



APS Disability Champions Network

Terms of reference

1. Introduction

The APS Disability Champions Network (DCN) was established in 2014.

The DCN is comprised of senior executive level members from Australian Public Service (APS) agencies who meet quarterly to drive positive change for people with disability across the APS.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the DCN is to bring together senior level advocates to actively champion, advocate for, influence and steward disability employment and inclusion across the APS. It is the wider aim of the Network to both uplift disability representation and improve the employee experience of people with disability in the APS.

3. The role of the Network and its members

The APS Disability Champions Network has a unique platform for influencing change for people with disability across the APS. The Network is comprised of APS Disability Champions who are senior leaders that advocate for the rights, inclusion and participation of people with disability across the APS. They are visible, active, influential, and empathetic allies who use their influence to create inclusive, respectful and accessible workplaces.

The APS Disability Champions Network and its members:

- **Actively champion** visibility and rights of people with disability in the workforce and foster a culture where disability is understood, respected and valued.
- **Advocate** for systemic improvements to workplace policies, strategies and processes to improve outcomes for employees with disability.
- **Influence** other senior leaders to prioritise disability inclusion in their work and decisions.
- **Steward** agency activities to align with strategic APS and national disability priorities, such as current disability strategies and plans, royal commissions and inquiries.
- **Collaborate and partner** across the APS to share better practice, align efforts, identify, develop, co-design joint materials, initiatives and events, driving collective progress towards disability inclusion.
- **Listen to and act on** the lived experiences of people with disability, linking in with the expertise of the SES Disability Network (SDN) where appropriate.
- **Role model** good practice disability inclusion demonstrating respect, promoting authenticity, challenging stereotypes, and creating a sense of community for employees with disability in the workplace.
- **Demonstrate personal accountability, and seek agency accountability**, on progress towards achieving a disability affirming workplace.

Champions from larger APS agencies should also support Champions from smaller agencies as appropriate, by sharing resources such as workplace inclusion practices, policies and guidelines, to help build capability and drive disability workplace inclusion across the APS.

By modelling inclusive leadership and actively promoting disability confidence and capability uplift across the APS, Disability Champions play a vital role in creating a workplace culture where people with disability are represented at all levels across the APS, and where all employees can thrive while feeling safe, respected, heard and empowered to contribute across APS work environments.

4. Membership

Membership is comprised of Disability/All-Abilities Champions. Disability Champions are usually senior leaders within an APS agency or Commonwealth entity.

Members should attend personally wherever possible. If you wish to send a proxy, please advise the secretariat at diversity@apsc.gov.au.

Members should advise the secretariat via email if they leave the DCN and provide details of their replacement where possible.

5. Collaboration with the APS SES Disability Network (SDN)

To strengthen the collaboration between the DCN and the SDN, the chair or co-chairs of the SDN are granted a standing invitation to participate in DCN meetings. This arrangement, which was endorsed by the DCN chair on 15 April 2025, aims to integrate the lived experiences of SDN members into the strategic discussions and APS wide initiatives of the DCN. This collaboration will ensure that the voices of APS senior leaders with lived experience inform the DCN's activities and priorities, fostering a more inclusive and effective approach to disability advocacy and inclusion across the APS.

6. Meetings and secretariat

The Network meets quarterly.

The chair of the Network convenes meetings and is supported by the secretariat.

The Network chair and deputy chair will each pass on their roles to an active colleague when appropriate.

The APSC provides secretariat support for the Network. The secretariat can be contacted via diversity@apsc.gov.au.

7. Review and amendment of the Terms of Reference

The DCN Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually, at the start of each year. This work is to be led by the chair or co-chairs for that year, working with the secretariat.