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


3. Approximately one in five Australians identify a person with disability. Improving the representation of people with disability in the workforce will enable the APS to respond more capably to the needs of the community. By representing the Australian population’s diversity, we are better placed to communicate, understand and meet the full range of needs.

4. With an ageing workforce and shrinking labour market, it is important to be an employer of choice. This requires agencies to be disability confident and offer rewarding careers in which people with disability are supported to perform at their best.

5. Rates of disability are significantly higher among Indigenous Australians. As One: Making it Happen complements the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2015 by seeking to improve representation of Indigenous Australians with disability in the APS.

6. Our goal is to increase the representation of employees with disability across the APS, including Indigenous people with disability. We need to offer people with disability multiple pathways into the public service and offer existing employees with disability better career opportunities. We must also increase the representation of employees with disability in senior leadership positions.

7. As One: Making it Happen provides a roadmap towards improved representation of people with disability in the APS workforce. It has been informed by consultations with employees with disability, APS agencies and community and private sector bodies working in the disability field.
Actions to achieve our goal

8. All agencies are responsible for improving the representation of people with disability in their workforce. All employees have an obligation to engage with, and contribute to, initiatives that support employment of people with disability in the APS. The initiatives also require the support of employees with disability; their ideas and participation are essential in making the APS as inclusive as possible.

9. APS agencies need to implement a feasible plan that delivers results. As One: Making it Happen focuses on four key action areas which all include a focus on Indigenous people with disability. These are:
   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.
Principles that guide agencies’ actions

10. Sustainable improvement in representation of people with disability will be driven by the following principles:

a. Accountability—the head of each APS agency is accountable for improving the representation of people with disability in their workforce.

b. Leadership— all APS leaders must participate and take real action to drive improvements in the employment of people with disability.

c. Capability—the public service must have inclusive and accessible workplaces where employees with disability are supported and valued for their contribution and where managers encourage flexible working arrangements.

d. Partnership— between APS agencies, non-government organisations and the private sector, to improve employment outcomes for people with disability and share best practice.
Measuring and reporting against action areas

11. The success of our actions will be measured by:

   a. an increase in the number of people with disability who come to work for the APS
   b. an improvement in reported job satisfaction for employees with disability
   c. an increase in the number of people with disability in senior leadership roles
   d. an increase in the number of employees who identify as having disability in agency human resource systems.

12. This information is collected by the Australian Public Service Commission annually.
Suite of actions

13. Agencies have different needs. In recognition of this, a suite of actions is set out under each of the four key action areas. Agencies should adopt those actions best suited to their needs.

14. The Australian Public Service Commission will publish practical resources for disability employment, including agency programs and policies to share on its website. This will allow agencies to collaborate on initiatives and achieve greater impact within existing resources. These resources will be updated regularly.

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

15. 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.

Actions

a. 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.

b. 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.

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

d. 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.

e. Promote government procurement from businesses that employ people with disability.

* RecruitAbility is a scheme where applicants with disability who opt into the scheme and meet minimum requirements of the role are progressed to the next stage in the selection process. For further details see: http://www.apsc.gov.au/priorities/disability/recruitability.
B. Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability

16. 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.

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

Actions

a. Make the workplace accessible.

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

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

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

18. 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.

Actions

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

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

c. Provide senior mentors across the APS to middle managers with disability who have identified a desire to develop.

d. Attract people with disability at senior levels from the community and private sectors.
D. Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

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

20. 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.

21. 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.

Actions

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

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

c. Offer training to improve disability awareness and address unconscious bias.

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

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