



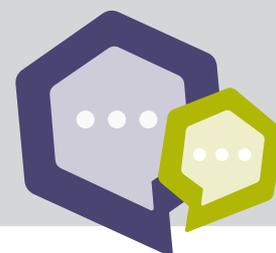
**Australian Public  
Service Culturally and  
Linguistically Diverse  
(CALD) Employment  
Strategy**

...

**Consultation  
Paper**

...





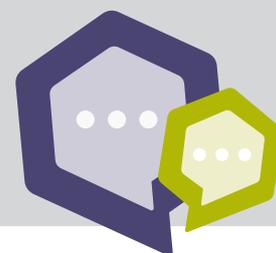
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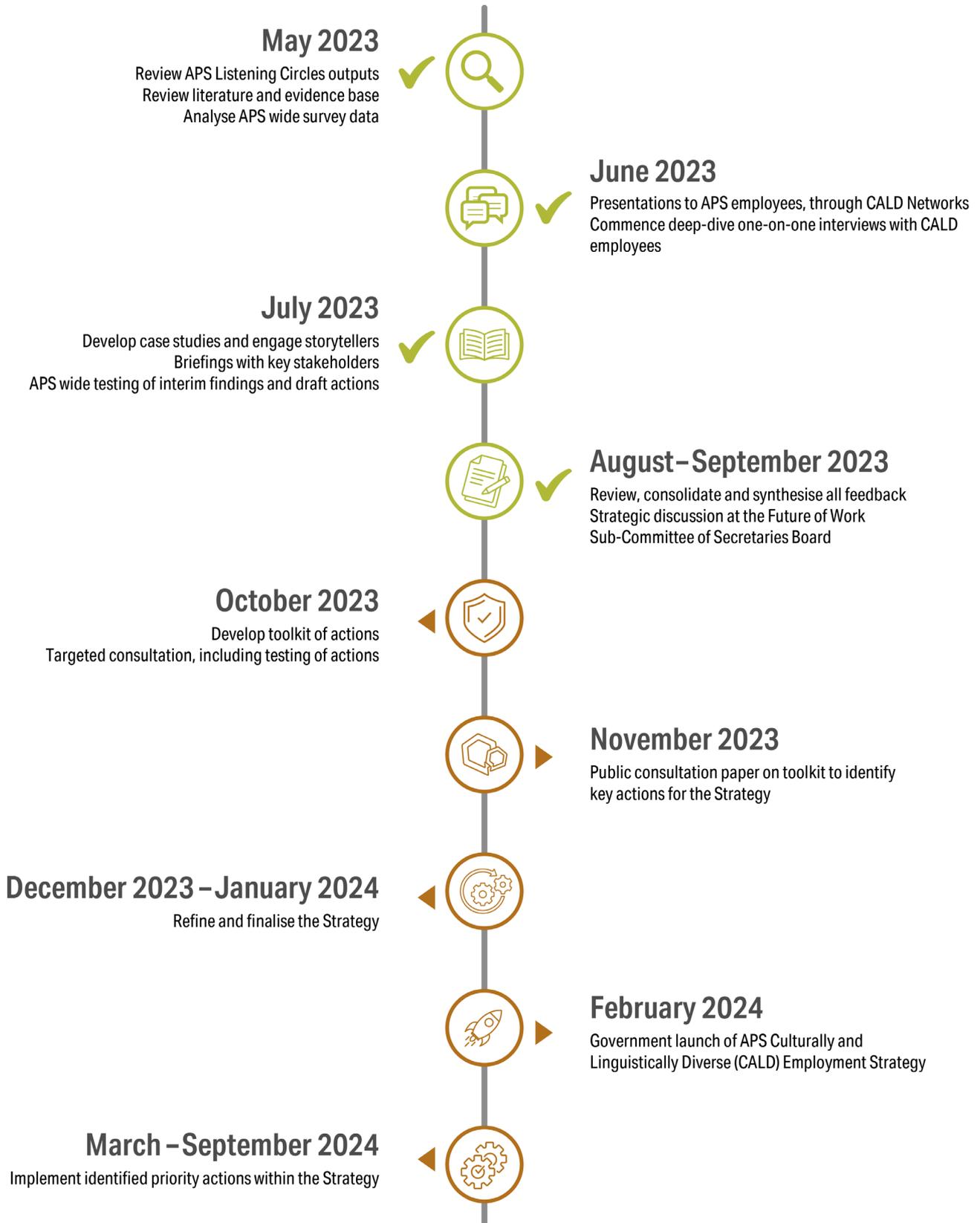
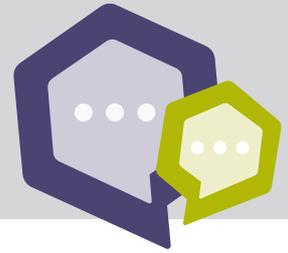


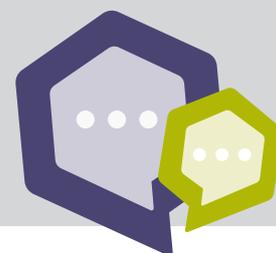
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# Australian Public Service CALD Employment Strategy Roadmap





## Terminology

The appropriateness of the term culturally and linguistically diverse 'CALD' is somewhat contested, and there are alternative terms which are preferred and promoted by some groups.

As a single term, CALD cannot capture all of the rich diversity of cultural backgrounds which can include differences in cultural/ethnic identity, language, country of birth, national origin, heritage/ancestry, race and religion.

Through our consultations, it was clear that there is not currently widespread agreement on a single definition for CALD, although work continues to develop common usage for statistical and policy purposes. This public consultation paper uses the terms 'Australians from CALD backgrounds' and 'CALD Australians' interchangeably. In this context CALD refers to all migrants, including skilled migrants, asylum seekers/refugees, of first, second, third generation and beyond.

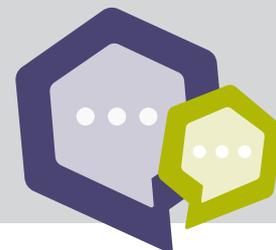
In the meantime, we have chosen to take a multidimensional approach to the work, which recognises and draws out many different aspects of cultural diversity. In this way, we are seeking to reflect the feedback we have received regarding the multiple dimensions of CALD experiences, which are difficult to capture in any single binary metric.<sup>1</sup>

We have applied this multidimensional approach to the broad range of CALD-related data captured through APS agencies' human resources (HR) information systems and made available centrally with the APS Employment Database (APSED). This HR data is supplemented by employee perception data captured through surveys such as the APS Employee Census.

We have undertaken further analysis of this APS HR data across three dimensions: first language spoken, region of birth, and cultural background.<sup>2</sup> The overview results of this analytic work are summarised in the 'Findings' section of this document.

<sup>1</sup> Pham, T. T. L., Berecki-Gisolf, J., Clapperton, A., O'Brien, K. S., Liu, S., & Gibson, K. (2021). Definitions of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD): A Literature Review of Epidemiological Research in Australia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(2), 737. <https://doi.org/10.3390%2Fijerph18020737>

<sup>2</sup> This is based on further analysis of APSED following research undertaken by R Breunig, D Hansell, and N N Win (October 2023), *Modelling Australian Public Service Careers*, Working paper [complete\\_wp\\_breunig\\_hansell\\_win\\_oct\\_2023.pdf](https://www.anu.edu.au/research/working-papers/modelling-australian-public-service-careers) (anu.edu.au). Please see general note on promotion odds analyses on page 21.



# Context

## Purpose of this document

The Australian Government have asked the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to develop a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Employment Strategy for the Australian Public Service (APS).

The APSC has undertaken consultation across the APS and with external experts to understand the current experience for Australians from CALD backgrounds in the APS. We have heard both positive and negative stories. In the APS, representation of CALD Australians is proportionate to the broader Australian population but decreases significantly at the middle and senior leadership ranks. CALD Australians have a high degree of engagement with the APS, and want to make a contribution through serving the government, the Parliament and the Australian community. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their work in the APS, and through their diversity of background and understanding can make a particular contribution to making the work of the APS better. The consultations show that there remain significant limitations on advancement and challenges to CALD employees making a full contribution. These challenges include the impacts of discrimination and racism.

This document sets out the work so far on the Strategy, encompassing the aspiration, the approach, the data, the consultation to date, and the proposed actions. It is intended to support a further public consultation process to gather feedback on the proposed direction and actions of the Strategy prior to it being finalised and presented to the Government.

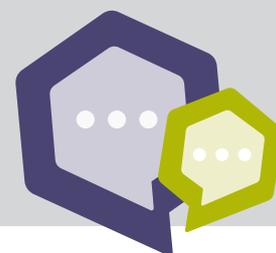
## What we plan to do

We have developed a proposed Toolkit of actions across the APS. There are actions at the individual, leadership, agency and whole of enterprise levels and their implementation is over a time horizon which reflects relative magnitude and scale.

The Toolkit includes three tiers of actions:

- **Immediate simple actions that can be taken at the individual and agency levels by managers, Human Resource and Diversity and Inclusion teams:**
  - are relatively small in effort
  - can be implemented now within existing structures and policy frameworks
  - will have an immediate impact.





- **Priority actions for agencies that:**
  - can get underway with focused effort
  - require a different approach to our corporate practices and policies including workplace protections, recruitment, promotion, complaints, learning and development
  - will require consultation, engagement, and redesign work.
- **Future potential actions at the leadership and system level that require:**
  - further design work
  - a decision at the leadership, agency or enterprise level to commence work and direct resources to implement the action
  - consultation.

An Agency's choice of actions will need to be based on its own maturity in relation to cultural, racial and linguistic diversity, inclusion and safety. The assessment needs to be informed by CALD employees. The MOSAIC Project offers an action planning approach to assist agencies undertake their maturity assessment.<sup>3</sup>

A particular focus of the public consultation process is to gather your feedback on the proposed Toolkit of actions.

## Our questions to you

We are seeking your views on the following:

1. Which of the actions in the Toolkit would be most effective in achieving the Strategy's aspiration (detailed on page 6) of the APS being:
  - a. A safe, fair, equitable and inclusive APS workplace for all employees, free of discrimination and racism?
  - b. An environment that fosters individual and collective learning and reflection about our cultural diversity?
  - c. A workforce which reflects the diversity of the community we serve, at all levels?
2. Please provide any additional comments, about gaps or other actions, which you think are important to achieving the Strategy's aspiration and successful implementation across the APS.

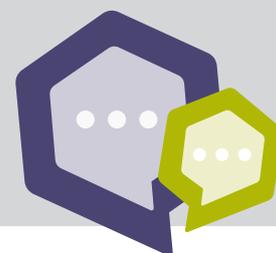


Your answers to the questions can be provided via the [Converlens platform](#), or you may wish to make a submission via that platform. Submissions are open until **ADST 5pm Friday 15 December**. *We thank you for your interest and engagement.*

Following the public consultation process, the Strategy will be refined and presented to the Australian Government for decision, The Government has indicated that it wishes to finalise the Strategy by early 2024.

<sup>3</sup> MOSAIC: Multicultural Organisation – Staff Awareness, Innovation and Capability





## Introduction

Australia's multicultural diversity is a fundamental aspect of our identity, and a source of national strength and vitality.<sup>4</sup> Given Australian migration history and forecasting, Australia's population will continue to become more culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), including through racial and ethnic diversity.

The APS is uniquely placed to role model Australian values and expectations as it delivers government services to the Australian community. To do this, it needs to represent the full diversity of the community it serves. The APS also needs to be a model employer that provides a safe and inclusive workplace for all.

Improving the cultural and racial literacy of all APS employees will bring greater cultural cognitive diversity and expression, enabling the APS to use the many strengths borne of such diversity. Embedding diverse thinking into our structures, processes and communications will improve decision making, policy and service delivery. Fundamentally, it will make our work better to serve the government, the parliament and the Australian people.

The APS already has significant work underway to build First Nations employment and cultural capability, and this critical work must continue and be given high priority. This document focuses specifically on addressing the significant additional gap with respect to our efforts on CALD employment and cultural capability.

In the APS, representation of CALD Australian people is 24 per cent based on country of birth, and 22 per cent based on the language spoken at home.<sup>5</sup> While overall, representation is proportionate to the broader Australian population, this drops significantly at the middle and senior ranks. In addition, CALD APS employees report higher levels of discrimination and racism.

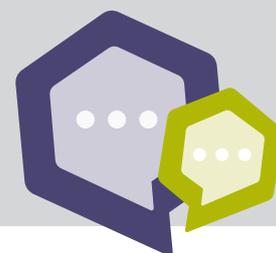
The data and the consultations show that there remain significant limitations on advancement and challenges to CALD employees making a full contribution. These challenges include the impacts of discrimination and racism. There is a substantive sense of difficulty and distress due to inequities that may not be readily visible to non-CALD employees. It is clear that the issue is not simply about processes. Rather, the APS style of working and culture do not necessarily recognise the value and benefit of other cultural approaches and therefore have the effect of excluding them by default.

This Strategy is intended to provide a platform for building the cultural understanding and literacy of all APS employees. Greater awareness is the foundation that will enable us to design inclusive processes, to enhance workplace relationships and cultural safety, and improve communications, decision making, policy and service delivery.

<sup>4</sup> 50 Years of Multiculturalism – Launch of the Multicultural Framework Review ([homeaffairs.gov.au](http://homeaffairs.gov.au))

<sup>5</sup> APSED June 2023; 2023 APS Employee Census.





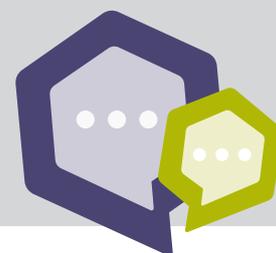
## Aspiration

We propose a strengths based approach drawing on the collective goodwill and interest expressed by CALD and non-CALD employees to learn from each other in a safe environment. The actions have been developed to address insights and opportunities identified from our research and consultation for the Strategy.

We are proposing actions that will:

- Create a safe, fair, equitable and inclusive workplace for all employees, free of discrimination and racism.
  - We want to enable people from all cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds to feel they are able to bring their whole selves to work, have their diverse views valued and progress their careers.
- Create an environment that fosters individual and collective learning and reflection about our cultural diversity.
  - We need to understand and reflect on how our cultural and racial differences impact on our worldviews, our attitudes and behaviours.
  - We need to build our cultural and racial literacy so we encourage robust debate, cognitive diversity and a contestation of views.
- Support the development of a workforce, which reflects the diversity of the community which we serve, at all levels.
  - We need to open up the institutional processes and systems that currently take a narrow view of existing norms, especially with regard to recruitment, promotion and recognition processes.
  - We need to utilise the many strengths of cultural, linguistic and racial diversity to inform our thinking and our work for the benefit of all Australians.





## Consultation and analysis to date

The APSC has undertaken deep and extensive consultation with CALD employees, through their CALD Networks, APS leaders and external experts to understand the factors impacting on CALD employees' lived experience in the APS. We have also conducted an APS wide survey, analysis of the Listening Circles conducted by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, analysis of employment data and a literature review.

**There have been positive stories that demonstrate a sense of belonging and goodwill.**



"Engaging with colleagues from CALD backgrounds provides better opportunities for skill acquisition and knowledge and information exchange through cross-cultural interaction."<sup>6</sup>

"Working in a culturally diverse environment also creates cultural competency through direct personal interactions. In turn, this benefits an organisation's dealings with external and international customers and stakeholders."<sup>7</sup>

"All staff benefit from developing their understanding of different cultures and perspectives, and their capacities for intercultural sensitivity and adaptation, to enable them to live and work as professionals in a diverse and increasingly globalised society."<sup>8</sup>

"The ability of Government agencies to perform well and deliver services that appropriately cater to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians is contingent on effective leadership and coordination at all levels."<sup>9</sup>

We have also heard that prejudice, discrimination and racism still exist in the APS, just as in broader Australian society.<sup>10</sup> There is consistency across all sources about the issues, specifically:

- Our recruitment and promotion processes reflect preferences for existing norms, and there are perceptions of discrimination based on race;
- We have a lack of cultural and racial literacy and capability across the APS.

<sup>6</sup> [factsheet-8-maximising-the-value-of-cultural-diversity1.pdf](https://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/factsheet-8-maximising-the-value-of-cultural-diversity1.pdf) (fecca.org.au)

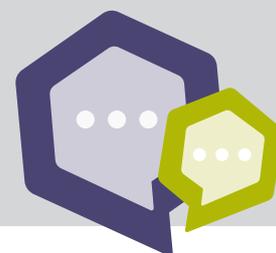
<sup>7</sup> <https://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/factsheet-8-maximising-the-value-of-cultural-diversity1.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [factsheet-4-recruitment-progression-and-retention1.pdf](https://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/factsheet-4-recruitment-progression-and-retention1.pdf) (fecca.org.au)

<sup>9</sup> [2013-14-multicultural-access-and-equity-report\\_public.pdf](https://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2013-14-multicultural-access-and-equity-report_public.pdf) (fecca.org.au). p17

<sup>10</sup> [Australian Cohesion Index 2023, apo-nid324371.pdf](https://apo.nid324371.pdf)





Overwhelmingly, CALD employees want to contribute to Australian society and to the APS to the best and fullest extent they can. Many feel they cannot do this effectively within the current structures and culture for a range of reasons.



“Values of the APS should be broad enough to reflect the values of the multicultural society they serve and so CALD people see their cultural values somehow represented in the values of the workplace/APS.”<sup>11</sup>

“I think that some CALD employees are not given the opportunities to progress their careers... is the perception of not being able to understand and therefore practice Australian work and cultural norms.”<sup>12</sup>

“Over preparing and working harder than the average has been the strategy to get accepted and valued in the workplace.”<sup>13</sup>

“Procrustean Bed<sup>14</sup> cuts away people’s talents and potential, and damages their contribution to the APS.”<sup>15</sup>

“Make sure CALD people are not overlooked during promotion or employment rounds. Add CALD people to recruitment panel. Be more open minded about people being modest and not being comfortable with western-style self-promotion – don't overlook them while offering jobs or promotions.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Subject matter expert employee interview

<sup>12</sup> Subject matter expert employee interview

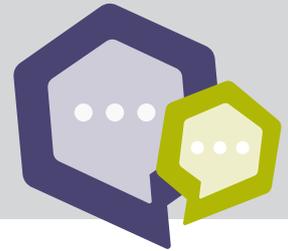
<sup>13</sup> Subject matter expert employee interview

<sup>14</sup> Britannica Dictionary (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aphrodite-Greek-mythology>)

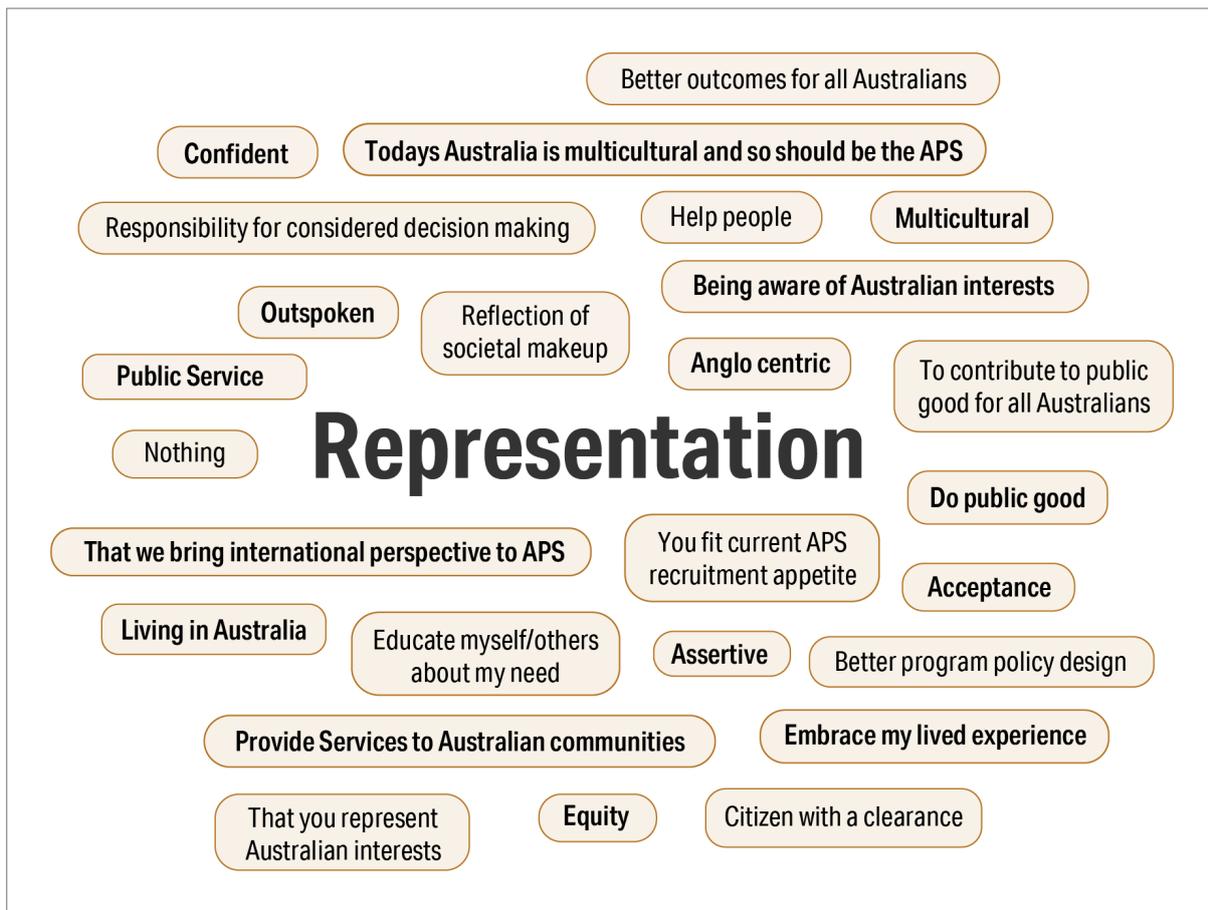
<sup>15</sup> Subject matter expert employee interview

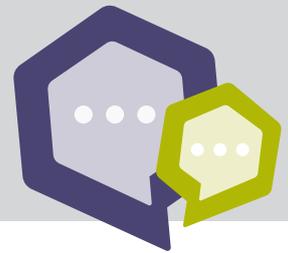
<sup>16</sup> APS CALD Survey response





## What does being Australian mean in the APS today?





## What does cultural inclusivity look like?



“I don't think we understand enough about the different cultural protocols and norms in the CALD communities which may impact on people's behaviour at work. For example speaking up at meetings or correcting a manager.”<sup>17</sup>

“In some Asian cultures being humble and reserved is appropriate but is contrary to what is expected in the recruitment process and in the workplace in Australia to get recognition and be visible”<sup>18</sup>

“The fact that CALD would benefit APS will never change.”<sup>19</sup>

“In CALD strategy, how do we make sure that the momentum... the work will keep going... that we have resourcing to keep on going... that it's carried on by all agencies in the APS.”<sup>20</sup>

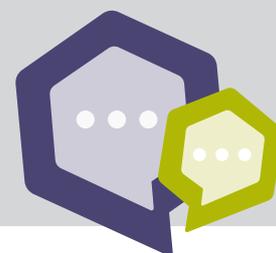
<sup>17</sup> APS CALD Survey response

<sup>18</sup> Subject matter expert interview

<sup>19</sup> APS-wide Listening Circles

<sup>20</sup> APS-wide Listening Circles





## Our sources

### Representation and perception data

- APS Employment Database of APS employees to identify country of birth, job family and classification.
- 2023 APS Employee Census to identify region of birth, language spoken at home, cultural background, perceptions of bullying and harassment, and workplace inclusion indicators.
- APS Agency Surveys to identify existing CALD strategies, policies, action plans.
- ABS Census of Population and Housing data.

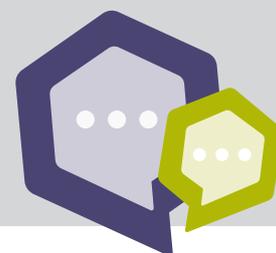
### Lived experience

- APS wide CALD listening circles – 24 agencies from small to extra-large of all types, 97 participants at all APS, EL and SES levels.
- Survey of CALD and non-CALD APS employees – 843 respondents from extra small to extra-large agencies of all types, APS, EL and SES levels.
- Subject matter experts 1:1s – employees and external organisations including Australian Human Rights Commission, Diversity Council of Australia, Centre for Asian-Australian Leadership, NSW Public Service Commission, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia.
- APS Diversity and Inclusion/HR practitioners.

### Literature

- Academic research.
- Publications by Non-government organisations such as the Diversity Council of Australia, the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, the Lowy Institute, McKinsey, Harvard Business Review.
- Public and private sector strategies, policies and action plans.
- Hofstede cultural dimensions.





## Our findings

The CALD diversity of the APS is largely reflective of employed Australians in the labour force.<sup>21</sup>

APS employees identify with a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, as can be seen from the map on the following page.

Many portfolios<sup>22</sup> have one in five employees whose first language was not exclusively English, with portfolios like Home Affairs and Industry, Science and Resources having one in four, and Treasury having closer to one in three. This is a profound illustration of the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in the APS.

### Representation across whole of APS and among employed Australian citizens

Cohort	APS employees, June 2023				Employed Australian citizens 2021
	APS level (APS1 – APS6)	EL level (EL1 – EL2)	SES level (SES1 – SES3)	Total	
First Nations/ Aboriginal and/or Torres Islanders	4.3%	1.7%	1.7%	3.5%	2.5%
Born outside Australia	25%	23%	16%	24%	23%
Language other than English spoken at home	25%	17%	10%	22%	17%
First language other than English	12%	10%	5%	12%	N/A <sup>a</sup>

Source: 2023 APS Employee Census; ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021; APSED June 2023

a. The ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021 has no comparable data on this metric.

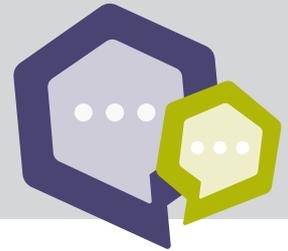
Despite growing numbers of staff who either speak diverse languages or who come from more diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, Senior Executive Service (SES) cohorts have changed the least since 2003 and CALD representation drops off markedly at senior levels.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> 2023 APS Employee Census; ABS Census 2021; APSED June 2023.

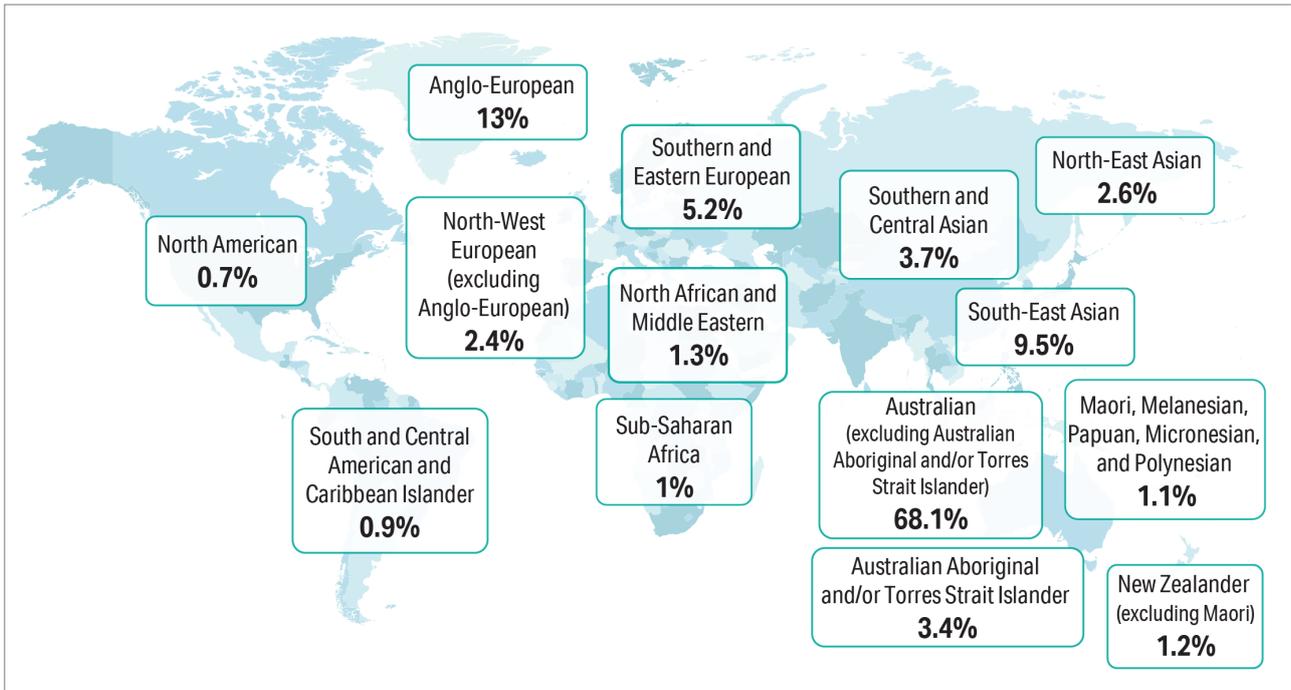
<sup>22</sup> Ranging from Veterans' Affairs and Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolios which have 18 per cent, to the 22 per cent in Foreign Affairs and Trade, Employment and Workplace Relations, and Health and Aged Care portfolios.

<sup>23</sup> Source: APSED June 2023.

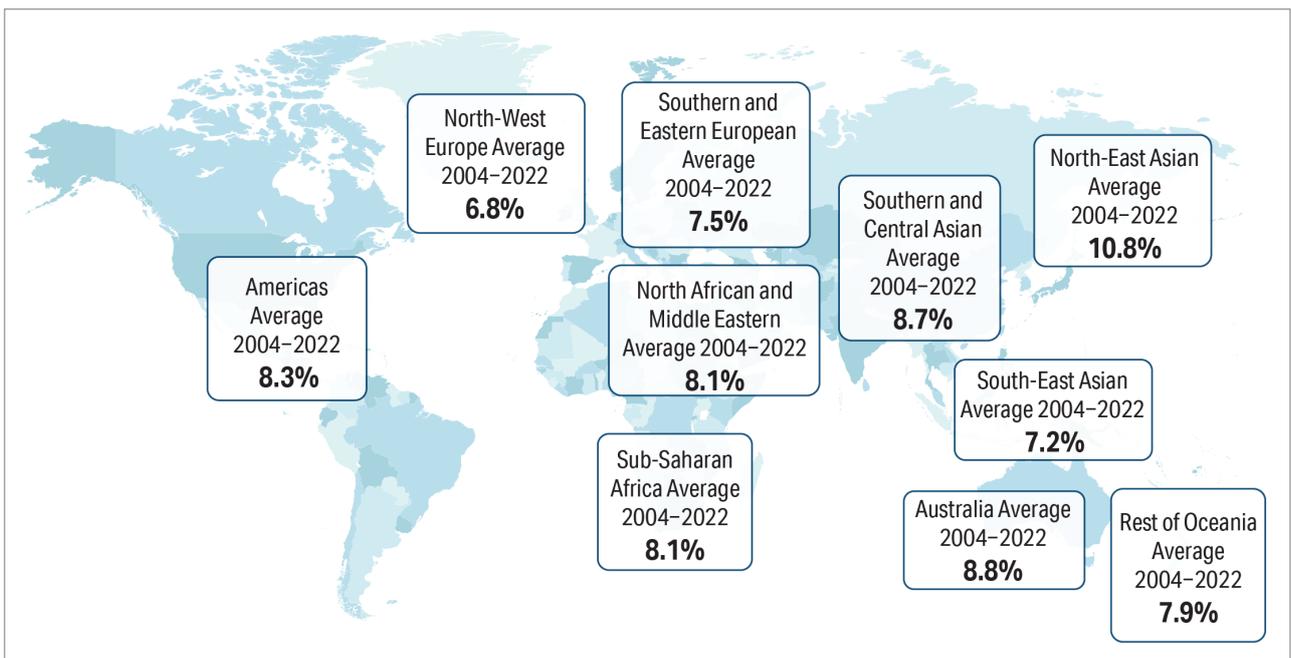




**APS employees identify with a diverse range of cultural backgrounds<sup>24</sup>**



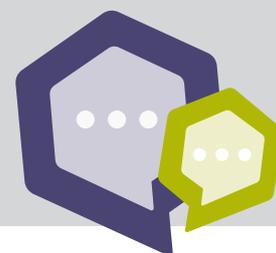
**Australian-born staff have historically high promotion rates, on average, over 2004 to 2022, exceeded only by North-East Asian born.<sup>25</sup>**



<sup>24</sup> 2023 APS Employee Census.

<sup>25</sup> APSED December 2022.





## APS employment data raises concerns on career progression

It is clear from the data and from the lived experience that there is variation in promotion experiences across countries of birth and by classification.

Australian-born staff generally have historically high promotion rates compared to staff born outside Australia. Non-Australian born staff have different promotions experiences depending upon their country of birth and classification level.<sup>26</sup>

For example, an employee's country of birth strongly impacts promotion odds in the APS at the EL1 level. Those born in North-East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa experience 30% lower likelihood of promotion, those born in Oceania (excluding Australia) have 20% lower likelihood and people from South East Asia experience 20–30% lower likelihood of promotion.

“Not seeing as much representation of CALD people in management roles which makes it harder to envision that kind of career progression for myself.”<sup>27</sup>

“More storytelling – more openness about cultural heritage, especially by the executives...not just, this SES has these qualifications and worked at these places, but also where they grew up, where their parents are from, what languages they speak. The same way that First Nations people are identifying... those with a CALD background could identify as 'Jane Ng whose parents settled in Australia from Vietnam in 1972.'”<sup>28</sup>

“Senior leaders need to stop patting themselves on the back for a job well done in promoting diversity just because they celebrated 'special days' for CALD people. Concrete steps are needed to really make a difference, starting with setting cultural diversity targets across the APS at the SES levels and statutory boards.”<sup>29</sup>

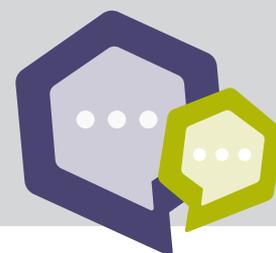
<sup>26</sup> APSC analysis does note some particular cases of higher CALD promotion odds at more junior levels.

<sup>27</sup> APS CALD Survey response

<sup>28</sup> APS CALD Survey response

<sup>29</sup> APS CALD Survey response





## APS perception data raises concerns about discrimination

In the 2023 APS Employee Census, a higher proportion of respondents from a CALD background perceive discrimination than non-CALD respondents:

- 9 per cent of respondents who identified as Australian (separate from First Nations Australians) reported experiencing discrimination during the last 12 months.
- Respondents from First Nations cultural backgrounds had the highest rate of 23 per cent.
- Respondents who identified as having other cultural backgrounds all reported rates of experiencing discrimination above 9 per cent, ranging from 10 per cent for North-East Asian respondents to 16 per cent for Maori, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian and Polynesian respondents.

For those who perceived discrimination, 63 per cent from Southern and Central Asian, 61 per cent from North-East Asian and 60 per cent from Sub-Saharan African backgrounds identified race as the basis of that discrimination.

While the question is about discrimination, the feedback points to racism. Further, it is clear that people who experience discrimination and racism do not feel there is adequate recourse.

“People think racism is only obvious, overt statements, and aren't aware of more subtle forms of discrimination that are more common.”<sup>30</sup>

“Suggestions in meetings [are] not being taken as seriously if you don't speak in the same way as native English-speakers ... people tune out and are more dismissive of team members who have an accent.”<sup>31</sup>

“Despite my qualifications and work experience, I am frequently spoken down to, ignored in meetings and do not have my contributions valued. It is difficult to raise these experiences because there is no platform to share or have these issues heard. I know it is unconscious bias but how do I call this out?”<sup>32</sup>

“There is hesitancy in reporting discrimination. There is no guarantee of a good outcome and the process is arduous.”<sup>33</sup>

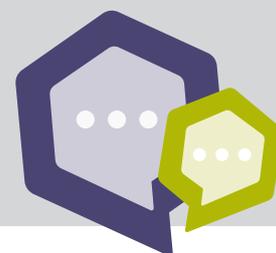
<sup>30</sup> APS CALD Survey response

<sup>31</sup> APS CALD Survey response

<sup>32</sup> APS CALD Survey response

<sup>33</sup> Subject matter expert interview

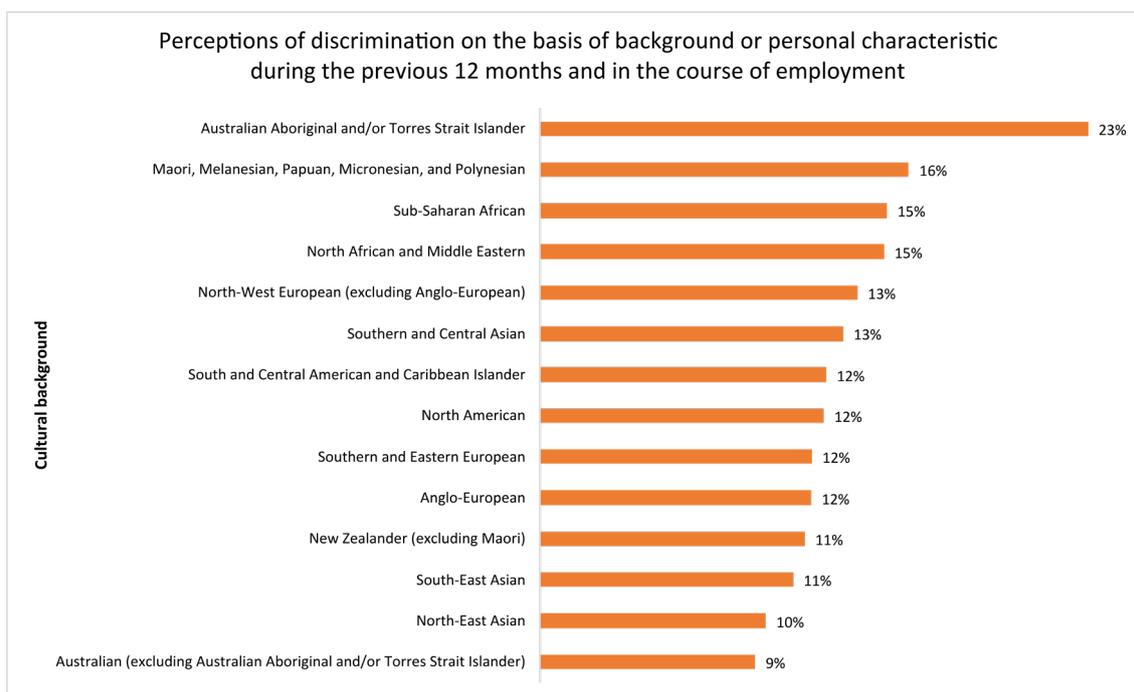




“The problem is not just the people who say the discriminatory comments but those around them who say nothing when it happens.”<sup>34</sup>

“Racism can manifest in many ways, is harmful and its impacts are quite profound... The APS has a duty of care to ensure racism is not a part of our workplace... Racism is a problem in all our institutions. There is not an APS document that covers racism beyond that against First Nations.”<sup>35</sup>

“...potential accusations of racism are treated with more importance than instances of racism itself. It appears that the department is more ready to empathise with accusations of racism.”<sup>36</sup>

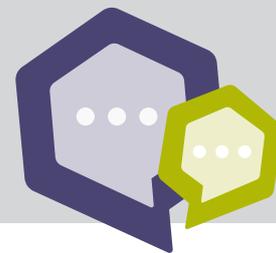


<sup>34</sup> Subject matter expert interview

<sup>35</sup> Subject matter expert interview

<sup>36</sup> Subject matter expert interview





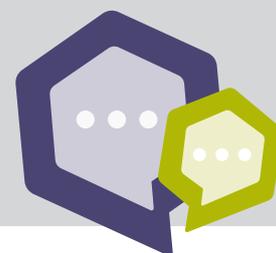
## Key insights

What is clear from the data that we have gathered is that there is a gap between the workplace experience of CALD employees and that of non-CALD employees. To bridge that gap, the APS needs to address the cultural and systemic barriers to support all CALD employees to achieve their full potential and contribute their skills and talent to the work of the APS. The qualitative feedback can be broadly summarised, in its own terms, as below:

- The status quo frames cultural, linguistic and racial difference as a deviation from the 'norm' which needs to be altered or managed.
- Australian society is highly multicultural and ideas around cultural inclusivity have evolved. Yet more can be done to ensure integration of cross cultural perspectives in all our work. This would enable decision making to reflect a broader view of what it is to be Australian. It would also ensure that the APS reflects the community it serves.
- There is a tacit distrust around that which deviates from the perceived norm and a tendency to clone. CALD people are aware that their cultural differences work against them in building productive working relationships.
- The recruitment process within the APS is widely perceived as predicated on candidates presenting as non-CALD.
- Racism and discrimination are not easy to detect if you are not experiencing them.
- Identities are reduced to clichés, labels and stereotypes.
- Conversations about racism and discrimination are avoided and flattened into tokenistic actions that feel 'safe' but are ultimately reductive.
- CALD employees' experience of racism and discrimination damages their capacity to succeed in the APS.
- Leaders need to 'walk the talk' while sharing the mic, to empower others.

This represents a very serious challenge. As an essential pre-condition, we must uphold the existing laws and protections that provide a fundamental right for all employees to enjoy safe, fair and inclusive workplaces. The APS is not, in all cases, meeting this basic responsibility, which stops people with diverse cultural heritage from bringing their full selves to work. We are not harnessing all the skills and experience of our existing CALD employees, and not always presenting a welcoming environment to prospective employees.





## Toolkit of actions

In addition to work underway, through the MOSAIC Project and the new APS Employee Census questions, we have developed a proposed Toolkit of actions for further consideration under the Strategy.

The individual Action Items fall under the broad themes listed below, with a full list at **Appendix A**:

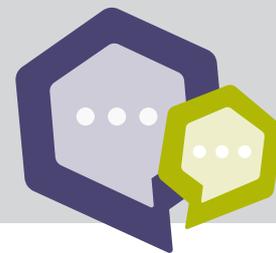
- Action Item 1** *Providing a safe, fair and inclusive workplace for all employees*
- Action Item 2** *Broadening the expectations of an APS model employee*
- Action Item 3** *Understanding and building on the diversity of the current workforce*
- Action Item 4** *APS as a model employer*
- Action item 5** *APS represents the community we serve*

### The Toolkit includes three tiers of actions:

- Immediate simple actions that can be taken at the individual and agency levels by managers, Human Resource and Diversity and Inclusion teams.
  - are relatively small in effort
  - can be implemented now within existing structures and policy frameworks
  - will have an immediate impact.
- Priority actions for agencies that:
  - can get underway with focused effort
  - require a different approach to our corporate practices and policies including workplace protections, recruitment, promotion, complaints, learning and development
  - will require consultation, engagement, and redesign work.
- Future potential actions at the leadership and system level that require:
  - further design work
  - a decision at the leadership, agency or enterprise level to commence work and direct resources to implement the action
  - consultation.

An Agency's choice of actions will need to be based on its own maturity in relation to cultural, racial and linguistic diversity, inclusion and safety. This maturity assessment will need to be heavily informed by engagement with their CALD employees.





## Possible priority actions

As an initial guide, we have selected a sub-set of actions for consideration for priority implementation.

Some of the items listed below correspond directly with a single action item in **Appendix A**. Others are a summary of a number of actions with key elements outlined. The numbering of actions below is not sequential, but corresponds with their place in the full suite of actions at **Appendix A**.

### For the APS as a whole

Establish a platform for agencies to share interdepartmental best CALD practice through formal and informal presentations. (**Action Item 4.16**)

### To boost representation of CALD Australians at senior levels in the APS

In consultation with CALD identifying staff or their representative networks, identify buddying/mentoring/sponsorship initiatives. (**Action item 3.3**)

Offer learning and development opportunities to support progression of CALD staff. E.g. shadowing. (**Action item 3.7**)

Commit to a sponsoring program or reverse mentoring for SES and CALD. (**Action item 3.9**)

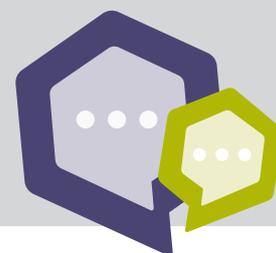
Increase CALD awareness in recruitment and promotion processes, including representation on panels where possible. This could be through an APS-wide CALD EOI to identify CALD employees interested in sitting on a panel. (**Action item 3.11**)

Identify and implement targets, at a whole of agency level, based on a picture of the CALD representation across the agency, to improve CALD representation in job families with career pathways and across APS, EL and SES levels to ensure a pipeline. (**Action item 3.12**)

### For agencies

Develop action plans aligned to CALD profiles and identified needs. The action plans would be based on a maturity assessment of non-CALD cultural literacy and CALD cultural safety e.g. through conducting a MOSAIC Cultural Diversity Sprint or consulting CALD employees. (**Action Item 5.6**)

Agencies to consult multicultural organisations or intercultural experts to develop inclusive design principles for future corporate policies and practices to be explicitly inclusive of all cultural backgrounds. (**Action Item 5.9**)



## For senior leaders

Develop and role-model a charter of what a professional, constructive and culturally respectful workplace is and what it is not, in consultation with CALD and other diversity groups. **(Action Item 4.17)**

Build capability of managers to recruit, build and manage multicultural teams. This would include through the current capability uplift project, MOSAIC<sup>37</sup> and through incorporation of specific cultural diversity elements into the Academy's Executive Level Leadership Edge program and each of the Senior Executive Stewardship programs. **(Action Item 3.15):** Key elements include:

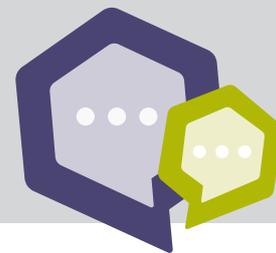
- Identifying and expanding one's own comfort zone and overcoming cultural blind spots, unconscious bias, cultural misconceptions and stereotypes.
- Having a safe space for people to discover and reflect on how their own cultural lens impacts on others.
- Having the time and space to sit in discomfort.
- Learning skills to navigate conflict when there are robust debates from cognitive diversity.

## For HR and D&I teams

Review recruitment and promotion guidance and processes including vetting and hiring tests to recognise a wider variety of attributes and benefits from different cultural and racial backgrounds. **(Action Item 2.1–2.7)**. This could include working with CALD Networks to incorporate the following:

- Explicitly welcoming applications from all cultural and racial backgrounds.
- Specifying how cultural differences are valued.
- Including cross cultural competency as a criterion (eg demonstrated through living/working overseas, speaking another language, working in a multicultural setting).
- Developing hiring tests to recognise a wider variety of attributes and benefits from different cultural and racial backgrounds.
- Consulting multicultural organisations on inclusive language and approaches.
- Developing language and cultural inclusivity tests for job ads.
- Inverting the process so that on the job performance (assessed via referee reports) is the entry point, to remove the performance element of interviews and focus on clarifying questions or scenarios based on referee reports.

<sup>37</sup> MOSAIC: Multicultural Organisation – Staff Awareness, Innovation and Capability



Develop in-house “walk-in-the-shoes” training sessions, informed by CALD employees. The purpose is to illustrate the life experiences, contributions and sacrifices CALD people make as 1st or 2nd generation migrants, in establishing themselves as Australians. The format would be similar as that used to build cultural awareness of First Nations.

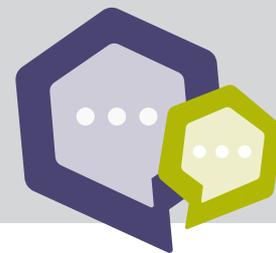
**(Action Item 3.13)**

#### **General note on promotion odds analyses**

Breunig et al (2023) calculated the promotion odds of Non-English Speaking Background and Asian-born employees. The APSC undertook further analyses to separate Asian-born staff into North East Asian, South East Asian, and Southern and Central Asian born, and included additional job family data than what was available to Breunig et al. Based on data for 2017 to 2022, the APSC found very similar results to those reported by Breunig et al for NESB staff. It also found lower promotions odds for South East Asian born at APS3 to EL1 levels (compared to Australian born), and higher promotion odds for North-East Asian born APS4s and Southern and Central Asian born APS6s.

The findings in this public consultation paper also report promotion rates. Promotion rates differ from promotion odds. Promotion rates in this public consultation paper are annual measures of the frequency with which employees are promoted in a given calendar year. Promotion odds, on the other hand, estimate the likelihood that an employee will be promoted, based on characteristics such as their gender, disability status, and their length of time at a classification level. As such, promotion rates can differ significantly from promotions odds.





## Long list of possible actions being considered for the Toolkit

### **Action Item 1** *Providing a safe, fair and inclusive workplace for all employees*

#### **Responsibility of Agency HR & D&I teams and managers – at present**

- 1.1 Raise awareness of existing laws and protections that provide fundamental rights and protections for all employees (IR, AHRC, WHS, Merit protection).
- 1.2 Provide a safe and supportive space to gather constructive feedback from CALD employees and allies about their experience of complaints procedures and appoint a trusted support person.
- 1.3 Raise awareness of the importance of understanding cultural context before using HR policies such as performance management and Conflict of Interest to ensure policies are used appropriately.
- 1.4 Ask CALD employees what valuing their culture and providing a culturally safe workplace looks like for them – understanding that people will have different expectations.
- 1.5 Establish transparent practices in the recruitment process including: providing, on request the selection panel's assessment to the candidate or offering verbal feedback; managers considering all suitable candidates from the merit pool rather than just one.

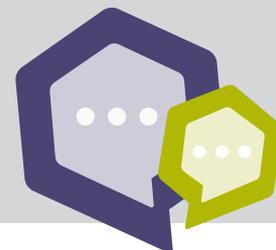
#### **Responsibility of Agency HR & D&I teams – in future**

##### **Good Practice:**

- 1.6 Review current procedures, using internal feedback, and assess their effectiveness in providing safe and supportive channels for reporting by the person impacted and/or a bystander, and resolving racism and discrimination.

##### **Transformational Practice:**

- 1.7 Co-design a complaints process from a psychosocial safety perspective, with a cross section of diversity group representatives, and include a discrete reporting category for discrimination and racism. As part of the safe disclosure process, allow for a support person (internal or external) of the plaintiff's choice.
- 1.8 APSC to examine the concept of merit as it relates to recruitment and promotion of CALD employees.



## **Action Item 2** *Broadening the expectations of an APS model employee*

### **Responsibility of Agency HR & D&I teams and managers – at present**

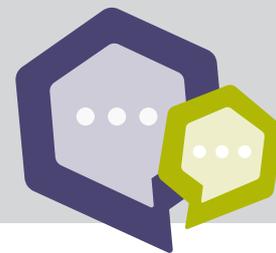
- 2.1 Capture transferable cross-cultural skills and experience (through the job selection criteria or interview questions) by offering candidates the option of highlighting the potential benefits of their individual leadership and working style, their cultural experiences, heritage and values.
- 2.2 Incorporate selection criteria in the job description that allows candidates to demonstrate how they foster cultural and cognitive diversity or demonstrate cultural competence.
- 2.3 Adopt advertising language and imagery to reflect CALD inclusion e.g. run job ads through self-selected CALD employees to test language for unconscious bias, assumptions or requirements that imply a preference for a specific group of people e.g. from the public sector.
- 2.4 For all roles, ask for evidence from the candidate and their referees, of that candidate's cultural awareness, inclusivity and sensitivity.
- 2.5 Pilot de-identifying applications (not when using targets).

### **Responsibility of Agency HR & D&I teams and managers – in future**

#### **Good practice:**

- 2.6 Work with CALD employees or their representative networks to review recruitment and promotion guidance and processes including for example by:
  - a) Explicitly welcoming applications from all cultural and racial backgrounds.
  - b) Including cross cultural competency as a criterion (e.g. demonstrated through living/ working overseas, speaking another language, working in a multicultural setting).
  - c) Developing language and cultural inclusivity tests for job ads.
  - d) Specifying how cultural differences are valued.
  - e) Consulting multicultural organisations on inclusive language and approaches.
  - f) Developing hiring tests to recognise a wider variety of attributes and benefits from different cultural and racial backgrounds.
  - g) Inverting the process so that on the job performance (assessed via referee reports) is the entry point, to remove the performance element of interviews and focus on clarifying questions or scenarios based on referee reports.





### **Transformational practice:**

- 2.7 Re-define the 'ideal candidate/fit' and craft role descriptions e.g. by:
- a) Recognising the inherent diversity of thought, perception and conceptual frameworks that come from having a second language which requires the individual to think in different ways.
  - b) Indicating where experience would be sufficient, rather than a formal qualification.
  - c) Taking into account the skills acquired from a degree or qualification from another country even if it is not recognised.
  - d) Basing the job requirements on essential skills, knowledge or experience that cannot be learned on the job e.g. those that require a specific level of schooling or a particular degree, rather than requiring skills, knowledge or experience that can be learned once in the job.
  - e) Acknowledging that having a formal qualification, but not necessarily experience in Australia, would be sufficient (some migrants are unable to gain work in their field).

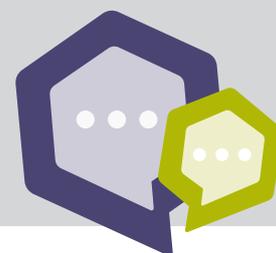
The aim is to shift the focus to skills that are critical, or ones that are transferable for high performance in any job, away from factors like prestigious work experience, school/university attendance or an uninterrupted employment history.

### **Action Item 3 *Understanding and building on the diversity of the current workforce***

#### **Responsibility of Agency HR & D&I teams and managers – at present**

- 3.1 Consult CALD employees or their representative networks on ways of making recruitment processes inclusive, including by broadening assessments to include:
- a) explicit recognition of the value of diversity of thought e.g. by inviting people to illustrate how they would approach the job or what characteristics they bring that would enable them to do the job, rather than describe how they meet the criteria.
  - b) examples of managing diverse leadership and team styles from other cultures.
  - c) expectations of leading cultural change, promoting diversity and managing intercultural tensions.
  - d) attributes like a growth mindset demonstrated through an ability to learn on the job or adapt to a new country, a strong work ethic demonstrated through starting again (instead of this being seen as failure), being an inclusive collaborative colleague.





- 3.2 Diversify HR and D&I teams to have CALD representation e.g. through secondments.
- 3.3 In consultation with CALD identifying staff or their representative networks, identify buddying/mentoring/sponsorship initiatives .
- 3.4 Develop resources for managers to navigate different cultural expectations in performance conversations.
- 3.5 Managers, through HR, to set expectations and proactively liaise with Australian Government Security Vetting Agency to ensure transparency on delays in security clearances. The principle is that if someone has been through a merit process and identified as suitable, they should not be lost to the organisation through a routine process.

#### **Responsibility of Agency HR & D&I teams and managers – in future**

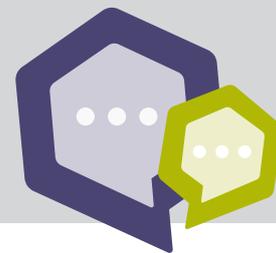
##### **Good practice:**

- 3.6 Create an APS workforce picture of CALD employees from employment data and cultural analysis to reconfigure and strengthen ways of working in the APS to reflect cultural cognitive diversity.
- 3.7 Offer learning and development opportunities to support progression of CALD staff. E.g. shadowing
- 3.8 Have an agency representative speak at career and cultural events about navigating the interview process.
- 3.9 Commit to a sponsoring program or reverse mentoring for SES and CALD.
- 3.10 Offer support for CALD applicants to prepare for interview, or offer interview adjustments that recognise NESB and CALD need to code-switch. E.g. a choice of tasks to complete or an interpreter.
- 3.11 Increase CALD awareness in recruitment and promotion processes, including representation on panels where possible. This could be through an APS-wide CALD EOI to identify CALD employees interested in sitting on a panel.

##### **Transformational practice:**

- 3.12 Identify and implement targets, at a whole of agency level, based on a picture of the CALD representation across the agency, to improve CALD representation in job families with career pathways and across APS, EL and SES levels to ensure a pipeline.



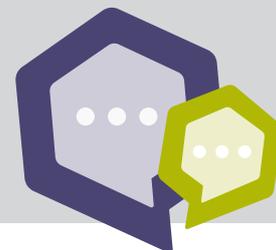


- 3.13 Develop in-house “walk-in-the-shoes” training sessions, informed by CALD employees. The purpose is to illustrate the life experiences, contributions and sacrifices CALD people make as 1st or 2nd generation migrants, in establishing themselves as Australians. The format would be similar as that used to build cultural awareness of First Nations.
- 3.14 Develop a suite of written and oral hiring tests drawing on diverse leadership and cultural characteristics. The assessment tools should be designed to reflect a fuller/ broader suite of skills, styles and characteristics including emotional intelligence, cross cultural awareness and cultural intelligence.
- 3.15 Utilise L&D tools to build the capability of managers to recruit, build and manage multicultural teams, including through MOSAIC, and through incorporation of specific cultural diversity elements into the Academy’s EL Leadership Edge and B1, B2 and B3 Senior Executive Stewardship programs. Key elements include:
- identifying and expanding one’s own comfort zone and overcoming cultural blind spots, unconscious bias and cultural misconceptions and stereotypes.
  - having a safe space for people to discover and reflect on how their own cultural lens impacts on others.
  - having the time and space to sit in discomfort.
  - learning skills to navigate conflict when there are robust debates from cognitive diversity.

#### **Action Item 4** *APS as a model employer*

##### **Immediate conversation for managers:**

- 4.1 Offer CALD team members the option to include an audio link in signature blocks with ‘how to pronounce my name’.
- 4.2 Where appropriate, ask others how to pronounce their name and show respectful interest about their heritage.
- 4.3 Offer the opportunity to CALD team members to introduce themselves with their cultural heritage and model this form of introduction where appropriate.
- 4.4 Foster open conversations about cultural and racial diversity in teams (e.g. this could begin with ice-breakers on cultural customs, traditions, beliefs to build awareness and empathy or sharing of experience of different work styles and workplace norms, approaches to policy and service delivery from different countries.)



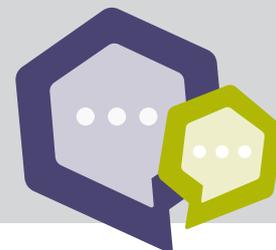
- 4.5 Discuss important cultural events and norms with your teams to make the necessary accommodation in work planning, team activities and leave arrangements. This could include a bulletin board of team cultural observances and leave. Potentially this could be incorporated into the performance agreement, particularly where public holidays are swapped and cultural leave is used, to avoid having it re-negotiated with a new manager.
- 4.6 In performance agreement discussions, managers to ask CALD team members if and how they would like their work contributions to be showcased or promoted within the organisation.
- 4.7 Managers to proactively undertake self reflection, to identify their own biases and prejudices and to identify practical actions they will take to develop their own cultural awareness and literacy, with particular focus on cultural backgrounds of their colleagues, without burdening those colleagues.
- 4.8 Actions should be reflected in performance agreements to show how they will demonstrate a commitment to building their own understanding of cultural similarities and differences of employees within their team, organisation or stakeholder groups.

The aim is to strengthen their skills in building, managing and interacting with diverse teams and managing situations in a culturally appropriate manner.

- 4.9 Managers should have open conversations with individual team members about their own and that team member's own leadership and working style, their communication preferences (particularly if English is an additional language where they are constantly translating and/or are unfamiliar with all idioms and sayings), how they prefer to receive feedback (e.g. via email or verbally, in a direct manner or through example), any cultural sensitivities or information that is relevant to how they work.

The aim is to develop managers' awareness and sensitivity to, and ability to manage, sensitive cultural situations to prevent misunderstanding or conflict. This could potentially be captured in the team member's performance agreement to ensure it is formally recognised and valued and does not have to be renegotiated with a new manager.





### **For Agency Leadership to undertake at present**

- 4.10 Ensure there is a CALD network in your agency with both a CALD and non-CALD Champion.
- 4.11 Support agency involvement in an APS-wide network of champions and allies.
- 4.12 Consider establishing an internal community of CALD workers with shared identities and interests as an Employee Resource Group (ERG) with a senior Ally or Champion. The purpose of the ERG would be to guide HR and D&I teams on fostering inclusion, improving diversity and promoting external impact. It is important that the ERG have formal recognition and support and that the organisation's and members' objectives are aligned. This can be assessed through five dimensions: employee community building, external engagement, allyship, leadership connection and career advancement.
- 4.13 Adapt "5+5 initiative" where 5 SES meet with CALD and other networks to hear their lived experience. This needs to have trained facilitators to ensure a safe space and avoid stasis.
- 4.14 Practical instructions on what effective CALD allyship looks like – 'How to guide' on allyship with examples.

### **For Agency Leadership to plan forward**

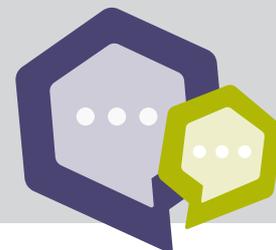
#### **Good practice:**

- 4.15 Provide resources/support to your CALD network or for CALD events e.g. by:
  - a) Allocating funding and human resources to support work by CALD network, e.g. to facilitate planning days.
  - b) Acknowledging that individual CALD staff contribution or participation in a CALD network for an agreed number of hours is a corporate contribution that is recognised and supported through the performance agreement.
- 4.16 Support the platform for agencies to share interdepartmental best CALD practice through formal and informal presentations.
- 4.17 Develop and role-model a charter of what a professional, constructive and culturally respectful workplace is and what it is not, in consultation with CALD and other diversity groups.

#### **Transformational practice:**

- 4.18 Put in place systemic and leadership support that helps employees prevent misunderstandings and normalise healthy debate e.g. through leaders and others modelling how to have team discussions on culture norms and mores.





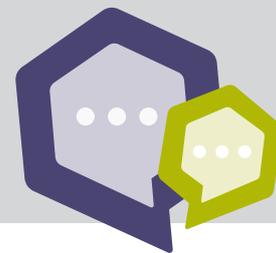
- 4.19 Cultivate a safe space by creating a culture of psychological safety where people can ask questions to help navigate personal discomfort e.g. nominate diversity managers who can facilitate yarning circles (or similar) or other spaces for people to ask questions anonymously if preferred.
- 4.20 Offer the opportunity for CALD people to share their own or their family's migrant journey and why they chose the APS at branch meetings or yarning circles across the organisation.
- 4.21 Navigate misunderstandings and resolve conflict in a healthy way i.e. nominating a CALD network to advise HR and D&I for mediatory purposes, on matters including relevant/important cultural norms to be identified in the performance agreement, developing troubleshooting resources for approaching cultural nuance in performance related conversations, SES to perform periodic wellbeing checks with CALD staff (these could be via the CALD network).
- 4.22 APSC to partner with key agencies and external parties to develop a curated, multi-media learning resource to showcase feedback of lived CALD experiences across the APS from this process, and build over time through further case studies and storytelling.
- 4.23 Empathy and curiosity moments: a voluntary project to capture everyday experiences of race and cultural interactions, kindnesses and brave acts to share across the service through discussion panels on experiences of race and culture in Australia and written contributions of migration experiences.
- 4.24 APS Storybook: a collection of lived experiences across the service through written case studies and videos, including a photo diary of migrant experience, regular podcasts of lived experience, a CALD oral history project of diasporic communities.

### **Action item 5** *APS represents the community we serve*

#### **For Agency Leadership to undertake at present**

- 5.1 Agencies to conduct a pulse survey of CALD employees to identify what matters to them.
- 5.2 Have key APS messages (e.g. on Stewardship) read out by employees with different accents and in different languages (including different styles of English).
- 5.3 Leaders to make themselves accountable by asking their staff what they need to bring their whole selves to work, and embed that in their performance measures.





- 5.4 Reflect CALD diversity in promotional material for the portfolio and job openings, for example, in the form of testimonials and articles.
- 5.5 Include as part of New Policy Proposal consideration the impact on the multicultural diasporas.
- 5.6 Develop action plans aligned to CALD profiles and identified needs. The action plans would be based on a maturity assessment of non-CALD cultural literacy and CALD cultural safety e.g. through conducting a MOSAIC Cultural Diversity Sprint or consulting CALD employees.

#### **For Agency Leadership to plan forward**

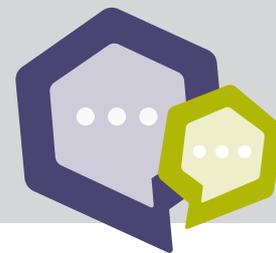
##### **Good practice:**

- 5.7 Fund language and translation allowances for people who work in international divisions or service roles where this skill is relevant.
- 5.8 Trial having international students doing internships/placements on unclassified networks. The background of the prospective interns should be thoroughly checked to ensure the risk of data security breach is minimised.
- 5.9 Consult multicultural organisations or intercultural experts to develop inclusive design principles for future corporate policies and practices to be explicitly inclusive of all cultural backgrounds.

##### **Transformational practice:**

- 5.10 Inclusion by design – agencies to embed policies and practices that dismantle barriers to workplace belonging and advancement of CALD people by facilitating cultural conversations, building capability and enabling cultural learning.
- 5.11 Key agencies, starting with DoHA, ABS and APSC, to collaborate and scope a multi-dimensional dataset that will give us a more comprehensive picture of what 'contemporary Australian society' looks like in the APS, by:
  - a) Unpacking the broad categories of cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity, with a view to making these identity markers more visible (happening now).
  - b) Building a set of data indicators around these categories, aligned to ABS.
  - c) Using these indicators to build a cultural profile that tells us more about the diversity that exists within these groups to identify issues affecting different groups of CALD people within the APS.
  - d) This will form an evidence base that will help agencies to understand their cultural makeup, and can be used to develop intercultural awareness.





5.12 Build genuine commitment, capacity and capability across the APS, starting with managers by:

- a) Creating tools to help people understand the cultural, linguistic, ethnic and racial diversity in the APS. This could include tools from the MOSAIC Project.

5.13 APSC and other agencies partner with Australian Institute of Family Studies to conduct empirical research on intergenerational experience and intersectionality with a view to developing an entry-level program to support a more inclusive workplace for CALD people.

- a) Creating an immersive program for leaders to understand their own worldview and cultural lens and how this impacts on others. This could include tools from the MOSAIC Project.

5.14 APSC to work with academic partners to identify how the adaptive leadership approach could be practically implemented in a safe way to address racism and discrimination in the APS.

- a) Helping all APS employees to call out racism and prejudice in their workplaces.

5.15 APSC to work with academic partners to roll out bystander 'train the trainer' to APSC employees and to the APS Academy to deliver in-house across the APS.



