



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

APSC

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan 2025–2028



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Message from the Commissioner

As public servants, we strive to earn and maintain the trust of the Australian people. One important way we do this is by ensuring our workforce reflects the rich diversity of the community we serve.

As the Australian Public Service Commissioner my functions include fostering an APS workforce that reflects the diversity of the Australian population. A workforce that includes people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and brings a wider range of perspectives, experiences and ideas. This makes us better at understanding the people we work with and delivering outcomes that benefit everyone.

With this in mind, the Australian Public Service Commission developed the *APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy and Action Plan* early in 2024. As one of the lead agencies for the implementation of this APS-wide plan, the Commission has undertaken a comprehensive self-assessment process to create its own CALD roadmap – the *APSC Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan 2025–2028*. This plan outlines how we will build a workplace where everyone feels they belong and where cultural diversity is a strength that helps us to build greater understanding and connection.

Our action plan is underpinned by the CALD Compact, which promotes respect, acceptance, community and a sense of belonging across our agency. It includes initiatives to promote leadership with cultural capability along with modelling of inclusive behaviour and language, and embed inclusive practices into our everyday work. As part of this journey, we will continue to acknowledge how overlapping identities affect people within our agency and the APS more widely.

I encourage all APSC employees to read this, our first CALD Action Plan, and to be part of our journey to become a more inclusive and representative public service which reflects the diversity in the public we serve.

Dr Gordon de Brouwer
Australian Public Service Commissioner



Message from the CALD Champion

In 2024, I had the privilege of leading a project with APSC colleagues to develop the *APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy and Action Plan*. Through data and consultation, we heard clearly that many CALD employees face individual challenges and systemic barriers that limit their ability to contribute fully. As a senior CALD member of the APS, I'm also acutely aware that representation at senior levels remains well below what reflects either the broader community or the APS workforce.

Under the overarching *APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy and Action Plan*, the APSC is working with agencies to build inclusive, culturally safe, and respectful workplaces. We're also focused on deepening understanding of CALD lived experience and improving representation at senior levels to better reflect the diversity of the Australian public we serve, and to improve the substantive quality of our work.

As a reportable agency ourselves under the overarching APS Plan, the APSC needs to reflect on our own practice, and set a direct example of how change can be achieved. Accordingly, we have developed this *APSC Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan 2025–2028* to set out the steps that we will take in our own agency to address inclusivity, understanding and representation of CALD staff.

This Plan is informed by APS-wide data, a dedicated survey, and extensive consultation with staff, including the CALD Staff Network, small group discussions, and direct feedback. We also undertook a CALD self-assessment to guide implementation. It reflects how we will take forward the five themes of the overarching APS CALD work program, as adapted and tailored to our own specific circumstances. It responds to the specific feedback provided by APSC staff, and sets specific objectives that relate to our own organisational context.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this work. Special thanks to CALD Staff Network Co-Chairs Mr Shyam Raghupathi and Ms Samantha Montenegro for ensuring lived experience shaped the Plan, to Ms Stella Jones and Ms Sandra O'Malley for their expert advice, and to Ms Stephanie Hiscutt, Ms Anne Mornement and the APSC People Team for their tireless support.

I look forward to working with you all to implement this Plan and build an organisation where diversity is valued, inclusion is real, and every employee feels they belong and can thrive.

Dr Subho Banerjee
Deputy Commissioner, Head of APS Academy and Capability
CALD Champion



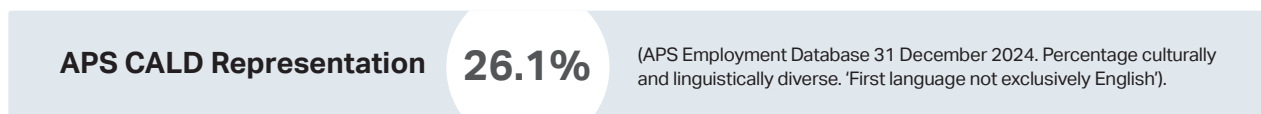
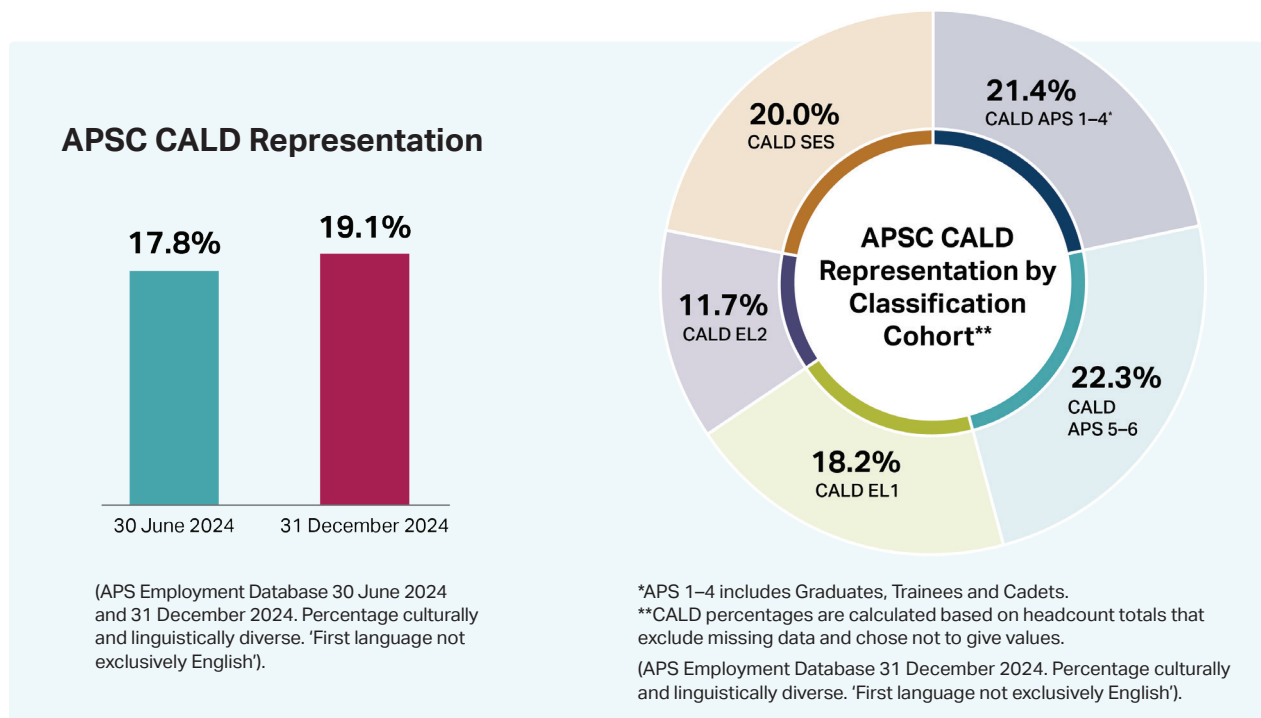
Create an environment where people feel comfortable to share what was unique about their culture" APSC staff member

CALD Representation at the Australian Public Service Commission

The Commission acknowledges that the basis for identification as CALD varies widely. For some the dimension for identifying as CALD could be language spoken at home is other than English, while for others that they were born outside Australia or it might be that they have an affinity with CALD through their family ancestry or lived experience. The Commission wants to ensure that the CALD Action Plan is for all staff, those who identify as CALD, on whatever basis is meaningful to them and for non-CALD staff, so that all staff can flourish.

The data analysis which follows is based upon the APS Employment Database (30 June 2024 and 31 December 2024) where the percentage culturally diverse is defined as "First language not exclusively English". This definition aligns with the measure of CALD for the purpose of benchmarking and tracking progress towards a reportable benchmark in accordance with the APS CALD Employment Strategy.

- 19.1% of APSC staff are CALD.¹
- In the APSC the highest representation of CALD staff is at APS classification levels.²
- CALD staff represent 20% of SES level staff at the Commission.³

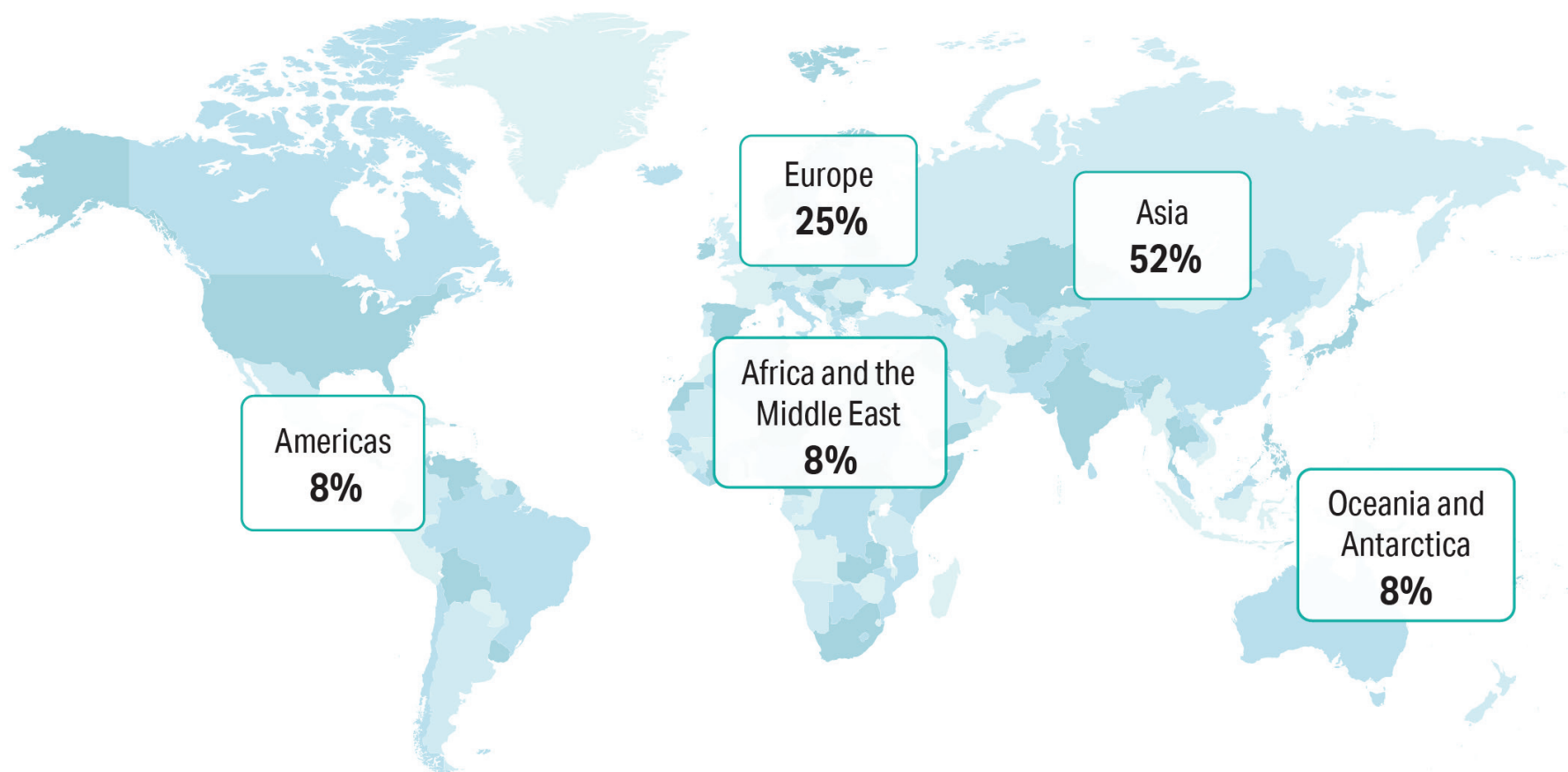


¹ APS Employment Database 31 December 2024. Percentage culturally and linguistically diverse. 'First language not exclusively English' is provided as a measure of CALD for the purposes of benchmarking and tracking progress towards a reportable benchmark in accordance with the APS CALD Employment Strategy. This measure is not intended as the singular measure of CALD for wider purposes.

² APS Employment Database 31 December 2024. Percentage culturally and linguistically diverse. 'First language not exclusively English' As for note 1 above.

³ APS Employment Database 31 December 2024. Percentage culturally and linguistically diverse. 'First language not exclusively English' As for note 1 above.

Continent of birth for APSC CALD staff*



*Staff identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse based on "First language is not exclusively English" by Continent of birth (other than Australia). APS Employment Database 31 December 2024. Percentages have been rounded.



More all of us learn and appreciate things that make different cultures the more we exercise the brain to be open and inclusive to different ways of thinking" APSC staff member

What our staff told us in the 2024 APS Employee Census

APS Employee Census question	CALD Strongly Agree/ Agree	All Staff Strongly Agree/ Agree	Opportunities
I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for doing a good job	66%	78%	Enhance Commission's recognition programs to celebrate culturally inclusive behaviours and leadership.
I have the same opportunities as anyone else	70%	78%	Continue to review and embed recruitment processes to identify opportunities to innovate and increase inclusivity. Investigate and roll out unconscious bias training module in partnership with learning partners.
The lack of inclusiveness in my workgroup not a problem	80%	88%	Promote uptake of psychological and psychosocial safety wellbeing through targeted learning campaigns. Encourage staff participation in network events through the year to foster cultural learning.
The lack of access to learning and development opportunities not a problem	63%	73%	Promote L&D opportunities tailored to CALD staff and career progression goals.



More activities to bring awareness to days of cultural significance"

APSC staff member



Roles and responsibilities

All Commission staff have roles and responsibilities under our CALD Action Plan.

Commissioner

Overarching accountability and leadership for the CALD Action Plan.

Executive Board

Oversight, planning and implementation of the CALD Action Plan.

CALD Champion

Lead advocacy for the CALD Action Plan across the APSC and the CALD Champions Network.

CALD Network

Partner in the implementation of the Action Plan, including highlighting lived experience, cultural awareness and cultural competency.

Leaders/Managers

Model inclusive behaviours and empower staff to prioritise inclusive thinking and acting.

Enabling Services

Deliver and evaluate the CALD Action Plan.

All Staff

Actively engage with CALD actions and uplift of cultural capability and safety.



... focus more on everyone belonging, so people feel that they are part of an organisation or team...rather than needing to be specifically included."

APSC staff member



APS CALD Employment Strategy and Action Plan

The *APSC Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan 2025–28* aligns with the five (5) Headline Actions referenced in the ***APS CALD Employment Strategy and Action Plan***:

- **Whole of APS standards:** Introduce an APS Statement of Leadership to Support Cultural Diversity to ensure that the standard for culturally respectful and safe workplaces is upheld.
- **Cultural understanding:** Build an APS-wide interagency CALD Champion network and a curated collection of multi-media learning resources.
- **Leadership and management:** Build APS leadership through embedding cultural capability training and sponsorship of CALD employees.
- **Recruitment and progression:** Modernise the APS recruitment and promotion processes to apply a rigorous understanding of merit.
- **Representation:** Introduce a reportable benchmark of 24% for CALD representation in the SES.

The Commission has explored the challenges and barriers faced by CALD staff. This evidence-based, consultative, self-assessment process has been undertaken in line with the *APS CALD Employment Strategy and Action Plan*. The result of this process is a CALD action plan that serves as a road map for the Commission, which includes a range of solutions focussed action items aimed at:

- promoting and growing cultural diversity at all levels,
- strengthening cross-cultural capability, and
- improving belonging and career progression for CALD staff.

The CALD Action Plan has been phased over a four-horizon timeframe. This acknowledges that some initiatives can be adopted quickly with high impact, while others require greater investment and require time to adapt and embed. This document is intended to be a living document which will be accompanied by a separate CALD Implementation Plan to operationalise the Action Plan. The implementation plan will be developed in consultation with the CALD Champion, CALD Network and relevant stakeholders in the Commission. The CALD Implementation Plan will have consideration for the importance of collaboration and intersectionality of teams, networks and sponsors to ensure the action plan initiatives are achieved within the allocated timelines.



Overview of key CALD action items and targets

We will:

- Develop enhanced recognition programs to celebrate culturally inclusive behaviours and leadership.
- Promote learning and development opportunities tailored to CALD staff and career progression goals.
- Develop, pilot and promote reverse mentoring program connecting APS classification CALD mentees with EL and SES mentors utilising culturally safe processes.
- Develop and implement a CALD cultural capability learning package for EL2 and SES leaders, incorporating the APS Integrated Unconscious Bias Training, MOSAIC Part 2, and the 6 Rs Relationship leadership Model, Multicultural: Our Stories as well as a full understanding of the CALD Compact.
- Identify high potential CALD talent for structured sponsorship and mentoring opportunities. Actively promote and support CALD staff to enrol in programs such as the APS Leadership Edge and the CALD Sponsorship Pilot ensuring they are aware of the opportunity and feel supported to participate. Track and report CALD SES Benchmark to Executive Board via APSC CALD Champion. APSC to join the CALD Sponsorship Pilot.
- Design a campaign to promote the relaunch of MOSAIC Part 1 and the release of MOSAIC Part 2, including the review of uptake of MOSAIC products and re-promoting to re-engage staff and engage with new staff.
- Increase in CALD staff recruitment, promotion and retention including an increase in SES CALD staff representation of 4% and in EL2 staff representation of 5% by 2028.
- Increase in APS Employee Census results for CALD staff perceptions of inclusiveness, opportunities, recognition and accessibility of learning and development of 3% by 2028.

Through this Action Plan, the Commission is committed to fostering a workplace where cultural diversity is not only respected but celebrated. By empowering all staff to engage with CALD initiatives, we aim to uplift cross-cultural capability and embed cultural safety across every level of our organisation. The Action Plan is our continuing commitment to build a future where every individual feels they belong, and are valued, heard, and supported to thrive. Together, we are shaping a more inclusive, capable, and representative APSC.