.1 Design

A Project Inception Meeting was organised via teleconferencing on 10th October. This meeting served to refine the scope and planning for the evaluation and to finalise the materials needed for the Program Logic Model Workshop held on 11th October.

The Program Logic Model Workshop was run on 11th October at the APSC offices in Canberra with APSC internal stakeholders. The purpose of this workshop was for Wallis to understand the strategy and to outline the model that was to be used for evaluation thereafter.

After the workshop, Wallis developed discussion guides for both the interviews and focus groups. Versions were developed for employees and managers. These were finalised on 22nd October. Wallis received the first wave of potential contacts on 23rd of October. From 23rd October, the recruitment team commenced contacting those who opted in and to gather more referrals from these contacts.

Fieldwork happened concurrently with the recruitment process. The focus groups were held on 7th November at the APSC offices, moderated by Wallis. All interviewing was completed by 12th November.

Analysis and reporting commenced on the 18th November. After a debrief workshop between APSC and Wallis on the 21st November, this report was delivered on 22nd November.

2.2 Recruitment

Recruitment was conducted on an opt-in basis. The following steps were taken to recruit participants:

- Flyers were distributed at a conference on 15th October to inform relevant parties (a copy of the flyer can be found in Appendix 4)

- An email was sent on 24th October to encourage more opt-ins and for contacts to circulate around their departments/agencies for others to opt in. (A copy of the email can be found in appendix 5)

- Those who opted in were contacted by Wallis' Qualitative Fieldwork Coordinator and a team of recruiters and were asked to recommend key references within their departments/agencies

- These references were then contacted and asked to participate in the study

2.3   Methodology

The focus groups were held in APSC's office in Canberra on 7th November. There were two groups of five participants each.

Twenty-five depth interviews were held via telephone conference with respondents from around Australia from 31st October to 12th November.

Due to the nature of the discussion, interviewers were provided with helpline details to pass on to respondents if it was deemed necessary. Wallis Sensitive Interviewing Information protocol was adapted for interviewers to follow as this document provides guidance on steps to take when a respondent shows signs of distress during an interview/focus group.

2.4   Participants

Focus groups: 10 x APSC Employees with disability

Depth Interviews:

- 12 X APSC Employees with disability

- 6 x APSC Managers of staff with disability

- 5 x HR/Corporate Personnel

- 3 x Disability Champions (Two interviews were conducted concurrently)

3 Findings

To preserve confidentiality, gendered pronouns have been removed from the findings. This has necessitated the use of the expression 'he/she' and occasionally results in awkward grammar.

The findings are organised by Action Area and category of participant.

3.1 Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

To improve representation, agencies should review and expand the opportunities they offer to people with disability. Agencies should adopt a range of contemporary recruitment approaches to increasing the representation of people with disability in their workforce.

Findings from Staff with Disability

Apply the RecruitAbility scheme to a broad range of vacancies, including graduate programs and Senior Executive Service roles, to maximise opportunities for people with disability.

Almost all participants were aware of the RecruitAbility scheme, although several said they were not sure how the scheme works.

Several participants said they had positive experiences with using the RecruitAbility scheme in applying for jobs or promotions. Two participants, when applying for internal roles, said the required adjustments for interview were provided and the interview style was adapted to reduce anxiety. The job applications were successful.

One participant said that the recruitment experience for their current role was 'fantastic'. The recruitment was done by an external agency. The recruiting agency made the required adjustments for the interview and the process went smoothly resulting in the participant being appointed to the role.

Another participant also had a positive experience when applying for a job as an external applicant. The participant said, 'the recruiters were really great about it'. The recruiting agency asked what adjustments were required and made allowances for written tests. The application was successful.

However, a greater number of participants had negative experiences. One participant described the experience of applying for EL1 jobs a couple of years ago. The participant said that none of the advertisements were under the RecruitAbility scheme, even though there was a box to tick. The participant said that when the box was ticked it remained blank.

This observation prompted a discussion amongst focus group participants regarding the prevalence and applicability of the RecruitAbility scheme. Some participants thought that RecruitAbility was an option for all advertised jobs. Others were not sure

that this was the case and were not sure whether jobs in their own agency were under the RecruitAbility scheme. Several participants said they were not sure how the RecruitAbility scheme worked.

Most participants said that whether or not to 'tick the box' and apply for a job under the RecruitAbility scheme was problematic. One participant said they had discussed the option with their medical professionals before making a decision. Some found having to tick the box confronting. Others were concerned about how ticking the box would be perceived by the recruiters. Several participants were concerned that ticking the box would prejudice their suitability and adversely affect their application.

Participants said the decision was difficult when their disability was not visible. Two participants said:

> *"Do I actually want to identify myself as having a condition?...It was a big consideration for me whether I'd tick that box, I guess."*

> *"I found that what happens there is that you straight away have exposed what you might consider your greatest vulnerability to a panel and so I wasn't prepared for that, I hadn't really thought about the fact that something that I would normally tread very carefully around and wouldn't really want to bring up, you don't really want to bring up your vulnerability at an interview so yeah, I wasn't prepared, I found it really confronting actually and felt so very vulnerable."*

One the other hand, some participants were more pragmatic about the need to disclose their disability:

> *"There is no point saying you don't need something when you need something."*

One participant said that he/she had unsuccessfully applied for a large number of jobs using the RecruitAbility scheme before finally being appointed to a position when the application was made through GradAccess. The participant said that his/her disability meant that it was impossible to compete in the interview process against people without a disability and that the RecruitAbility scheme was useful to level the playing field during the interview process. He/she also said that using the RecruitAbility scheme in the earlier applications was useful because it enabled the him/her to 'take a step forward in the process' by building interviewing experience.

One participant said that when he/she ticked the box for the RecruitAbility scheme he/she did not make it to the interview stage. For other applications where the box was not ticked, he/she did make it to the interview stage. The participant said that he/she believes that recruiters assume he/she will require reasonable adjustments if

the application is made using the RecruitAbility scheme and that this affects the application.

Several participants said that there was insufficient feedback provided after an application had been made under the RecruitAbility scheme. One participant wanted to know whether an interview was granted only because of ticking the box or whether it was on the merits regardless of the RecruitAbility scheme.

One participant said that after one job application he/she asked the recruiters whether they took the RecruitAbility scheme into account. The participant said that the recruiters answered that they do not even look at RecruitAbility. He/she said:

> *"So, you just don't know whether or not RecruitAbility is taken seriously or not."*

Two participants described their perception of the RecruitAbility scheme as:

- Mostly for people with a physical rather than mental disability

- Mostly for jobs requiring lower levels of skill

Expand pathways into APS employment, including through the use of disability affirmative measures in the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016 and the use of internships.

Just over half of the participants had heard of affirmative measures disability. One participant explained that in their experience the interviews were less formal and more friendly than regular interviews and that the pool of applicants was smaller. Another participant said that the principle adopted was to screen candidates in rather than screen them out and another said that the measures were good for promoting diversity and equitable outcomes.

However, most participants were not aware of specific instances where the disability affirmative measure had been used. One participant summed up the feeling of most participants by saying:

> *"I'm familiar with the concept. I've never seen it applied in anything. I've never seen it as a factor of any job I've applied for. I've never seen it available either."*

One participant had a negative experience with a affirmative measure disability application. After deliberation and advice, the participant (with an invisible disability) decided to tick the RecruitAbility box for a job application and also apply for affirmative measure disability. The rationale was primarily that the interview could be conducted with reasonable adjustments. The job application was successful.

However, the subsequent notification relating to the job in the Gazette was written as 'Name – Affirmative Measure (Disability)'.

The participant described how the experience caused considerable anguish because the participant had not disclosed the disability to colleagues. The participant said that it was as if the agency could claim success with a disability initiative by publicising that way in the Gazette. In addition, the participant said that the disclosure of the disability in the widely read publication made the participant feel that winning the position was not as valuable as for a recruitment round that was not an affirmative measure.

The participant also recounted how the appointment to the new position under the affirmative measure was made more quickly than for other appointments in the same round. This led to conflict with staff members who believed that the participant benefited from the reasonable adjustments by virtue of the speed at which the appointment was made. Initially, the participant was excited about the promotion but after the publication the participant has not mentioned it to anybody in order to minimise the number of people who check in the Gazette.

About half of the participants were familiar with the GradAccess program and how it worked. The focus group participants asked a number of questions amongst themselves to clarify the difference between the Graduate program and the GradAccess program.

Ensure recruitment and selection teams are disability aware and confident.

Several participants described instances where agreed reasonable adjustments for interviews had not been provided. One participant described their experience where the RecruitAbility box had been ticked. The recruiter from the agency called and discussed and agreed to reasonable adjustments for the interview. But on the day of the interview, the reasonable adjustments had not been passed to the interviewer and the person who made the initial call was not present. At the interview, the participant was in substantial physical pain. But there was nobody to talk to, so the participant attempted the interview tasks and did poorly and did not get the job. The participant said the dilemma was whether to proceed in pain or abandon the interview.

A second participant described their experience where the RecruitAbility box had been ticked. Subsequently, the participant said:

> *"[There was] no check-in, no phone call, no on-the-day making sure that anything was good or needed in terms of assessment or et cetera."*

This participant managed to move forward in the recruitment process and then described the experience at the 'bulk round process'. He/she had ticked the RecruitAbility box again and asked for reasonable adjustments, which were agreed to. However, these adjustments were not provided at the interview. The participant

also had to bring some of his/her own laptop-related equipment. The participant said he/she was embarrassed because the other applicants (at the group interview) were looking at the participant wondering 'What's going on here?' because the disability is not visibly apparent. The interview went very badly, and the recruiters offered to repeat the interview. The participant felt this was not fair to the other applicants and thought that the recruiters were concerned about how to rectify a botched interview. The application was not successful. The participant concluded by saying:

> *"I just wanted to be judged on my merits, so I was just like, stuff it, let's just go on."*

A third participant ticked the RecruitAbility box for an application managed by an external recruitment agency. The staff at the agency said that it was necessary to complete an online test at home. The participant said this was fine as long as the software for the test was compatible with their home computer which has reasonable adjustment software installed. The agency staff did not know if the software was compatible. The participant said that the agency had 'no idea' of even what the RecruitAbility scheme was. The agency asked whether the participant was sure he/she wanted to apply using RecruitAbility. The agency asked the same question twice again over the next few days. The participant received a letter advising that the application was unsuccessful three weeks later. The participant clearly met the minimum standard for the role because he/she was the successful candidate for a similar role a short time later. The participant chose not to complain because of the anxiety it would cause.

A fourth participant was required to sit an online test in the form of a game mid-way through the application process. The game had no capability for reasonable adjustments. The participant withdrew the application.

One participant said that managers do not know how to implement RecruitAbility. The participant described their own experience as a recruiter. He/she had been recruiting staff for quite some time but had never heard of RecruitAbility. He/she had to research what RecruitAbility was and could not find anything. He/she said that even the agency's HR department did not know about it.

One participant made the suggestion that managers should do a disability 'fluency' course. He/she said this would be of benefit because the agency could claim that it was accredited as being a disability friendly workplace.

Partner with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS and to reach more job seekers with disability.

One participant said that the problem of external recruitment agencies not making reasonable adjustments was 'endemic' [sic]. The participant said that allowing for reasonable adjustments was too difficult for third party recruitment agencies and that

'they are not trained for it'. The participant also said that online testing was a cheap way of eliminating candidates.

Following this observation, all focus group participants strongly agreed that the requirement to allow for reasonable adjustments should be included in contracts with third-party recruitment agencies.

One individual participant said that external agencies lack courtesy, sensitivity and empathy. They called without concern for the work currently being done and do not offer the opportunity to make the call private. He/she said:

> *"I guess when you're asking personal information the actual recruiter needs to be a bit more engaged…they still need to show a bit of humanity…"*

In addition, the participant said that the external agencies do not carry over personal information already collected during previous job applications, which necessitates repeating personal information over the phone to different people on different occasions for new job applications.

About half of participants were aware of instances of partnering with universities or peak bodies to promote awareness in their agencies. Several participated in networks.

Several participants were dissatisfied with their experiences with networks. One described the experience as 'terrible' and stopped participating. The reason was that the participant from HR was not helpful because the message was 'you guys probably need stuff but just go off and do it yourselves…'. The participant said that the HR participant mainly described things that he/she had achieved and in doing so named employees and their specific disabilities to the whole network.

Two participants said that the networks in their agencies were mainly for people with physical disabilities and did not cater for people with mental disabilities.

Promote government procurement from businesses that employ people with disability.

This element was not evaluated.

Findings from Managers

Apply the RecruitAbility scheme to a broad range of vacancies, including graduate programs and Senior Executive Service roles, to maximise opportunities for people with disability.

Five of six participants were aware of the RecruitAbility scheme. However, only one participant was sure that the scheme was used by his/her agency. That participant said that RecruitAbility boosts the number of interviews but does not necessarily lead

to more people with disability getting jobs. He/she also said that for the scheme to work it needs to be supported by senior management.

Expand pathways into APS employment, including through the use of disability affirmative measures in the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016 and the use of internships.

Half of the participants had not heard of affirmative measures and none were aware that their agency made much use of the program. One participant said that while RecruitAbility got promoted in his/her agency he/she was not aware of any instance where affirmative measures disability had been encouraged. The participant suggested, nonetheless, that it would be worthwhile to provide advice or literature that could be used by job applicants who intend to use the affirmative measures disability so that they are aware of how the process differs from a normal job interview.

Ensure recruitment and selection teams are disability aware and confident.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Partner with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS and to reach more job seekers with disability.

Half of the participants said that their agency had some form of partnership with external organisations. The organisations nominated were:

- An organisation that provides disability case managers

- Specialsterne – an organisation that assists people with autism get employment

- An external disability employment service provider

- JobAccess

Promote government procurement from businesses that employ people with disability.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Apply the RecruitAbility scheme to a broad range of vacancies, including graduate programs and Senior Executive Service roles, to maximise opportunities for people with disability.

While all participants were familiar with the RecruitAbility scheme, only three participants said that the RecruitAbility scheme was used in their agencies. In two

agencies, it was policy for all advertised jobs to use RecruitAbility and in the third agency the policy was 'almost all'.

One participant said that RecruitAbility was not used nor actively promoted because the agency's recruitment system is not accessible; online applications are not accessible to a lot of the system software. (Therefore, the agency has designed an alternative system where staff can email their application.) The participant said that many staff feel that RecruitAbility is still a way for recruiters to filter applicants; in the past, applicants would refuse to answer the questions. He/she said that many people do not understand how RecruitAbility actually works now. Many believe it is an automatic interview, which is wrong. Even recruitment staff in this agency believe that RecruitAbility should not be applied to every position. The participant said that many agencies only apply RecruitAbility to entry level positions rather than across the board. The participant added that some agencies will only apply RecruitAbility for roles that they think a disabled person can do. He/she also said:

> *"A lot of people I know will not use RecruitAbility because it will not work the way it's been advertised to work."*

One participant said there was a lack of understanding about how RecruitAbility works amongst the panels and they are figuring out how to educate the panels to ensure the process is applied properly.

One participant said, after noting that there had only been two RecruitAbility applicants, that they do not know how to get more applicants to 'tick the box'. He/she said that it is important that more people tick the box so that there is evidence that more resources need to be put into supporting disability which can result in a business case put to the executives.

Expand pathways into APS employment, including through the use of disability affirmative measures in the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016 and the use of internships.

All participants were aware of affirmative measures, but none said they were effectively using affirmative measures in their recruitment activities (although there had been one appointment using affirmative measure disability). One participant said he/she was aware of affirmative measures in general but not for disability. Another participant said a discussion paper had been prepared for the executives but there had been no enthusiasm for the concept.

Ensure recruitment and selection teams are disability aware and confident.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Partner with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS and to reach more job seekers with disability

Most participants were not aware of any partnerships with disability employment providers, universities or disability peak bodies. One participant said their agency used a recruitment company that specialises in seeking candidates with disability. A second participant said their agency had partnered with JobAccess.

Promote government procurement from businesses that employ people with disability.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Apply the RecruitAbility scheme to a broad range of vacancies, including graduate programs and Senior Executive Service roles, to maximise opportunities for people with disability.

Both participants said their agencies use the RecruitAbility scheme. One participant said there has been a strong focus over the past few years to ensure RecruitAbility is applied to all vacancies.

One participant suggested that it is important to check that a new starter has the willingness and skills to be able to thrive in the position. He/she said:

> *"So, it's about making sure people are really set up to build a career from that point on."*

Expand pathways into APS employment, including through the use of disability affirmative measures in the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016 and the use of internships.

One participant said that affirmative measures disability were not used by their agency. The other was not sure.

Ensure recruitment and selection teams are disability aware and confident.

No feedback was obtained.

Partner with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS and to reach more job seekers with disability.

Both participants said they have partnered with external agencies. One participant described the Australian Disability Network as a small organisation which is somewhat mismatched when dealing with a large government department. However, it provides advice and support in determining reasonable adjustments.

Promote government procurement from businesses that employ people with disability.

No feedback was obtained.

3.2   Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

Employees with disability should be equipped to progress their careers at the same rate as others in the workplace and have equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for promotion.

Making reasonable adjustments helps create a level playing field and enables employees with disability to perform at their best.

Findings from Staff with Disability

Make the workplace accessible.

Most participants said that their agency tried to make their workplace more accessible. Several other participants said that they needed to stand up and ask for reasonable adjustments to be made.

One participant said that his/her deafness causes him/her to miss opportunities to learn things through informal channels that are associated with casual social contact among people who are not deaf. Therefore, the participant said, the 'invisible' sorts of rules that govern promotions and participation in networks need to be described more explicitly for people with disability. Another participant with autism agreed, and said:

> *"[I'm] not going to read between the lines. I'm going to take it quite literally."*

Make workplace adjustments where required, including job design and flexible work arrangements, to maximise productivity.

Several focus group participants said that it is common to find that changes to the physical work environment were made without consulting people with disability. They said that, unfortunately, many of the currently fashionable upgrades to offices, such as high tables, open spaces, and rounded corners are not disability friendly. After the changes are made it was too late for people with disability to make suggestions. One participant added that many of the new office features are not only unsuitable for people with disability, but also for other groups like women who are pregnant. One participant summed up the feeling of the group in the following way:

> *"But [they] are very much, "We can't do anything about it, we've already invested the money". And I'm like, "Why didn't you check with us?".*

All focus group participants strongly agreed that the funding model for physical reasonable adjustments is inappropriate. They suggested that most reasonable adjustments are funded by line areas and that the effect of this is to greatly reduce the mobility of people with disability across the APS because the department moved to needs to fund the new reasonable adjustments from their own budget. This issue aroused strong feelings of frustration and indignation within focus group participants. One participant rhetorically asked why reasonable adjustments are not a central service when adjustments are funded by the line area. One participant said:

> *"They're not going to let you take it out of the building!"*

One participant described problems associated with moving reasonable adjustments between buildings. The participant said that only staff with case managers received assistance. However, the participant did not have a case manager because adjustments had been made earlier. The participant only wanted to retain current adjustments in the new building. The participant said:

> *"Yeah, we don't need a hand-hold, we need resources. That's all we need."*

Most participants in the focus groups were familiar with the JobAccess program. However, the participants had a question and answer session to explain to each other how JobAccess provides funding for an individual rather than a department, which allows for the workplace adjustments to be retained by an individual who changes roles. One participant explained that his/her agency was aware of JobAccess but preferred to use an external supplier – that is associated with the agency's EAP – to do the workplace assessment. However, the participant said that this supplier does not know how to do anything that is different to a typical ergonomic assessment for a person without a disability. Another participant said:

> *"It is a general population approach to workplace assessments. OTs are not trained in disability awareness."*

One participant described how they were sent a regular OT for their workstation assessment. The participant needed noise cancelling headphones, but the OT recommended earmuffs from Officeworks. In contrast, according to the participant, the JobAccess staff are specifically trained to conduct assessments relating to disability.

One participant said that his/her agency is aware of the need for specific disability assessments because managers have received disability awareness training. However, this training does not translate into practice. Another participant said that:

> *"People are so busy doing work, they don't stick their heads up to find out about anything."*

One participant said that there was a problem in their agency due to the demanding physical ability needed for a significant number of jobs. The required physical ability makes it infeasible to attempt to introduce reasonable adjustments. Nonetheless, even where the role does not have a demanding physical ability, the agency is not doing well with reasonable adjustments. The participant said that every time there is a new manager, an employee with disability has to 'go through the whole issue again'. This is due, the participant said, to poor case management and poor record keeping and lack of communication between different parts of the organisation.

One participant was aware of flexible work arrangements and their agency had a working from home policy and a workplace adjustment policy where employees can adjust hours and work from home. The participant said this was useful. However, it can be difficult to have flexible hours in his/her team because there is not much "solo" work. One participant said that is was much easier obtaining reasonable adjustments when he/she was working at a large private sector agency. The participant said it was a 'bureaucratic nightmare' in their agency and that it was necessary to provide evidence of the requirement. One participant said that flexible arrangements are offered in his/her agency, but they have nothing to do with disability.

Another participant said that support for flexible work arrangements in their agency was 'haphazard' and lacked an onboarding process. The participant said the process needed to be clear, such as:

> *"Need vision support? Ring X, Need hearing support? Ring Y. etc."*

Another participant said he/she has had to push for flexible work arrangements over time. The participant said that the level of support depends on the type of person you have in management and their understanding of disability issues. He/she said that there should be mandatory training of managers for managing people with disability. Several participants were not aware of flexible work arrangements being available in their agency.

Implement adjustments—including assistive technology—quickly to enable productivity

One participant said that there was a lot of talk about accessibility in communications but that it tended to focus solely on websites and making work content accessible. The participant suggested that the notion of accessible communications should be expanded to all communications, including activities such as roadshows.

One participant with vision impairment, including colour blindness, said that he/she was annoyed with agencies that do not follow the WCAG 2.0 guidelines. The

participant said that the WCAG 2.0 guidelines only apply to services for government and do not apply to agencies. He/she said that, due to his/her disability, agency reports and documents that do not follow WCAG 2.0 guidelines are difficult to read and materially impact his/her ability to function in the role.

All focus groups participants agreed that there are specific difficulties relating to IT security and the restrictions imposed by shared services. One example offered related to an ergonomic keyboard. The driver for the keyboard cannot be installed because of the security requirements of the IT system. This means, the participant said, that the required features of the keyboard cannot be used. Another participant said that a laptop was required as a reasonable adjustment to allow documents to be read and that it took many months to receive approval for the software to be installed. A third participant said that assistive computer software frequently does not work properly and that many people are involved to find a resolution, but none will take responsibility. An participant summed up the feeling of the focus group participants as follows:

> *"It's a very clear demonstration that shared services, which is the way of the future, leaves us out of the loop."*

One participant described the use of a chatbot incorporating artificial intelligence that allows staff to ask questions anonymously. One use for this technology might be to allow a person experiencing family violence to ask questions anonymously about family leave provisions. The participant said that the technology could readily be expanded to assist people with disability and people experiencing financial hardship.

One participant explained that specific assistive technology was overlooked in his/her agency's new IT plan. The participant queried the omission and was told by IT that assistive technology was not seen as being essential. Many participants expressed frustration with assistive technology and said it was demoralising because they have the same ability to finish the work if they had the right tools. One participant said:

> *"We all just want to get on with our jobs."*

One participant said he/she had a negative experience in their agency after having had a good experience at an external agency regarding an ergonomic assessment. A range of equipment was recommended. The assessment, which included personal medical information regarding conditions and diagnoses, was sent to the participant. However, the recommendations for equipment were not actioned. Instead, the participant was told to submit the complete assessment with every request for the recommended equipment. The participant found recounting the experience of having to submit the personal medical assessment to unfamiliar staff to support each request for equipment to be very distressing. In addition, the participant was required to submit the medical assessment to his/her direct supervisor because the cost of the

equipment was "coming out of the line area's funds." The participant said that it was necessary to 'sit there and explain every dollar to spend.' The participant concluded by explaining that the supervisor was replaced a week later which necessitated a further disclosure of the medical assessment to the new supervisor. Another participant said:

"I can hear the frustration in your voice, and we've all lived it!"

Provide support for managers and colleagues of people with disability. For example, increase managers' uptake of Mental Health First Aid training and disability awareness training.

Participants in one focus group debated who was responsible for supporting staff with disability. One participant said that their agency had a written policy that it was the responsibility of each person to 'look after themselves'. Others said that HR needs to be supporting the manager to support the person with disability. One participant said that responsibility needs to be pushed back onto HR because he/she does not have time to chase up requirements. He/she said:

"So, I pushed back quite a lot when they've tried to put things back onto me. I've just said, 'No that's actually HR. You can drive that for me, because I don't have the time to do that and that's really up to you to do that. I don't have the same power situation as you."

Many participants said that the 'behaviour and practice' to support disability is not adequate, nor is there sufficient training. Most participants agreed that the problem occurred at the level of middle management. There was strong agreement that while there might be an action plan and support at senior management the delivery of support fails at middle management. One participant captured the feeling of the group in the following way:

"But if there's a complete breakdown in engagement from SES down to direct supervisor, they mean nothing. They really do mean nothing."

Many participants said that feedback with regard to the needs of people with disability was not actioned until senior management was involved. One participant said:

"So, it's actually very much on the strength of individual SES and above for these things to happen…"

Most participants agreed that it is common for middle managers to lack awareness with respect to disability. One participant said:

> *"My experience is they're not disability-aware. They don't have the confidence, they don't have the knowledge."*

One participant said that an issue was that managers do not receive management training with respect to disability unless they personally pursue it because they want to become a better manager.

Several participants agreed that managers are inundated with information, but nobody has time to read it or take action. One participant said the problem related to 'work intensification'. Because of this increase in workload, the participant said it is hard for managers to invest in activities that are more challenging and support disability.

Many participants said that it is a matter of luck whether you end up with a 'good' manager. They agreed that having a good manager removes pressure and anxiety in the role. Relatedly, many participants said that the knowledge that there are many managers who are not disability-aware is a substantial disincentive to transfer to new roles. This is because there is a risk that the new manager will not have the required empathy and skills to support disability and then the person with disability will be trapped in an unsuitable work environment. One participant said:

> *"That's been my hesitation to move outside my department. Because although my department does and doesn't do it well, holy crap, I've heard war stories of other agencies. And I can't run that risk to get there and be like, "Well, that didn't work", and tap my department and be like, "Can you take me back?"'*

One participant with an invisible condition found it was necessary to disclose his/her condition and reasonable adjustments to his/her manager. However, the manager did not escalate the requirements – even in de-identified form – to the management team which meant that the adjustments did not occur. This resulted in the invisible condition becoming visible and work performance was affected. He/she said:

> *"So, I'm quite capable, but if the reasonable adjustments don't exist, my invisible…condition can become visible…"*

The participant said he/she then requested a transfer to a role where the manager was 'disability-informed'. The participant said that the new manager knew how to escalate in a sensitive manner and how to 'check in' with the participant in a

professional manner while maintaining privacy. The outcome was a 'completely different experience which moved from…underperforming, condition was exacerbated…to working the best I've ever worked.' The participant concluded that if the manager is empathetic and competent then the outcome is positive.

One participant said that prior to his/her current job he/she was thinking of leaving the APS because the previous manager was not understanding with respect to disability. The participant added that he/she thought that people with a psychological disability are not viewed in the same way as those with a physical disability.

One participant expressed a related concern to explain a fear of promotion because of the loss of flexibility it would entail. This loss of flexibility relates to the need to work extended hours and removal of the ability to make reasonable adjustments. The participant summed up the perception of many by saying:

> *"Oh, well, you know, we don't want to risk a really important job on someone who might need to take a day off".*

Participants described the apparent contradiction in attitudes to people with disability working in senior roles. One the one hand, one participant said the prevailing mindset in his/her agency is that to be a manager you must be physically in the office full time in order to manage teams and be available when team members need you. However, other participants pointed out that there are senior managers who work remotely and that this approach seems to work fine. Most participants agreed that promotion is very difficult if you are not working full-time and that this disadvantaged not just people with disability but also other groups with, say, caring responsibilities or parenting responsibilities.

Several participants said there was a prevalence of well-meaning but misguided assistance. One participant said a typical scenario is one where a need is escalated to the executive level and the executives respond by providing assistance. However, often the assistance is not what was requested and required, and so the process has to be repeated. The participant said:

> *"People are well-meaning, but they are not listening."*

Another participant – with a sensitivity to light – described the situation where the building was brightly lit with natural light. There were disputes with team members about whether the blinds could be drawn in the afternoons. As a solution, the participant was moved into an office. This caused jealousy amongst other team members. Eventually, the participant had to leave the agency.

Several participants were critical of the lack of people management skills in middle management. One participant said that recruitment used to be done using HR hubs

but now HR is devolved to the agencies. HR still exists, but only for advice and HR personnel generally do not sit on panels. The participant said:

> *"They have no idea about personnel management, and no idea about their obligations."*

Another participant said that most managers are subject matter experts and as such do not have people management skills. Most participants agreed with this sentiment. One participant said that agencies need to take into account the need for more generalist managers because many managers with a subject matter focus do not know how to support reasonable adjustments. One participant said:

> *"They don't know how to lead, they don't know how to manage… the people managers need to be more equipped to manage staff and to support staff, and to understand the needs of staff."*

One participant said he/she does not think their agency develops the capability of employees with disability. He/she said that no real assistance is provided for a person with disability unless there is a manager who is actively trying to help a staff member to plan their career.

Findings from Managers

Make the workplace accessible.

One participant was not aware of any initiatives in his/her agency to make the workplace more accessible. One participant was not sure of any specific activities but was confident that 'it happens.' A third participant said that the agency moved into a new building 'which is not even designed for able-bodied staff'. A fourth participant said that a staff member who became wheelchair bound after commencing employment was accommodated with appropriate facilities. In addition, a workplace assessor is on call who can conduct ergonomic checks as required. The other participants said that their workplaces were accessible.

Make workplace adjustments where required, including job design and flexible work arrangements, to maximise productivity.

One participant said that his/her agency has case managers and rehabilitation specialist for their staff with disability. He/she said that this works well because the rest of the team can continue with business as usual. The participant said that there are challenges in managing staff with disability. One specific challenge is that the staff with disability might run out of personal leave due to having to take time off due to their disability. In these cases, the staff member has to use leave without pay and then possibly reduce their work hours. The participant was satisfied that they can

have frank discussions with staff with disability about which aspects of the job they can do and which parts of the job require reasonable adjustments.

One participant said their agency uses JobAccess, which provides funding for equipment and software for people with disability. Another participant said that their agency always has appropriate equipment to support people with disability and provided flexible leave provisions. The participant said that a that the effort is appreciated by his/her manager. Other participants were not sure about workplace adjustments in their agencies.

Implement adjustments—including assistive technology—quickly to enable productivity.

One participant said that agency policy is that all mandatory training must be accessible for staff who use assisted technology. A second participant said their agency provides software to assist a staff member with impaired vision and the IT department provides a high level of support.

Provide support for managers and colleagues of people with disability. For example, increase managers' uptake of Mental Health First Aid training and disability awareness training.

One participant was not aware of any support activities provided to managers. Two participants mentioned mental health first aid training – one was compulsory for managers while the other was part of the new staff induction schedule.

The other participants said that there were a range of initiatives undertaken by their agencies including:

- Disability awareness training

- A disability network – an inter-agency forum which allows participants to hear what other agencies were doing.

- Focus on Ability network – in-house

- A policy that all mandatory training is accessible for staff who use assisted technology

- Disability Champions

- An agency-level disability policy which helps to support staff at lower levels who might not be able to advocate for themselves

- An electronic meeting place or forum where staff can learn about and exchange ideas relating to disability

- A new manager's toolkit for all managers of staff with disability which sets out policies and procedures and expectations

- A mentoring scheme for people with disability (at pilot stage).

One participant said that initiatives in his/her agency were 'driven from the top' and senior management initiated the Disability Champions group. The participant said:

> *"It's incredibly important, because I find that it really helps to generate buy-in and people own those decisions, and own that drive, and that's where I think it creates a lasting initiative as opposed to something that someone's gone, "Cool, all of you are going to do this now because we want to tick a box."*

The same participant said that when new to the management role, it was very challenging to manage support the members staff with disability. The participant did not know the processes and he/she found that the ELs did not know the processes either. There had been several staff changes at the time which may have exacerbated the lack of knowledge. The participant said:

> *"In the meantime, you [sic] still got to get the work out."*

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Make the workplace accessible.

One participant said that their agency had invested in a wide range of accessibility equipment, including:

- Physical barriers for wheelchairs were removed

- All doors are automatic

- Contrasting strips on all glass

- Handrails updated

- A changing place installed

In addition, the agency has engaged access consultants who are liaising with people with disability. All these initiatives have contributed to a cultural change; he/she said that project managers now listen to people with disability. The participant also said that people in the agency accept that Australian Standards and the like for accessibility are now the minimum standard.

The participant said that budgets have been a challenge. However, there had been a change of attitudes with acceptance that if the project does make adjustments at the

beginning then it costs 'three times as much' at the end of the project to make it work. The participant also said that another change of attitude was that an adjustment built into a project does not only assist the person with disability; there is a broader benefit, for instance:

- A ramp is going to help staff who need to bring in a table

- A sans serif font will save on ink when compared to a fancy font

This second change of attitude towards viewing adjustments as having broader benefit makes the argument for adjustments more persuasive. Instead of saying 'we have to do it to comply with the Australian Standard' the argument becomes 'this will benefit lots of people in the organisation'.

A second participant said that the trend towards open plan offices has good intentions but works against the interest of people with disability. He/she cites some examples:

- Hot desking - does not work for people with disability when stand up desks cannot be adjusted.

- Open spaces are hard for hearing impaired

- Big open kitchen spaces and meeting rooms – the noise makes it difficult for wayfinding

- Rounded walls are harder to navigate than square cornered walls

A third participant said that his/her building has ramps, but the kitchen is probably not OK. He/she was not sure if there had ever been a workplace assessment.

Make workplace adjustments where required, including job design and flexible work arrangements, to maximise productivity.

One participant said that in his/her agency, flexible work arrangements are not accepted. He/she suggested that managers need more knowledge and awareness about how to introduce flexible work arrangements and the benefits it can bring; they need confidence and training. The participant said:

> *"…people actually need to see somebody sitting there at a desk in a chair to actually think they are working. "*

A second participant said that his/her agency's IT systems and eLearning were not suitable for people with disability. He/she suggested that the IT system needs to include a memory of the needs of the person with disability so that the same problem is not repeated, and gave an example: continuous prompts were sent to a manager

that his/her staff needed to complete eLearning when there were special circumstances and that training had been provided by alternative means.

In contrast, one participant said that their agency 'excelled' in provision of flexible work arrangements. However, these arrangements are mostly for staff with carer needs as opposed to staff with disability. The participant said that since flexible work arrangements were introduced unscheduled absences had halved.

Another participant said their agency has a flexible working adjustments procedure and a procedure for workplace adjustments. They are widely promoted and well supported. Most managers are fully supportive. However, the participant said, there are pockets where stigma needs to be overcome. The challenge is how to change to mindsets of people who are not on board.

Implement adjustments—including assistive technology—quickly to enable productivity.

One participant said that their agency created a dedicated one-stop-shop within the ICT Team to support staff with disability with their assistive technology needs.

Provide support for managers and colleagues of people with disability. For example, increase managers' uptake of Mental Health First Aid training and disability awareness training.

One participant said that there had recently been a focus group held with staff with disability. He/she said the findings were very confronting and concerning and they have sparked action. The trigger for the focus group and subsequent action was not the Strategy. Instead, the trigger was an external consulting company that suggested there were ways to build inclusion into the department.

Subsequently, the participant said, the SES initiated a range of initiatives, including:

- Review of accessibility of buildings

- Disability confidence training – but not rolled out for managers yet.

- Personal evacuation plans (people with disability did not have them)

- New IT policy being developed

- Mental health first aid training

- Wellbeing strategy being developed and a network soon to be rolled out

- Mental health and wellbeing champion.

- Existing disability network has been re-focused on strengths, so is now the Ability Network

- Partnered with JobAccess to install Bindimaps (wayfinding in buildings) in one building.

- All jobs are now advertised under RecruitAbility

One participant said their agency had been running a successful mental health first aid course for four years. In addition, the agency celebrates International Day of People with Disability every year. However, the participant said that the broader focus of the agency is on diversity rather than disability. To this end, the agency has a Diversity Action plan; this plan is not targeted to any particular level or classification.

The participant said one challenge was a lack of resources. A second challenge is 'diversity fatigue'. This fatigue is manifesting in a reduction in participation rates. Because there are not enough weeks in the year to do everything relating to diversity, the agency must be clear on what the priorities are. For 2019 the focus was on gender equality (and by necessity, therefore, less so on disability). Nonetheless, the agency conducts disability awareness training, but not specifically for managers. There is also e-learning relating to disability awareness available on the Learning Hub.

Another participant said that their agency conducts a wide range of initiatives to support disability, including:

- Support for the Focus on Ability Network. Cards are handed out explaining how to join the network

- An online social-like platform to post awareness raising information, and share ideas for assistive technology, etc.

- Recognition of Days of Significance, including the International Day of People with Disability

- Five-plus-five sessions (based on the APSC ten-plus-ten initiative) where five staff with disability meet with five senior executives to bring issues to the executives first-hand. It is embedded into the disability action plan

- Dedicated one-stop-shop within ICT Team to support staff with disability with their assistive technology needs

- Disability awareness training – only recently introduced so take-up so far is minimal

- Mental Health First Aid training

- Disability Champions for the department

- Dandelion Program for staff on the autism spectrum

- Biannual update of the intranet for managers and supervisors, who might not have been exposed to managing staff with disability, relating to workplace adjustments, communication and training. Purpose is to build confidence.

- Participation in the GradAccess program

- Review of activities undertaken by other agencies.

- Networking with other agencies

- Member of the Australian Network on Disability.

- (None of the initiatives, however, are targeted to a particular classification or job grade level)

One participant said that their agency conducts mental health first aid courses, but not disability awareness courses, but was not sure of the details.

Finally, one participant said their agency conducts mental health first aid training for staff, but not managers. There is also disability awareness training available for all staff, including managers on the LearnHub. The agency now speaks of cultural safety and cultural capability rather than awareness; it is a more holistic approach around creating a safe culture that also covers things like disability.

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Make the workplace accessible.

Both participants said their workplaces were accessible.

Make workplace adjustments where required, including job design and flexible work arrangements, to maximise productivity.

Both participants said their agency provided flexible work arrangements. However, one was not sure about flexible job design. The other noted that there has been a big shift in mindset with the understanding that flexible groups can be the highest performing groups.

One participant said their agency had introduced a paper workplace/reasonable adjustment passport which is used to share information about the adjustments the person with disability needs. One challenge with the passport is that each agency has their own version. This issue is being discussed in the APS. The passport can be provided to their manager and their new manager if there is a change. The participant said that it was important that carers were catered for equal to people with disability and added that the passport is the same for both carers and people with disability. The participant said that:

"I've never seen a request that we couldn't accommodate."

The other participant said that he/she believes that the government is doing well with Indigenous programmes with initiatives like allowing Indigenous staff members work at home two days a week. He/she suggested that this initiative could be extended to people with disability.

Implement adjustments—including assistive technology—quickly to enable productivity.

No feedback was obtained.

Provide support for managers and colleagues of people with disability. For example, increase managers' uptake of Mental Health First Aid training and disability awareness training.

One participant said that their agency offered mental health first aid training which was voluntary. The participants said it should be compulsory and that after the course there needs to be regular reminders so that the learnings are not forgotten. The other participant said their agency has introduced the following initiatives:

- Raising awareness of days of significance - including International Day of People with Disability

- Refreshed workplace adjustments policy

- Australian Disability Network membership

- JobAccess – provides funding. Importantly, provides support to employers of people with disability

- Had used GradAccess

- Disability training – for managers. Not mandatory. Helps to remove unconscious bias and provides practical tips

- Pace mentoring (for disability – pilot)

- Stepping Into program – working with university. No other formal partnerships

- Parking policy. Accommodate people with disability. Would not have occurred three years ago

- Disability and carers network – strong voice in the department.

3.3 Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

At the heart of change is leadership. Our leaders are stewards of our values—they communicate our priorities and encourage and reward us to perform well. People with disability should be well-represented at senior management levels.

Findings from Staff with Disability

Ensure the inclusion of middle managers with disability in development programs for high performers.

Only one participant was able to comment on this Action Area. This participant said that he/she knows of vision impaired managers at APS 6 and EL1 who have not been able to achieve promotions and that the situation has not improved over the last three years.

Offer career development opportunities to middle managers with disability who demonstrate consistent high performance.

Only two participants were able to comment on this Action Area. One participant said that he/she does not believe that his/her agency invests in the capability of employees with disability. A second participant said:

> *"I would also say the agency hasn't really got its head around yet how to support middle level people to actually progress further…"*

Provide senior mentors across the APS for employees with disability who have identified a desire to develop.

One participant said it would be good to see more mentors in senior positions. Another participant in a management role had declared his/her disability. The participant said there needs to be more middle managers who declare their disability in order to encourage people at lower levels to declare. The participant said:

> *"I think we already have a diverse workplace, we just don't know it."*

Attract people with disability at senior levels from the community and private sectors.

Participants said the following things in relation to the APS attracting people with disability at senior levels:

- Not aware of any activity

- APS is not making any effort to increase representation of people with disability in senior roles

- Does not know anybody with disability in a senior role

- There has been no increase in representation in senior roles

- Disappointment that the APS does not show leadership

- It is hard to overcome stigma. Perhaps a senior person declaring disability would help to remove stigma

Findings from Managers

Ensure the inclusion of middle managers with disability in development programs for high performers.

No participants were aware of specific development programs for middle managers with disability. Several, however, said that development programs were available for use by staff with disability and one participant said that their agency did not have a program for high performers.

Offer career development opportunities to middle managers with disability who demonstrate consistent high performance.

No participants were aware of career development opportunities for middle managers with disability. One participant, however, said that career development programs were available for use by staff with disability.

Provide senior mentors across the APS for employees with disability who have identified a desire to develop.

Only one participant said that their agency had a mentoring program tailored for people with disability which was at the pilot stage.

Attract people with disability at senior levels from the community and private sectors.

No participants were aware of programs in the agencies for attracting people with disability at senior levels. However, one participant noted that their manager had a disability.

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Ensure the inclusion of middle managers with disability in development programs for high performers.

All participants said there was nothing specific provided for people with disability. Where programs were provided for staff, people with disability were free to access the programs. One participant said there was no necessity to do more because there

are people with disability spread across different levels in the agency. One participant said the agency recently became aware that 'staff with disability are sort of congregated at certain levels'.

One participant said the focus of their agency was to 'create an inclusive environment where everyone is given those opportunities'. He/she added that there is no monitoring of career development.

Offer career development opportunities to middle managers with disability who demonstrate consistent high performance.

One participant said there are no career development opportunities specifically for people with disability. One participant said that their agency offered development programs for high performers, but nothing specific for staff with disability.

Provide senior mentors across the APS for employees with disability who have identified a desire to develop.

One participant said that their agency did no specific mentoring for people with disability. There is a semi-formal mentoring system for all staff which is not monitored for outcomes.

Attract people with disability at senior levels from the community and private sectors.

One participant said that there were no efforts to recruit people with disability into senior roles and that RecruitAbility is not used for senior roles. There might, however, be informal personal coaching of a person who happens to have a disability. The participant said:

> *"…there's still that unconscious bias that a person with a disability cannot do anything high in leadership or management."*

One participant said that the culture in their agency is highly inclusive and that this is evidenced by findings from the annual staff survey.

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Ensure the inclusion of middle managers with disability in development programs for high performers.

Both participants said that their agencies develop programs, but not specifically for people with disability. One participant said a challenge occurs when training is external and the external facility is not accessible.

Offer career development opportunities to middle managers with disability who demonstrate consistent high performance.

Both participants said their agencies do not provide career development opportunities for high performers.

Provide senior mentors across the APS for employees with disability who have identified a desire to develop.

One participant said their agency has a pilot mentoring scheme for people with disability. The other participant said their agency has a mentoring scheme, but it is not specific to people with disability.

Attract people with disability at senior levels from the community and private sectors.

Both participants said their agencies do not have programs to attract people with disability at senior levels.

3.4   Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

To improve the recruitment and retention of employees with disability, agencies need workplaces that are genuinely inclusive.

Employees with disability will be more likely to tell their employer they have a disability, particularly when experiencing mental ill health, if they are confident they will be welcomed in the workplace.

Workforce inclusion needs to be a priority for all managers, staff and colleagues, not just those working in human resources. Everyone has a role to play.

Findings from Staff with Disability

Highlight the value of APS Disability Champions as visible advocates for employees with disability—and champions of change within agencies.

Many participants were not aware of Disability Champions in their agency. One participant said he/she had been asking HR whether a group could be started of people with disabilities. This approach has not been successful. The participant added that there was supposedly a Disability Champion but that nothing ever comes out of it. The participant concluded by saying:

> *"There's not a lot happening at [agency] to do with disability."*

Some participants said that the APS was developing capabilities because the agency had a disability network and Disability Champion.

Several participants, however, were critical of the behaviour exhibited by Disability Champions. One participant said that some Disability Champions, if they do not have a disability themselves, use the mental model encompassing the idea that 'we want to help you because you need help'. However, the participant said that the

environment is the disability and so the process should be one of removing the barriers so that the person with disability can grow as a full person. The participant said:

> *"…it's often the environment is actually what's disabling us, so if we remove those barriers then we're just going to be able to move through like everybody else does."*

One participant described an event where he/she had submitted a JobAccess application for a specific type of monitor. The Disability Champion came in 'over the top' and provided a huge monitor. While the monitor was large, it did not satisfy the requirement.

Leverage the skills and experiences of people with disability to identify and overcome barriers, whether physical, systemic or attitudinal.

Most participants with invisible disabilities said they would prefer not to disclose their disability. One participant who had disclosed disability said that other team members who have not disclosed their disability have spoken to him/her about work issues. This allowed the participant to advise management that there was a significant anxiety problem in the team.

One participant feels his/her disability holds him/her back. The participant knows people who have been given employment opportunities which have not been offered to him/her. The participant feels that management might think it takes more effort to employ him/her when this is not the case. The participant said opportunities could be expanded by:

- Providing opportunities to obtain experience in areas where he/she can add value

- Providing positive support

- As a priority, training manager to explain that having disability is not a hindrance.

Offer training to improve disability awareness and address unconscious bias.

In one focus group, participants discussed what they described as the d-ceiling. One participant said it was analogous to the glass ceiling for women in management, and said:

> *"You know the d-ceiling? If you have a nominated or an un-nominated disability, you hit that ceiling when they find out."*

One participant recounted experience of the first day on job and during induction was told that there was no need to be shown where the lift was. The participant said the staff member should not assume everyone without a visible disability is without disability. Other participant agreed that there are many instances where even people without a disability would need to know where the lifts were.

Most participants agreed that there are relatively simple changes in procedure that could assist people with disability. For instance, make the default meeting format a videoconference meeting. This would allow people with flexible work arrangements to participate. One participant suggested that the lack of a cultural norm supportive of disability means that awareness is lacking to pro-actively promote inclusiveness through habits and processes. One participant offered the following fictitious dialogue occurring at the start of a meeting:

> *"Oh, this person said yes [accepted a meeting invitation], but can we do a video call?"*
>
> *"I don't know how to do that."*
>
> *"It's okay, we'll catch them up later."*

The participant said that a more appropriate dialogue should be:

> *"Oh, this person says they can't be here, and they need to do a video call."*
>
> *"Oh, that's all right, I've got the Jabber in this room, I'll pop it on, because we've all done a training module on it."*

Supporting this view, one participant said that culture becomes habit, which becomes process, which becomes systemic. The participant strongly agreed that the habits of people without disability that support disability are good for broader inclusiveness as well. One example offered was planning for an event. The participant said it was not just people who have disability who need accessibility plans. Others include carer and parenting requirements, and people with disability who have chosen not to disclose the disability.

One participant with colour blindness said that it is common for executives to request tables and charts in reports to be coloured. This makes the reports unreadable for staff with colour blindness. Another participant expressed frustration at the insensitivity that is often displayed and said:

> *"I'm vision impaired, I'm not blind. There's a really big difference and guess what I can ride a bike by myself. Shock horror! But ask me to read a document with 10 font, read something in a short period of time, that's something I can't do. So, they really, people just don't really understand."*

One participant said that many people and agencies associate disability with something that requires assistance and help. The participant said that people 'just don't see people with disabilities… as a person who you know as your shopkeeper, as your doctor, as your lawyer, as your manager.' One autistic participant said people make assumptions about what autism is. The participant said:

> *"We present really differently to what people think autism is, and so I want to like yell from the rooftops and educate people constantly."*

Other information and suggestions provided by participants included:

- There is goodwill to increase inclusiveness – 'but not in my section'. So, the majority of people with disability end up with 'back-end' roles

- Inclusiveness is more difficult in small departments because there is less opportunity to provide support and create opportunities

- Older staff struggle to change

- Some staff feel that flexibility means malingering at home

- Fear of losing your job is the perception rather than the reality

- Disclosure is certainly a disadvantage

- Physical disability is disclosed, but not necessarily by choice

- It is easier to disclose disability if there are 'runs on the board'

- There is stigma associated with disability

- There is an assumption that certain disabilities restrict people to certain roles (e.g. People with Asperger syndrome will be good at IT)

- More training of managers is required

- Many people have strange ideas about people with mental health conditions

- Some believe the APS is trying to normalise disability

- Some believe inclusiveness refers to gender only and not disability

- Some staff with disabilities have been overlooked for promotion

- Staff with disability are sometimes put in the 'too hard basket'

- Some people believe that people with disability overplay their condition.

One participant expressed a common theme in the following way:

"I don't think I should exploit a weakness to get where I have to get."

Integrate disability awareness principles into existing management development and orientation programs.

One participant described a '5 plus 5' initiative in their agency. In this initiative, five managers from SES meet with five people with disability. They discuss various challenges and the participant said a number of positive outcomes have eventuated. The participant said that one particularly positive outcome was a change of focus from the disability to a focus on the ability of people

One participant said their agency is working on a new disability action plan, but he/she was unaware of any other initiatives other than the existence of a network.

One participant said that their agency has conducted disability awareness training, and it tries to include HR people on recruitment panels. However, the participant said that even within HR there are different specialities such as learning development and OH&S. Therefore, even a HR specialist might not be aware of requirements with respect to disability. The participant thought that their agency was 'ticking all the boxes, and doing their best' but that they had not sought the advice of people with disability.

One participant suggested that a 'disability leave' should be included in the Enterprise Bargaining negotiations, similar to the mooted 'cultural leave' days for specific requirements of religion or culture. This disability leave could be used for activities such as getting fitted for a wheelchair.

One participant said their agency is making progress with disability awareness because they are getting the message 'from the top down'. The participant said that promotion of a diverse workforce is more successfully achieved when there is overt leadership from the top.

One participant said that branch managers should be more active in supporting staff with disability. In the participant's case, his/her opportunities had expanded because of good support.

One participant suggested creation of a disability reference group which would be formalised by the APSC. The purpose of this group would be to provide feedback to senior management and would have representatives of various disabilities

One participant thought that the APS fosters inclusiveness by way of anti-discrimination laws.

Expand disability networks to support implementation of inclusive cultures within agencies

One participant said that there would be a benefit in establishing a network that was APS-wide that would allow staff to learn what was happening in other agencies and learn from the activities occurring in other agencies.

About a quarter of participants were aware of a network in their agencies.

Findings from Managers

Highlight the value of APS Disability Champions as visible advocates for employees with disability—and champions of change within agencies.

One participant said their agency had Disability Champions.

Leverage the skills and experiences of people with disability to identify and overcome barriers, whether physical, systemic or attitudinal.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Offer training to improve disability awareness and address unconscious bias.

Several participants said, to varying degrees, that people with disability would not feel comfortable disclosing their disability. Several reasons were offered:

- Some have concern that they will just be stereotyped or looked down upon

- Disclosing may limit their opportunities due to continuing stigma

- Some are simply concerned about the stigma

- If the disability is sensitive.

One participant said that stigma is still an issue, particularly amongst the older generation, but that he/she would like to think that the attitude is changing. Another participant suggested that managers should receive training to understand how job applicants with disability can feel vulnerable and, therefore, require a modified interview technique; managers need to have guidance to understand the perspective of the person with disability.

> *"I think it's good to have the awareness of the potential that someone might be feeling particularly, exceptionally vulnerable because they just exposed their disability where maybe they don't normally."*

This participant also suggested that it would be of benefit to encourage testimonials from 'brave people' to share their experiences so that managers could read and understand the perspective.

One participant noted the importance of the commitment of the management team and said that in their agency some managers were not supportive of the program to support people with autism; yet there was little enthusiasm to change those negative attitudes. Another participant said that their agency is structured so that there are multiple paths for people with disability to raise concerns. The participant said:

> *"It's not just like, "You have to report to this manager, good luck.".*"

One participant said that he/she does not think people in his/her agency would be discriminated against because of their disability and noted that it is easier to help a person with disability if they have a positive outlook. A final participant was concerned that there may be a small proportion of people who take advantage of claiming a mental health condition as an excuse not to come to work.

Integrate disability awareness principles into existing management development and orientation programs.

Two participants said that:

- It is important to have targets

- It's not the policies that drive inclusivity, but the practical things behind the policies like training courses.

One participant said that in their agency's HR system staff can update their details to identify as a person with disability. This helps management understand needs of the agency.

Expand disability networks to support implementation of inclusive cultures within agencies.

One participant said that for members of the public who visit the facility, the agency runs access and equity days, and also low sound days where adjustments are made to lighting and sound in the facility to suit people with autism.

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Highlight the value of APS Disability Champions as visible advocates for employees with disability—and champions of change within agencies.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Leverage the skills and experiences of people with disability to identify and overcome barriers, whether physical, systemic or attitudinal.

One participant said that they considered their agency to have an inclusive culture in spite of being quite homogenous. He/she drew a distinction between diversity and inclusiveness. So, while the staff were mostly white, middle class, and able bodied, they were inclusive in the sense of being supportive of one another.

Offer training to improve disability awareness and address unconscious bias.

One participant said that affirmative measures disability was used to recruit for one position; it had a good employment outcome. Because of the successful outcome, the participant said that a lot of people are now aware of some of the more misunderstood disabilities and it has helped to normalise mental disability.

The participant said there had been a slow change in attitude within the agency. It used to be that managers would complain about having to introduce reasonable adjustments. Now, however, there is no frustration or exasperation and there is a willingness to introduce adjustments for people with disability. The participant said the change has been from the first quotation to the second quotation:

> *"Oooo oooo, how am I going to accommodate the person?'*
>
> *'What do we need to do to make sure everyone can come to this [event]?"*

The participant said that this change in attitude is matched by a change of attitude amongst people with disability; they are now more likely to explain that a barrier needs to be removed so that they can do their job rather than trying to justify their disability.

The participant said that disclosure of disability can have a negative impact on career. He/she said:

> *"Mainly because of the lived experience of people with disability that when they disclose, their career comes to a screeching halt… I do know of other people outside of my agency with disability who have disclosed their disability and found that suddenly they're not getting the projects."*

Half of the participants said that people with disability would probably feel uncomfortable disclosing their disability and that there is unconscious bias or stigma

attached to disability across the APS. One participant said that the culture in his/her agency is one of acceptance, 'but only at a cursory level'. With regard to recruitment, the participant said that you can remove bias in application documentation, but not at the interview stage. Another participant said that a lot of work needs to be done to improve the level of trust so that staff would disclose their disability.

Two participants said that the role of the manager is important in whether or not a person with disability discloses their disability. One of these participants stressed the importance of managers being mindful of disability even for simple things like scheduling a meeting. He/she said that it helps if the invitation email includes:

> *"If you have a workplace adjustment, and you need something to attend this meeting, let us know."*

One participant, whose agency has a wide range of initiatives to support disability (see above) said that they had been successful in increasing attendance at networking events and other initiatives. In addition, the number of staff who have disclosed their disability in the HR system has increased by over 50%. The participant also said that a key challenge was to reach people who might not be interested in disability issues, or do not see them as a priority, and get them interested; otherwise, they are preaching to the converted.

Integrate disability awareness principles into existing management development and orientation programs.

One participant explained the difficulties faced by smaller agencies in giving the same amount of attention to all the programs that arise. The participant said that the executives made a decision to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters rather than other areas of diversity. At the same time, there is a requirement to place a greater focus on Work, Health and Safety than on disability because that is a legislative requirement. The participant said there are about 30 significant events to be considered for next year, and added:

> *"Bearing in mind that we get pressure from the commission, we get pressure from government, we get pressure from our own portfolio. But at the end of the day…there are still business requirements and we're just trying to sort of have a more strategic look at it. I certainly will be pushing and saying, "We just pick two areas where we think we can focus on and maybe put our resources into that."*

The participant said that their agency has had success by integrating 'scenario-based' diversity training and training relating to disability into the general learning modules rather than being separate topic-specific modules.

Expand disability networks to support implementation of inclusive cultures within agencies.

One participant said that he/she was aware of a number of reference groups that had been set up for specific disabilities. He/she said that the only one left is the blind and vision impaired reference group, which does not even respond to APSC any more. He/she tried to start up groups for autism, carers, and mobility impaired without success. However, he/she said that in the last year new disability access and diversity action plans have been launched.

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Highlight the value of APS Disability Champions as visible advocates for employees with disability—and champions of change within agencies.

Both participants said their agencies had Disability Champions. One participant said that in their agency, traditionally the department had an Indigenous champion. The role of champion has been broadened over the last couple of years to include CALD, gender and Disability Champions. In this agency, Champions are recruited through an EOI process. Their role is to:

- Champion the cohort

- Discuss issues at the senior level.

The "Champions" is a senior management process designed to ensure representation of the cohort at a senior level and provide visibility to the cohort. Given the absence of these voices at EL and SES level, this initiative is good practice at present.

Leverage the skills and experiences of people with disability to identify and overcome barriers, whether physical, systemic or attitudinal.

There was no feedback on this topic.

Offer training to improve disability awareness and address unconscious bias.

Both participants said that people with disability are concerned about disclosing their disability. Some are worried about discrimination and barriers they have faced in the past; some won't disclose because it does not impact their job or is of no benefit to them. Also, people with disability do not want to be perceived as different.

One participant said that it is important to ensure that middle management is one board with any initiative. He/she said:

"The good intention is there…but that can be more at the ground level and the senior level, but it's the middle management level that we know has the

biggest impact on individuals that we need to bring along with us. That happens in pockets but it's not consistent."

Integrate disability awareness principles into existing management development and orientation programs.

One participant said that the agency's strategies are aligned to the APS Strategy.

Expand disability networks to support implementation of inclusive cultures within agencies.

No feedback was obtained.

3.5   Other findings not applicable to Action Areas

Findings from Staff with Disability

There has been little progress since 2016

About half participants had heard of the *As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19*.

One participant who was aware of the Strategy said that the Strategy was only publicised to those who are likely to be involved. Another participant said that the Strategy had not 'permeated' throughout the APS.

Most participants thought that there had been little or no substantive change in positive outcomes for people with disability since 2016 and any change there had been was focused on appearances. However, several participants suggested that there had at least been more people talking about disability in recent times. Two participants summed up the sentiment by saying:

"It feels very ticking the box."

"They talk a good talk, but they don't really apply it well."

Some participants said that in their agency other initiatives, such as inclusiveness for LGBTQI employees, has tended to overshadow disability initiatives and that it is difficult to focus on all initiatives simultaneously. One participant said that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTQI events are a monthly or fortnightly occurrence whereas disability events might be one per year. This has meant that while inclusion is improving, disability inclusion is not improving at the same rate. The participant said:

> *"I feel like that we've gone off disability, not so much looking after those with disabilities…we've very much gone down the ATSI [sic] and the LGBTQI line."*

One the other hand, one participant said that employment opportunities had improved substantially if the person had a physical disability or a disability people can understand. For others, employment opportunities have not improved. A couple of participants suggested that employment opportunities had contracted. One participant drew the distinction between positive outcomes for people with disability and inclusiveness whereby inclusiveness was enhanced if people are more prepared to make conversation.

One participant stated his/her opinion that a workplace compensable injury effectively eliminated any chance of promotion. This statement elicited surprise from most other participants.

Management perception is inaccurate

Participants in one focus group agreed that management at various levels assumed that 'everything's working well' with respect to improving outcomes for people with disability when in fact the people with disability know this is not the case. Participants said that when feedback is provided to management about the true situation, the response is the minimum required. One participant also said that senior executives see people with visible disability at work and so form the impression that there are no problems.

Conflict between inclusiveness and efficiency

Many participants said that there is a conflict between what needs to be done to support disability and the dictates of organisational efficiency or the 'annual efficiency dividend'. Several participants said they were aware of instances of push-back against initiatives and one said that people allocating funding to disability sometimes saw it as a diversion of resources. Another participant said there was a big push to achieve a business focus. This resulted in staff not staying as long in roles as they did in the past. In addition, there were more managers being employed from the private sector. These two factors, the participant said, resulted in managers not being aware of requirements with respect to disability which made employing people with disability more challenging. Two participants expressed the situation this way:

> [We say] *"This is where we need to be. And they're like, 'We don't have the resources.'"*

> *"Mangers have focus on profit. Good corporate leaders, but no experience with managing disability."*

Outcomes

One participant stated his/her opinion that he/she was not able to find any examples yet where agencies had actually benefited from getting people from diverse backgrounds or with disabilities into the agency.

Findings from Managers

Only one participant had heard of the *As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19*.

Three participants said that the culture of inclusiveness had improved over the last three years. However, one of these three participants thought that some of the improvement might only be lip service.

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

All participants were aware of the *As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19*. However, one participant said that since the Strategy was launched three years ago it has not been publicised by senior management. The participant said that this suggested to him/her that it is not 'on the radar' of the SES. He/she said:

> *"I've never heard it mentioned by SES. I've never heard it mentioned by the commission. It's never been pushed by the commission. I've never heard it publicly pushed in speeches by commissioners or the SES."*

One participant said that it was interesting that even in a team with a focus on diversity and disability that he/she lacked familiarity with the details. The participant said:

> *"I really had nothing to do with it. I knew the name, I knew that the rest of my team were working on it, but I suspect it wasn't embedded or shared widely. And I think that's perhaps the downfall; that it really hasn't crossed into the land of people who don't identify as having disability or aren't directly related to the work."*

Two participants made suggestions regarding formulation of the new strategy. One said that the new strategy needed to be supplemented by a promotion and implementation plan. The other said that when the new strategy is developed it needs to be developed in consultation with smaller agencies. This is because the strategy needs to take into account the resource constraints of smaller agencies; these agencies cannot focus on all the initiatives and demands that are made so they have to be selective.

Findings from APS Disability Champions

One participant was no aware of the *As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19*.

The other participant said that compare to three years ago, there are more discussions and more conversations about assisted technology accessibility, together with more user testing. Also, the participant said, the focus of the conversation has changed to being about what is required for the person with disability to do their job. Instead of asking if they have a disability, they are asked what they need to do their job.

One participant said that the metrics for measuring outcomes of the Strategy need to be improved. The current metrics focus on getting people into roles. Instead, the metrics should be measures about people being able to grow in their careers, what are the promotion outcomes of staff with a disability versus staff who don't identify as having a disability. The participant said that without appropriate metrics it is not possible to tell if the Strategy is succeeding:

> *"I think there's always the risk that there can be a lot of action and not necessarily a lot of outcome for people."*
>
> *"I look at the Strategy and I can't see how we know if it's actually worked or not."*

4   APSED / Census Information

Percentage of APS staff with disability over time

Table 1 below shows the percentage of APS staff by diversity group over time. The figure includes data sourced from APS Employment Database (APSED).

Looking at the APSED data and the percentage of staff who have disclosed one or more disabilities on their HR records, the long-term pattern shows a decline from 2005 (4.1%) to 2012 (3.3%). This downwards trend reversed in 2014 (3.5%), increasing steadily until 2016 (3.8%). During the period the Strategy has been in effect the percentage of APS staff with disclosed disability is stable at 3.8%, although a 0.1 percentage points decline was recorded in 2019 (3.7%).

Table 1 also shows the percentage of APS staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (Indigenous Australians) and those from a non-English speaking background (NESB). The NESB group grew strongly from 2005 (12.1%) to 2014 (14.7%) and has since been stable. The representation of Indigenous Australians has increased from 2.6% in 2013 to 3.5% in 2019.

Table 1 – APSED June 2019: Percentage of employees in APS (all staff) by diversity group over time

Diversity Group	Indigenous Australians	People with disability	NESB
2005	2.6	4.1	12.1
2006	2.6	3.8	12.5
2007	2.6	3.7	12.8
2008	2.6	3.6	12.9
2009	2.6	3.5	13.3
2010	2.7	3.5	13.6
2011	2.6	3.4	14.1
2012	2.6	3.3	14.4
2013	2.6	3.3	14.5
2014	2.8	3.5	14.7
2015	2.9	3.6	14.7
2016	3.2	3.8	14.7
2017	3.3	3.8	14.6
2018	3.4	3.8	14.6
2019	3.5	3.7	14.5

Source: APSED June 2019 data release

Percentage of respondents with disability who have had their disability recorded on their HR record

Table 2 below shows the percentage of APS Employee Census respondents who identify as having disability and who have their disability recorded in their agency HR records. Around half (51%) of APS staff who reported a disability in the 2019 APS Employee Census had their disability status recorded. The percentage of staff with

disability who have not declared their disability declined from 2017 to 2018 (56% to 51%) and remains at 51% in 2019.

Table 2 – APS Employee Census 2017, 2018 and 2019: Percentage of employees with disability who have had their disability recorded in their HR records

2017	2018	2019
56%	51%	51%

Source: APS Employee Census 2017, 2018 and 2019

Q15b Is the information that you have an ongoing disability recorded in your agency's human resource information system (i.e. have you informed your agency that you have a disability)?

Q15a Do you have an ongoing disability?

Filter: Q15a = "Yes"

When responding, staff were able to provide some clarification as to why they have not disclosed their disability status. One in five (19%) of staff with disability consciously choose not to have the information recorded. Note that staff may discuss disclosing with HR and opt to not have the information recorded. Non-disclosure does not necessarily mean that no colleagues or other staff members are aware, just that the information is not recorded on file.

Of employees with disability, one in six (16%) were not sure whether their disability was recorded. One in ten (10%) indicated that they had never been asked to disclose this information and a further 5% cited "another reason" (which was not recorded).

Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

Table 3 below shows the percentage of APS employees by base classification (2019 APS Employee Census). The notable pattern in this chart is that the representation of employees with disability is greater at lower APS classifications. APS staff with an undeclared disability have a more senior profile than those with a declared disability.

Table 3 – APS Employee Census 2019: Substantive classification level of APS employees Percentage of employees

Classification Level	Declared	Undeclared
Senior Executive Service	1%	2%
Executive Level	16%	25%
APS 5-6 (or equivalent)	33%	41%
APS 3-4 (or equivalent)	43%	28%
APS 1-2 (or equivalent)	4%	2%
Trainee/Graduate	2%	1%

Source: APS Employee Census 2017, 2018 and 2019

Q5 What is your substantive classification level?

Q15b Is the information that you have an ongoing disability recorded in your agency's human resource information system (i.e. have you informed your agency that you have a disability)?

Representation of staff with disability by APS classification

Table 4 shows the representation of APS employees with declared disability at each APS classification (2019 APSED data). The percentage of employees with disability is highest at APS 4 (4.9%) and the percentage declines with each classification until EL 2 (2.6%). Representation amongst SES 1 staff (3.3%) is higher than both EL classifications, although representation declines at SES 2 (2.9%) and SES 3 (2.1%).

Table 4 – APSED June 2019: Percentage representation of employees in APS (all staff) with declared disability by classification (2019)

Classification	%
Trainee	3.1%
Graduate	4.8%
APS 1	4.3%
APS 2	4.3%
APS 3	3.2%
APS 4	4.9%
APS 5	4.1%
APS 6	3.8%
EL 1	2.9%
EL 2	2.6%
SES 1	3.3%
SES 2	2.9%
SES 3	2.1%
Total	3.7%

Source: APSED June 2019 data release

5 Summary of Findings

This summary of findings is provided in bullet point format with abbreviated descriptions. Care must be taken in interpreting the abbreviated descriptions and they should be read in the context of the longer description provided in Section 4.

5.1 Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

Findings from Staff with Disability

RecruitAbility:

- Almost all were aware of RecruitAbility

- Mix of positive and negative experiences using the RecruitAbility scheme

- Lack of knowledge of how the scheme works

- 'Ticking the box' for RecruitAbility is problematic for many people with disability

    - Confronting

    - How it will be perceived by recruiters

    - Adversely affect job application

    - Belief that recruiters assume that reasonable adjustments will be required

    - 'Ticking the box' is more difficult when the disability is not visible

    - However, some are pragmatic and 'tick the box' to assist with job applications

    - Hard to compete with people who do not have a disability

    - There is insufficient feedback after the interview

    - Evidence that recruiters do not take RecruitAbility into account

    - Recruiters believe it is for physical rather than mental disability

    - Mostly for jobs requiring lower skill levels

Affirmative measures disability:

- About half were not aware of the scheme

  - Even if familiar, most had not seen it applied in practice

- Some believed recruiters used the scheme to screen out applicants

- Some had positive experiences. E.g. Less formal interview format

- Several had negative experiences

  - Name + disability published in the Gazette

  - Conflict with staff because the appointment was made more quickly than for staff applying without affirmative measures

- About half were familiar with GradAccess and how it worked

Recruitment teams:

- Example provided where there was follow up to determine reasonable adjustments

- Examples provided where reasonable adjustments were agreed to but not provided at interview

- Some external agencies do not know about RecruitAbility

  - No provision for reasonable adjustments, e.g. Software used by the agency

  - External agencies are not trained for RecruitAbility

  - Online tests used as a cheap was to screen out applicants

  - Agencies lack sensitivity and empathy for people with disability

  - Agencies do not carry forward information from one application to the next which then requires repeated questioning of sensitive information

  - Suggestion that requirement to provide reasonable adjustments should be in engagement contracts

- Examples provide where APS managers do not know how to implement RecruitAbility

- Suggestion that recruiting managers should undertake disability course, which would allow the agency to claim a form of accreditation for 'disability-friendly'

Partner with external agencies:

- About half were aware of partnerships with external agencies or universities

- Some were dissatisfied with disability networks

  - Focus only on physical disability

  - Lack of perception regarding needs of people with disability amongst people without disability

Findings from Managers

RecruitAbility:

- Most were aware of RecruitAbility

  - Only one was sure it was used by their agency

- Belief that RecruitAbility boosts interviews but not successful job placements

- Scheme needs to be supported by senior management

Affirmative measures disability:

- About half had heard of affirmative measures but none were aware of its use in their agencies

  - One said affirmative measures had not been encouraged

- Suggestion to provide literature that could explain to job applicants how the process differs from a normal interview

Recruitment teams:

No feedback.

Partner with external agencies:

- Half said their agencies has some form of partnership

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

RecruitAbility:

- Most were aware of RecruitAbility

- Policy of two agencies was for all advertised jobs to use RecruitAbility

- In a third agency, the policy was 'almost all'

- One agency's recruitment system is not accessible. The agency uses email. Participant said that historically, people felt that RecruitAbility was a way to filter out applicant

    - Applicants would refuse to answer some questions

    - Many do not understand how RecruitAbility works now

- Some recruitment staff believe RecruitAbility should not be applied to all advertised jobs

    - Some only apply RecruitAbility to entry level jobs

    - Some only apply RecruitAbility to roles they believe a person with disability could handle

- Some panel members do not know how RecruitAbility works

- It is important for applicants to 'tick the box' so that there is evidence that can support requests for resources to support disability

Affirmative measures disability:

- All were aware of affirmative measures, but none were using in their agencies

    - One was not aware that affirmative measures can apply to disability

    - One said that there was no enthusiasm for affirmative measures amongst the executive team

    - One said that affirmative measures would be applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ahead of disability

Recruitment teams:

No feedback.

Partner with external agencies:

- Most were not aware of any external partnerships

- One was aware of using JobAccess

- One agency had partnered with a recruitment company that specialises in seeking candidates with disability

Findings from APS Disability Champions

RecruitAbility:

- Both agencies use the RecruitAbility scheme and one has had a strong focus to ensure it is applied to all vacancies

- Suggestion to check that a new starter has willingness and skills to be able to thrive in the position

Affirmative measures disability:

- One said affirmative measures disability were not used. The other was not sure

Recruitment teams:

No feedback

Partner with external agencies:

- Both agencies have partnered with external agencies

- Suggestion that the Australian Disability Network, being a small organisation, is not suited to dealing with large departments. Otherwise very helpful

5.2   Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

Findings from Staff with Disability

Make the workplace accessible

- Most said their agencies tried to make their workplace more accessible

- One said disability (e.g. deafness or autism) can result in missing opportunities through informal channels associated with casual social contact amongst staff

    - Therefore, 'invisible' rules governing promotions need to be made explicit

Make workplace adjustments

- It is common that changes to the physical workplace environment are made without consulting people with disability

- Many fashionable office upgrades are not disability friendly. E.g.

    - High tables

    - Open spaces (noise)

    - Rounded corners (wayfinding)

- These office upgrades are often unsuitable for people who do not have a disability (e.g. pregnant women)

- After changes are made, it is impracticable to modify them

- The line area-based funding model is inappropriate

    - Each department must fund workplace adjustments, and they are not transferable

    - Funding should be from a central function

- Most were familiar with JobAccess, but it prompted a Q&A session amongst focus group participants to understand how it is supposed to work

    - One agency prefers to use an external supplier

    - However, external agencies do not know how to conduct an ergonomic assessment for people with a disability – they have a 'general population' approach

    - JobAccess staff are trained to assess adjustments for people with disability

- Demanding physical requirements can make it difficult or impossible to introduce workplace adjustments

- In one agency, people with disability must explain the need for workplace adjustments every time there is a change of manager

    - Noted that it was much easier to obtain workplace adjustments at a large private sector agency

- One agency has flexible work arrangements, but not focused on disability

- Suggestion that the onboarding process for a person with disability needs to have clear instructions about how the ask about what is required

- The level of support for workplace adjustments can be dependent on one's manager

- Some do not apply for promotion because of the loss of flexibility it would entail

- Several were not aware of flexible work arrangements in their agency

Implement adjustments

- Suggestion that accessibility in communications should be more than websites and work content and include broader activities such as roadshows

- Suggestion that the APS should apply WCAG 2.0 to internal documents as it does to documents supplied by external agencies

- There are specific difficulties relating to IT security and the restrictions applied to shared services

    - Common for essential software to be not installed due to IT security restrictions

    - Common for assistive software to not work properly

- Suggestion to use a chatbot (with AI) so that staff can ask HR questions anonymously

    - Useful for people experiencing family violence or financial hardship as well as people with disability

- One agency's IT department said that assistive technology was not a priority and was left out of their plan

- People with disability just want the right tools so they can do their jobs

- Example provided where a written ergonomic assessment from an external agency included all details of medical conditions and diagnoses. The person with disability had to provide this assessment to unfamiliar staff for every item required for the workplace adjustment.

Provide support for managers and colleagues

- Participants debated who is responsible for providing support for people with disability

- One agency's written policy is that each person had to look after themselves

- Others said that HR must play a supporting role – it is time consuming for the individual if there is no HR support

- Strong agreement that middle management was crucial for effective support for people with disability and implementation of policies

  - There may be a plan at a senior level, but it needs to be delivered by middle management

  - It is common for middle managers to lack training with respect to disability and therefore lack confidence and knowledge

- Considered leaving APS due to manager who was not understanding with respect to disability and did not escalate requirements for workplace adjustments

  - Now working 'best I have ever worked' under a new disability-aware manager

- Apparent contradiction in attitudes to people with disability in senior management

  - People with disability are told senior managers must be able to be physically in the office full time

  - But there are many successful senior managers who work remotely from their teams

- There are instances of well-meaning but misguided assistance arising from not asking the person with disability about what is needed to do their job

- Recruitment has been devolved from HR hubs to agencies. This has led to lack of expertise in recruiting job applicants

- There is a need for more generalist managers in place of subject-matter-expertise managers who do not know how to lead

Findings from Managers

Make the workplace accessible

- Most said their workplaces were accessible

- One new building was (in the participant's opinion) not even designed for able-bodied people

Make workplace adjustments

- Having case managers and rehabilitation specialists is beneficial because the rest of the team can get on with BAU

    - Conversely, one said that a challenge is that it can take up a lot of time to support a person with disability, which might not be recognised by his/her manager

- People with disability will often run out of annual leave and need to resort to leave without pay or reduced work hours

Implement adjustments

- One agency policy is that all mandatory training must be accessible

Provide support for managers and colleagues

- One participant was not aware of any support activities provided to managers

- The rest were aware of disability awareness training, support for networks, and the like

- One agency has a new manager's toolkit for all managers of staff with disability which set out policies and procedures

    - Relatedly, one participant described the difficulties – as a new manager – in working out how to support person with disability

- One agency has initiative that are 'driven from the top'

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Make the workplace accessible

- A wide range of accessibility equipment was described for one agency

    - Project managers had listened to people with disability

    - The relevant Australian Standards are now the minimum standard

    - A change of attitude: If adjustments are not made now, they will cost a lot more to make after the project concludes

- Workplace adjustments are often of benefit to the wider workforce which makes the case to implement easier to make

- The trend to open plan offices has good intentions but works against people with disability (see earlier examples)

Make workplace adjustments

- One participant said their agency does not accept flexible work arrangements

    - Managers need to be made aware of the benefits if this is to change

- One agency's IT systems were not suitable for people with disability

    - Suggestion to include a memory function to record the individual needs of people with disability

- One participant said their agency 'excelled' in flexible working arrangements

- There are pockets of stigma to overcome

Implement adjustments

- One agency has introduced a one-stop-shop within the ICT team to support staff with disability with their assistive technology needs

Provide support for managers and colleagues

- One participant said that their agency conducted a focus group with people with disability and the findings were confronting, which prompted extensive action from senior management

    - A wide range of initiatives have been introduced

- Some agencies have a wide range of initiatives

    - Not all mental health first aid courses are available for managers

- There can be a problem of 'diversity fatigue' when there are too many initiatives or activities relating to diversity and disability

    - For smaller agencies, it is important to be selective of the programs they support

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Make the workplace accessible

- Both agencies have accessible workplaces

Make workplace adjustments

- Both agencies have flexible work arrangements

- One agency has introduced a paper workplace/reasonable adjustment passport

  - This records and individual's adjustment needs

  - The passport facilitates movement between agencies

- Suggestion to introduce allowance to work-at-home for people with disability similar to the allowance for Indigenous staff

Implement adjustments

No feedback.

Provide support for managers and colleagues

- Mental health first aid training

  - Suggestion that is should be compulsory

- One agency has introduced a wide range of initiatives

5.3   Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

Findings from Staff with Disability

Ensure inclusion of middle managers

- One participant said that he/she knows of vision impaired APS6 and EL1 staff who have not been able to achieve promotions and the situation has not changed over the last three years

Offer career development opportunities for high performers

- Belief that agencies are not addressing this issue

Provide senior mentors

- Agencies are not doing this

- Suggestion that there needs to be more middle managers who declare their disability to encourage staff at lower levels to declare

Attract people with disability to senior levels

- Agencies are not doing this

- Disappointment that the APS does not show leadership

Findings from Managers

Ensure inclusion of middle managers

- No specific activities for people with disability. But no exclusion from programs

Offer career development opportunities for high performers

- No specific activities for people with disability. But no exclusion from programs

Provide senior mentors

- One agency has a mentoring program for people with disability which is at the pilot stage

Attract people with disability to senior levels

- Agencies are not doing this

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Ensure inclusion of middle managers

- No specific activities for people with disability. But no exclusion from programs

- One participant said there was not need for specific programs because people with disability are spread across the levels of their agency

Offer career development opportunities for high performers

- No specific activities for people with disability. But no exclusion from programs

Provide senior mentors

One agency has a mentoring program which is available to all staff

Attract people with disability to senior levels

- One participant said there was an unconscious bias that a person with a disability cannot do anything high in leadership or management

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Ensure inclusion of middle managers

- No specific activities for people with disability. But no exclusion from programs

Offer career development opportunities for high performers

- Agencies do not have programs for high performers

Provide senior mentors

- Agencies do not have programs for high performers

- One agency has a pilot mentoring program for people with disability

Attract people with disability to senior levels

- Agencies do not do this

5.4   Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

Findings from people with disability

Highlight the value of Disability Champions

- Many participants were aware of existence of Disability Champions

- Some were critical of the behaviour exhibited by Champions

    - Using the wrong mental model: We want to help you

Leverage the skills and experience of people with disability

- Most people with disability prefer not to disclose their disability

- One participant feels his/her disability is holding him/her back

Training for disability awareness

- Participants strongly agreed there was a d-ceiling, similar to the glass ceiling for women in business

- There are relatively simple changes in procedures that would make a big difference

- Culture becomes habit, becomes process, becomes systemic

- Executives request reports that are not WCAG 2.0 compliant

- There is goodwill towards inclusiveness, 'but not in my section'

- Older staff struggle to change

- There is stigma associated with disability

Integrate disability awareness principles int development and orientation programs

- There are a wide range of initiatives

    - 5-plus-5 initiative

    - Disability action plans

    - Disability awareness training

- agency is making progress because there is a message 'from the top down'

- Suggestion to create a disability reference group

Expand disability networks to support inclusive cultures

About a quarter of participants were aware of a network in their agencies

Findings from managers

Highlight the value of Disability Champions

- One participant said their agency had Disability Champions

Leverage the skills and experience of people with disability

No feedback on this topic

Training for disability awareness

- People with disability are not comfortable disclosing their disability because:

    - Concern that they will just be stereotyped or looked down upon.

    - Disclosing may limit career opportunities due to continuing stigma

    - Simply concerned about the stigma

    - If the disability is sensitive

- Managers should be trained to modify interviewing technique for RecruitAbility applicants

- Suggestion to promote testimonials managers can read about the interviewing experience of people with disability

- The commitment of the management team is important. Not all are supportive

- The older generation is more likely to retain stigma

- Some people might take advantage of claiming a mental health condition as an excuse not to come to work

Integrate disability awareness principles int development and orientation programs

- It is important to have targets

- Policies do not drive inclusivity – practical things behind the policies do

- Having people with disability update their details in the HR system allows management to understand the needs of the agency

Expand disability networks to support inclusive cultures

- One agency has public access. For visiting public the agency runs access and equity days, and low sound days for visitors with autism

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

Highlight the value of Disability Champions

No feedback.

Leverage the skills and experience of people with disability

- One participant said their agency had an inclusive culture despite being homogenous

    - Distinction drawn between diversity and inclusiveness

Training for disability awareness

- One agency had a successful affirmative measures disability appointment

    - Staff now aware of some more misunderstood disabilities and it has helped to normalise mental disability

- One agency has seen a change in attitude, from managers complaining about accommodating reasonable adjustments to willingness to help work get done

- A matching change of attitude where people with disability will explain the barrier that needs to be removed rather than justify their disability

- Disclosure can have a negative impact on career

- People with disability probably feel uncomfortable disclosing their disability

- Acceptance is sometimes only at a cursory level

- Work needs to be done to improve the level of trust

- Recruitment bias can be removed in application documentation but not at the interview

- The manager is an important factor in whether a person with disability discloses their disability

- Mindfulness of managers is important in little things like inclusiveness in scheduling a meeting

- An agency with a wide range of initiatives supporting disability has seen increased support at the initiatives

  - A key issue is interesting people who might not otherwise be interested in disability

- Integrate disability awareness principles int development and orientation programs

- Smaller agencies find it difficult to give equal attention to programs for diverse causes

  - One agency has concentrated on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and OH&S issues at the expense of disability

- Success in integrating 'scenario-based' diversity training into general learning modules

Expand disability networks to support inclusive cultures

- Of a range of disability reference groups that were created, only one remains

- Has had no success in starting other groups in the agency, although new diversity and disability action plans have been launched

Findings from APS Disability Champions

Highlight the value of Disability Champions

- Both agencies have Disability Champions. The role of Champion has been broadened to include disability over the last two years

- Champions provide representation of the disability cohort as senior management level

Leverage the skills and experience of people with disability

No feedback.

Training for disability awareness

- People with disability are concerned about disclosing their disability due to

  - Discrimination

  - Barriers being introduced

  - It is of no benefit to disclose

  - Not wanting to be perceived as different

- Middle management must be supportive for any initiative to work

Integrate disability awareness principles int development and orientation programs

- One agency said its strategies are aligned to the APS Strategy

Expand disability networks to support inclusive cultures

- No feedback obtained

5.5   Other findings not applicable to Action Areas

Findings from people with disability

- About half of participants had heard of the As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19.

- The Strategy has been publicised only to those who are likely to be involved

- The Strategy has not 'permeated' through the APS

- Most said their had been little or no substantive change in outcomes for people with disability since 2016

- Any change there has been has focused on appearances

- One participant said employment opportunities had improved if the person had a physical disability, but not other disabilities

- Initiatives for other cohorts such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders or LGBTQI tend to overshadow disability initiatives

    - It is difficult to focus on all initiates simultaneously

- One participant expressed his/her opinion that a workplace compensable injury effectively eliminated any chance of promotion

- The management perception regarding outcomes for people with disability is often inaccurate

- There is a conflict between the 'annual efficiency dividend' and what needs to be done to support people with disability

Findings from Managers

- Only one manager had heard of the As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19.

- Three participants said the culture of inclusiveness had improved over the last three years

Findings from HR Corporate Staff

- All participants were aware of the As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19

- One participant said the Strategy had not been publicised

- Suggestion that the new strategy needs to be supplemented by a promotion and implementation plan

    - The strategy needs to be developed in consultation with small agencies

- One participant said the metrics for measuring outcomes need to be improved

    - Current focus is on getting people into roles

    - Focus should be on measuring how people grow in their careers

    - Without appropriate metrics it is impossible to tell if the strategy is succeeding

6 Conclusions

Before providing conclusions for each of the Action Areas individually, we provide the following overarching conclusions regarding factors that have influenced the effectiveness of the *As One – Making it Happen: APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19*:

- The quantitative data from the APSED and the APS Employee Census broadly support the qualitative findings that:

  - There has been no substantive change in positive outcomes for people with disability over the last three years

  - There is a clustering of people with disability at the level of APS6 and below

- There is a difference in perception between managers and people with disability with respect to positive outcomes that have been achieved

  - People with disability tend to perceive less progress has been made

- There is a large variation between agencies with respect to

  - Initiatives undertaken

  - The understanding of and effective use of the RecruitAbility scheme and affirmative measures disability

  - The understanding and effective delivery of workplace adjustments and flexible work arrangements

- There is a large variation between managers with respect to awareness of requirements relating to disability

- Training of middle management and obtaining their buy-in to support initiatives is essential

- Middle managers juggle competing priorities relating to efficiency and support for people with disability

- The most effective initiatives have received support and drive from senior management

- People with disability feel there is stigma and that disclosing their disability may lead to negative outcomes in relation to their career

6.1   Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

Progress against action area

We conclude there is little evidence of an expansion in the range of employment opportunities for people with disability. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- There has been no change in the percentage of APS employees disclosing a disability in the last three years

- The percentage of staff with a declared disability declines consistently from APS 4 to EL level.

- Many participants were unaware of the existence of affirmative measures disability

- Participants agreed that there is stigma associated with disability which reduces the number of staff who might apply for positions using the RecruitAbility scheme

- Some participants said there is a 'd-ceiling' similar in concept to the 'glass ceiling' associated with women in business

- Participants said that a person with disability might not seek promotion due to a concern that they may encounter a manager in a new role who is not empathetic or trained to support a person with disability

- Participants said that many managers are largely unaware of policies relating to workplace adjustments and flexible workplaces.

6.2   Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

Progress against action area

We conclude that there has been progress in investing in developing the capability of employees with disability. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- The concept of the workplace/reasonable adjustment passport has been developed and utilised, which reduces barriers for people with disability to change roles

- Partnering with JobAccess is providing transportable workplace adjustments

- Disability Champions and networks supporting disability have been established. These initiatives provide forums for people with disability to develop their capability

- Some agencies have introduced wide ranging initiatives to support people with disability

6.3   Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

Progress against action area

We conclude that there is no evidence that there has been an increase in representation of employees with disability in senior roles. The conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- There was no evidence that career development programs have been designed specifically for people with disability.

- There was no evidence that programs have been developed to attract people with disability into senior roles

- Some participants said that there was a perception that people with disability are unsuited for senior roles

- Participants said that RecruitAbility was often not offered for advertised senior roles.

6.4   Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

Progress against action area

We concluded that there has been very little progress in fostering inclusive cultures in the workplace. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

- Most participants said that there had been little or no substantive change in outlooks for people with disability over the last three years

- Most participants said that they would prefer not to disclose their disability because of stigma, reduced promotion opportunities or not wanting to appear as different. This finding is supported by the recognised difference between the percentage of people who disclose disability in the APS Employee Census and the percentage of people who record a disability on their HR record

7 Challenges

7.1 Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability

We suggest that the challenges to expanding the range of employment opportunities for people with disability are:

- Building understanding of:

    - The theory of the programs

    - The benefits of participation in programs (case studies and evidence-based rationale)

    - The diversity and talent available amongst candidates with disability and over-coming stereotypes

- Improving the implementation of programs to support employment outcomes by providing clear guidance on the practical implications of participation in RecruitAbility and affirmative measures disability for different types of APS staff (staff with disability, managers, HR staff) and contracted recruitment providers.

- Expanding recruitment initiatives to cover more roles:

    - Applying RecruitAbility to all roles in all agencies

    - Increasing the number of affirmative measures disability recruitment rounds

- Increasing engagement with external partners such as universities and disability employment providers

7.2 Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

We suggest that the challenges to investing in developing the capability of employees with disability are:

- Maintaining and expanding support from senior management given there are a range of diversity initiatives

- Improving the consistency and confidence of middle managers in working with people with disability. Specific challenges in this area include:

- Ensuring managers are supported by senior management to reduce perceived conflicts between workload and investing in staff

- Ensuring managers are supported by HR to provide guidance on using initiatives targeted at staff with disability effectively

- Providing effective disability awareness training for managers and ensuing uptake of this training

- Improving the approach to handling workplace adjustments including:

   - Improving understanding amongst APS staff that workplace adjustments are about giving staff with disability effective tools and an appropriate workplace environment

   - Limiting the need to repeat adjustment requirements at recruitment interviews, to new managers, to IT support etc.

   - Decoupling workplace adjustments from information about disability to improve privacy regarding personal medical information

- Improving the accessibility of APS workplaces by:

   - Ensuring that staff with disability, or representative organisations, have a voice in the design of buildings, workspaces and procedures.

   - Ensuring IT support provided by shared services and other IT support is disability confident, with appropriate specialised support and escalation practices in place to provide timely resolution of requests relating to assistive-technology.

7.3   Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles

We suggest that the challenges to increasing representation of employees with disability in senior roles are:

- Building understanding that disability encompasses a very broad range of ability and that there will be many people with disability with the capability to thrive in senior roles

- Accommodating workplace adjustments such as flexible working hours and locations into senior roles

- Creating development programs specifically for high performing staff with disability

7.4   Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

We suggest the challenges to fostering inclusive cultures in the workplace are:

- Promoting of the new APS Disability Employment Strategy to APS staff to ensure strong awareness at launch

- Ensuring all agencies deliver a positive message regarding disability from the top down

- Managing competing priorities with other initiatives, including activities to improve inclusiveness, to promote recruitment and development of other diversity groups

- Ensuring high visibility of Disability Champions across all staff, in particular middle managers and staff with disability

- Ensuring that colleagues are sensitive to the needs of co-workers with disability by, for instance, producing accessible documentation and making meetings available via telepresence. This requires processes to make these activities easy and second nature for all staff so that inclusion becomes second nature

- Dispelling myths around disability and promoting truths to reduce stigma and normalise disability in the APS workforce by:

    - Communicating stories from senior staff regarding their own experience with disability

    - Providing support for events which allow APS staff to discuss the lived experience of people with disability

- Creating workplaces APS where staff with disability feel comfortable disclosing their disability on their HR records by:

    - Promoting the benefits of disclosing disability

    - Removing perceived and actual disadvantages that employees may face when disclosing their disability

    - Protecting the privacy of individuals who disclose their disability by limiting the information regarding appointments made under

RecruitAbility and affirmative measures disability to their manager and HR

APPENDIX 1

Employee Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Introduction (3 mins)

- Introduction of yourself and the research project:

- We've been asked by the Australia Public Service Commission to speak to people about their experiences with the programs and activities that were developed as part of the APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19.

- IF NECESSARY: 'As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016 – 2019' was developed by the Australian Public Service Commission to improve employment opportunities for people with disability.

- Before we get started, I need to let you know that anything you tell me today will be completely confidential. Wallis operates under the Australian Privacy Act, and your personal details will be separated from the information you give me. Quotes from this conversation may be used in the Wallis or APSC report, but they will not be linked to your name.

- Observations and recording - ask permission for the discussion to be audio recorded and transcribed. If you find anything we discuss today stressful or distressing, we encourage you to contact your EAP if you feel the need to.

- Housekeeping – up to 1.5 hours, snacks, amenities.

- Please turn off or put on silent mode mobile phones and do not use during session.

- Group rules – different points of view encouraged, one person to speak at a time, no right or wrong answers, moderator and participant roles.

Note to moderator: Wallis Distressed Respondent protocol must be applied.

2. Background (2 mins)

- To start, would you be able to tell me a bit about yourselves.

    - What is your role in the public service (probe for Australian Public Service classification)? What does your job entail?

    - And how long have you been employed in the Australian Public Service (APS)? Overall, and in your current position?

3. Pathway to the APS (15 mins)

- We would now like to ask you a few questions about your employment experience and pathway in the APS.

  - Could you tell me a bit about your work experience prior to your current role? Was it in the public or private sector? Was it a similar role to what you have today?

  - Thinking now about your current role in the public service…I would like to ask you a few questions regarding the recruitment process for your current job.

    - Firstly, how did you find out about your current job?

    - And what was involved in the selection process? What was the experience like? Was it positive?

    - IF NECESSARY: Did you make use of the RecruitAbility scheme to gain your current role?

      - IF YES: What was the experience like? What process did you go through? Do you feel that it was worthwhile?

      - IF NO: Did you decide not to use it? Why? Or were you not aware of the scheme/some other reason for not making use of it.

    - IF NECESSARY: Was the role advertised as an affirmative measure disability vacancy?

      - IF YES: What was the experience like? What process did you go through? Do you feel that it was worthwhile?

  - Apart from your current role, what has been your experience in applying for positions in the APS? Were they different to your latest experience? How were they different? When did they occur?

4. Awareness of support for employees with disability (15 mins)

- Which specific initiatives are you aware of aimed to support employees with disabilities? Do these programs benefit you? In what way do they/don't they benefit you?

- IF NECESSARY: Before you were invited to participate in this research, had you heard of "As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability/Employment

Strategy 2016-19"? IF YES: As far as you are aware, what does this strategy entail?

IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED: Which of the following initiatives are you aware of that are offered to people with disability?

- RecruitAbility

- Affirmative measure disability

- Making the workplace more accessible for people with disability (e.g. via job design and flexible work arrangements)

- Partnering with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS. IF YES: Did you hear about your job this way?

As far as you are aware, what have been the challenges or benefits from these initiatives? (go through each that respondents are aware of).

5. Views regarding four key Action Areas (20 mins)

- Do you believe that over the last three years employment and/or promotion opportunities have expanded or contracted for people with disability in the APS? How so? What could be done to expand opportunities further?

- And what about for you personally? Do you feel your employment opportunities have expanded or contracted in the last three years? How have they expanded? What has worked well/what hasn't? What else could be done to (further) expand your own opportunities?

- In which ways do you feel that the APS invests in developing the capability of employees with disability? Has this increased or decreased in the last three years? How does it develop these capabilities? What more could be done?

- Thinking about you personally – in which ways do you feel that you have been given opportunities to develop your capabilities by the APS? How so? Have these opportunities increased or decreased in the last three years? What has worked well/what hasn't? What else could be done for you personally to (further) extend your capabilities?

- In which ways do you feel the APS fosters inclusive cultures in the workplace? How does it do this? What else could be done?

- And what about you personally – to what extent do you think your own workplace is inclusive? How is this demonstrated? Is it more or less inclusive than three years ago? What more could be done?

- How much effort do you feel that the APS is making to increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles? How does it do this? Has this increased in the last three years? What else could be done?

6. Nature of disability (5 mins)

- Do you feel comfortable disclosing your disability to work colleagues? Why/why not?

- Do you feel there is any advantage or disadvantage to your career by disclosing your disability? Why do you say that?

7. Final comments

Are there any other comments you want to add? Thank respondents, reassure about confidentiality of responses.

8. Useful Contact Numbers (if necessary)

If this conversation has bought up any emotional issues and you would like to speak to someone for help and support please call:

- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

- Lifeline: 13 11 14

APPENDIX 2

Employee Depth Discussion Guide

1. Introduction (5 mins)

- Hi, this is (name), I'm calling from Wallis Social and Market Research. Could I please speak to (name of respondent)?

- Hi (respondent name). We've been asked by the Australia Public Service Commission to speak to people about their experiences with the programs and activities that were developed as part of the APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19. Is this still a good time to talk?

- IF NECESSARY: 'As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016 – 2019' was developed by the Australian Public Service Commission to improve employment opportunities for people with disability.

- Before we get started, I need to let you know that anything you tell me today will be completely confidential. Wallis operates under the Australian Privacy Act, and your personal details will be separated from the information you give me. Quotes from this conversation may be used in the Wallis or APSC report, but they will not be linked to your name.

- To make sure that I don't miss any important information you share with me, I'd like to record this interview. Is that ok? All recordings are deleted at the end of the study, and they are only used for analysis by Wallis staff. I'll also need you to confirm on the recording that you give permission for this conversation to be recorded.

- This interview is voluntary, if you would prefer not to answer a question, please let me know and we can move to another question. You may choose to stop the interview and decline to participate at any stage, and we can also reschedule the interview if you prefer. If you find anything we discuss today stressful or distressing, please tell us and we can provide you with contact details for the appropriate support services.

- IF NECESSARY: If you find anything we discuss today distressing, I'd encourage you to talk through your concerns with beyondblue's Support Service. The Support Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week on 1300 22 4636 or you can email or chat to them online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport.

- Alternatively, you may wish to contact someone from your agency's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program provides confidential, independent support and help employees to implement strategies to manage their health and wellbeing and a healthy life balance. For more information see your human resources team.

- TURN ON RECORDER

- (Respondent name), can I confirm with you that it is okay to record this interview?

Note to interviewer: Wallis Distressed Respondent protocol must be applied.

2. Background (5 mins)

- To start, would you be able to tell me a bit about yourself.

    - What is your role in the public service (probe for Australian Public Service classification)? What does your job entail?

    - And how long have you been employed in the Australian Public Service (APS)? Overall, and in your current position?

3. Pathway to the APS (15 mins)

- We would now like to ask you a few questions about your employment experience and pathway in the APS.

    - Could you tell me a bit about your work experience prior to your current role? Was it in the public or private sector? Was it a similar role to what you have today?

    - Thinking now about your current role in the public service…I would like to ask you a few questions regarding the recruitment process for your current job.

        ▪ Firstly, how did you find out about your current job?

        ▪ And what was involved in the selection process? What was the experience like? Was it positive?

        ▪ IF NECESSARY: Did you make use of the RecruitAbility scheme to gain your current role?

    - IF YES: What was the experience like? What process did you go through? Do you feel that it was worthwhile?

- IF NO: Did you decide not to use it? Why? Or were you not aware of the scheme/some other reason for not making use of it.

  - IF NECESSARY: Was the role advertised as an affirmative measure disability vacancy?

- IF YES: What was the experience like? What process did you go through? Do you feel that it was worthwhile?

  - Apart from your current role, what has been your experience in applying for positions in the APS? Were they different to your latest experience? How were they different? When did they occur?

4. Awareness of support for employees with disability (10 mins)

- Which specific initiatives are you aware of aimed to support employees with disabilities? Do these programs benefit you? In what way do they/don't they benefit you?

- IF NECESSARY: Before you were invited to participate in this research, had you heard of "As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability/Employment Strategy 2016-19"? IF YES: As far as you are aware, what does this strategy entail?

IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED: Which of the following initiatives are you aware of that are offered to people with disability?

- RecruitAbility

- Affirmative measure disability

- Making the workplace more accessible for people with disability (e.g. via job design and flexible work arrangements)

- Partnering with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS. IF YES: Did you hear about your job this way?

As far as you are aware, what have been the challenges or benefits from these initiatives? (go through each that respondent is aware of)

5. Views regarding four key Action Areas (15 mins)

- Do you believe that over the last three years employment and/or promotion opportunities have expanded or contracted for people with disability in the APS? How so? What could be done to expand opportunities further?

- And what about for you personally? Do you feel your employment opportunities have expanded or contracted in the last three years? How have they expanded? What has worked well/what hasn't? What else could be done to (further) expand your own opportunities?

- In which ways do you feel that the APS invests in developing the capability of employees with disability? Has this increased or decreased in the last three years? How does it develop these capabilities? What more could be done?

- Thinking about you personally – in which ways do you feel that you have been given opportunities to develop your capabilities by the APS? How so? Have these opportunities increased or decreased in the last three years? What has worked well/what hasn't? What else could be done for you personally to (further) extend your capabilities?

- In which ways do you feel the APS fosters inclusive cultures in the workplace? How does it do this? What else could be done?

- And what about you personally – to what extent do you think your own workplace is inclusive? How is this demonstrated? Is it more or less inclusive than three years ago? What more could be done?

- How much effort do you feel that the APS is making to increase the representation of employees with disability in senior roles? How does it do this? Has this increased in the last three years? What else could be done?

6. Nature of disability (5 mins)

- Do you feel comfortable disclosing your disability to work colleagues? Why/why not?

- Do you feel there is any advantage or disadvantage to your career by disclosing your disability? Why do you say that?

7. Final comments

Are there any other comments you want to add? Thank respondents, reassure about confidentiality of responses.

8. Useful Contact Numbers (if necessary)

If this conversation has bought up any emotional issues and you would like to speak to someone for help and support please call:

- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

- Lifeline: 13 11 14

APPENDIX 3

Management Depth Discussion Guide

1. Introduction (5 mins)

- Hi, this is (name), I'm calling from Wallis Social and Market Research. Could I please speak to (name of respondent)?

- Hi (respondent name). We've been asked by the Australia Public Service Commission to speak to people about their experiences with the programs and activities that were developed as part of the APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19. Is this still a good time to talk?

- IF NECESSARY: 'As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016 – 2019' was developed by the Australian Public Service Commission to improve employment opportunities for people with disability.

- Before we get started, I need to let you know that anything you tell me today will be completely confidential. Wallis operates under the Australian Privacy Act, and your personal details will be separated from the information you give me. Quotes from this conversation may be used in the Wallis or APSC report, but they will not be linked to your name.

- To make sure that I don't miss any important information you share with me, I'd like to record this interview. Is that ok? All recordings are deleted at the end of the study, and they are only used for analysis by Wallis staff. I'll also need you to confirm on the recording that you give permission for this conversation to be recorded.

- This interview is voluntary, if you would prefer not to answer a question, please let me know and we can move to another question. You may choose to stop the interview and decline to participate at any stage, and we can also reschedule the interview if you prefer. If you find anything we discuss today stressful or distressing, please tell us and we can provide you with contact details for the appropriate support services.

- IF NECESSARY: If you find anything we discuss today distressing, I'd encourage you to talk through your concerns with beyondblue's Support Service. The Support Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week on 1300 22 4636 or you can email or chat to them online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport.

- Alternatively, you may wish to contact someone from your agency's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program provides confidential, independent support and help employees to implement strategies to manage their health and wellbeing and a healthy life balance. For more information see your human resources team.

- TURN ON RECORDER

- (Respondent name), can I confirm with you that it is okay to record this interview?

Note to interviewer: Wallis Distressed Respondent protocol must be used.

2. Background (5 mins)

To start would you be able to tell me a bit about yourself.

- What is your role in the public service? What does your job entail?

- And how long have you been employed in the Australian Public Service? Overall, and in your current position?

3. Awareness of strategies for employees with disability (5 mins)

- Which specific initiatives are you aware of aimed to support employees with disabilities? What do these initiatives deliver?

- IF NECESSARY: Before you were invited to participate in this research, had you heard of "As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19"? IF YES: As far as you are aware, what does this strategy entail?

4. Policies supporting recruitment of employees with disability (20 mins)

- In your agency, what initiatives are in place to support recruiting employees with a disability?

NOTE: IN FOLLOWING SECTION EXPLORE FOR EACH POLICY/PROCEDURE MENTIONED:

- How long have each of these initiatives been in place?

- What was the impetus for introducing these initiatives?

  - How has the strategic direction provided by the APSC had an impact on the introduction, maintenance or improvement of these initiatives? Have

other factors driven the introduction of the initiatives? What were these factors?

- Which classifications are these initiatives focused on? (APS / EL / SES) How are they geared to these classifications? IF NECESSARY: Why are they only geared towards certain classifications?

- How well implemented are the initiatives across the agency? How are they well implemented? Provide examples. IF NOT WELL IMPLEMENTED: Why aren't these initiatives well implemented across the agency? What evidence is there of that?

- How are the initiatives supported? Is that support internal to the agency or external? Is that support adequate or not? How so?

- What challenges have there been in implementing or maintaining these initiatives? What could be improved? How?

- What benefits have there been from these initiatives? Have they helped employment opportunities for people with disability increase over the last three years? What elements of the initiatives have created these positive benefits? Have there been any negative effects? What are these? Why?

IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED: Which of the following are in place in your agency?

- RecruitAbility

- Affirmative measures disability

- Mental Health First Aid training for managers

- Disability Awareness training for managers

- Making the workplace more accessible for people with disability (e.g. via job design and flexible work arrangements)

- Partnering with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs in the APS

What challenges have there been in implementing or maintaining these initiatives? What could be improved? How?

What positive benefits have there been from these initiatives? Why have they been effective?

5. Career planning for employees with disability (20 mins)

- How does your agency actively develop career capability of people with disability?

- FOR EACH ITEM MENTIONED: How has this worked in developing workplace capabilities? What has worked well, and what have been the challenges? Why? What more could be done?

- How is performance relating to career development of staff with disability monitored?

ASK FOR POINTS BELOW IF NOT MENTIONED ABOVE: Does your agency:

- Offer career trajectory planning for people with disability? How is this done? Has this helped people plan their careers? Why has it worked well (or not)? What are the challenges?

- Offer development programs for high performers with disability? What type of development programs? Has this worked well for high performers? Why has it worked well? What are the challenges?

- Provide mentorship programs for people with disability? What types of mentorship programs? Have these worked well? Why have they worked well? And what are the challenges?

- Recruit people with disability into senior roles? How is this done? What types of senior roles? Has this increased in the last three years? What has made this a success (or not) and what have been the challenges?

- Do you think your workplace is inclusive? Why/Why not? Is the workplace culture more inclusive than three years ago? How do current policies help foster a more inclusive workplace? What have been the challenges in fostering a more inclusive culture in the workplace?

- Provide an accessible workplace for people with disability? How does your agency accomplish this? Is your workplace more accessible than three years ago? What has helped achieve this? What are the challenges?

6. Attitudes to disability in the workplace (2 mins)

- Do you think colleagues with a disability feel comfortable disclosing their disability to work colleagues? Why/why not?

- Do you feel there is any advantage or disadvantage to a person's career by disclosing their disability? Why do you say that?

7. Final comments

Are there any other comments you want to add? Thank interviewee, reassure about confidentiality of responses.

8. Useful Contact Numbers

If this conversation has bought up any emotional issues and you would like to speak to someone for help and support please call:

- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

- Lifeline: 13 11 14

APPENDIX 4

Flyer for Workshop

Contribute to the evaluation of the APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19

The As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19 set the agenda for change in the Australian Public Service (APS) to improve employment opportunities for people with disability.

As 2019 comes to an end, an independent research company, Wallis Market and Social Research, has been engaged by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to evaluate the Strategy. The information collated and collected through this process inform a future APS Disability Employment Strategy.

The evaluation is expected to focus on:

• Success stories and the drivers behind the success

• Challenges faced in the implementation of the Strategy in your agency

• Obstacles preventing greater progress in certain areas.

The evaluation will include:

• Interviews

• Focus groups with a range of stakeholders

• Analysis of existing data

As part of the evaluation of the expiring Strategy, we are inviting input from across the APS. Feedback and contributions will be kept confidential and responses will only be reported on an aggregated level. Contributions are welcome from:

• Employees with disability

• Managers of employees with disability

• D&I/HR/recruitment specialists

- Employees who are carers of family members with disability

- Employees with disability who do not disclose their disability in their agency HR system

- Other APS employees with feedback to offer.

Please email contributions/feedback to APSC Diversity & Inclusion Policy diversity@apsc.gov.au.

Feedback is required by cob Friday 25 October.

APPENDIX 5

Primary Approach Email (PAE)

Dear (NAME)

As discussed, we are seeking the assistance of APS agencies to nominate employees to take part in the research. This entails circulating the following information amongst suitable networks to reach the following types of APS staff:

- Employee with disability (interviews and focus groups)

- Managers of people with a disability (interviews and focus groups)

- HR / Corporate (Interviews)

- Disability Champion (Interviews)

As a key contact for Disability in the APS, you may also be asked whether you would be willing to take part in an interview.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Simon Zoric

Qualitative Fieldwork Coordinator

Email: simonz@wallisgroup.com.au

Phone: 03 8620 5618

INFORMATION TO CIRCULATE

Dear (NAME)

Wallis Market and Social Research (Wallis), has been engaged by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to evaluate 'As One: Making it Happen – APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19' to inform the development of a future APS Disability Employment Strategy.

What we are looking for:

We are seeking people to opt-in to the focus groups or interviews to assist with the evaluation. As there is a set number of places, not all who opt-in will necessarily take part. Our aim is to ensure representation across the types of APS staff identified in the evaluation design. Those who opt-in will be contacted by staff at Wallis to schedule a mutually convenient time.

Topics covered in the focus groups and telephone interviews:

We are looking to explore topics relating to disability in the APS including recruitment, working environment, career opportunities and workplace culture. If selected to take part in a telephone interview, multiple staff members may attend.

All contributions to the discussion in a focus group or interview are both confidential and voluntary. Participants are not required to comment on any matter they do not wish to.

As these interviews and focus groups are informal, preparation is not necessary. There are no right or wrong answers, we are only seeking a frank discussion of perceptions and experience to assist in understanding the management and experience of disability in the APS.

Confidentiality in reporting:

Findings will be presented in aggregate, although deidentified quotes will be presented in the report.

We will not name any participants in the report.

Should case studies be used, we will seek the approval of the participants included for a case study.

Focus group details:

- Focus group 1 – Employees with disability:

    - Thursday, 7 November

    - 10:00am – 11:00am (1 hour)

- Focus group 2 – Employees with disability:

    - Thursday, 7 November

    - 11:30am – 12:30pm (1 hour)

- Focus group 3 – Managers of people with disability:

    - Thursday, 7 November

    - 1:30pm – 3:00pm (1.5 hours)

Location:

Australian Public Service Commission

Treasury Building, Parkes Place West, PARKES ACT 2600

Participants will need to sign into the Security desk on level 1, Parkes Place West, B Block Treasury building

Telephone Interview details:

At a mutually convenient time for Wallis and the participant(s) from now until 8 November 2019

Interviews will run for approximately 45 minutes

Next steps:

If you are happy to opt-in, please send your details to <u>diversity@apsc.gov.au</u>:

- Name

- Title

- Type of APS staff (as best described by the following):

  - Employee with disability

  - Manager of people with a disability

  - HR / Corporate

  - Disability Champion

- Email address

- Contact number (work)

Details will be securely transferred to Wallis by the APSC.

If you would like more information about the evaluation you can contact Wallis:

Simon Zoric

Qualitative Fieldwork Coordinator

Email: simonz@wallisgroup.com.au

Phone: 03 8620 5618

Thank you for your time,

Wallis Market & Social Research